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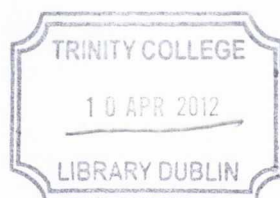
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Change: A Feminist- Pragmatist Analysis

by Clara Cecilia Fischer

2010



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Summary

This thesis seeks to provide an elucidation of change from a feminist perspective. The need for such a venture stems from an under-theorising of change by feminists on the one hand, and the problematic treatment of women and change in the history of philosophy on the other. Indeed, the development of philosophy itself is tainted by a paradoxical stance toward women and the place they are afforded in canonical expositions of change. While this is elaborated upon with the aid of an analysis of recurring themes in Greek mythology and early philosophical thought, its implications for the subsequent philosophy of Aristotle is assessed and further problematised within the context of a comparative analysis with pragmatist philosopher John Dewey. Since the thesis draws upon feminist and pragmatist theories, particularly Deweyan pragmatism, the latter needs to be outlined and assessed with regard to its capacity to provide a useful body of work with which to theorise change.

Dewey is shown to be akin to Aristotle in many respects, indeed, I argue that his philosophy can only be understood with regard to Aristotle's influences. Hence, Dewey and Aristotle are contrasted with each other, and significant areas of overlap and distinction are identified. Given that Dewey overcomes many of the difficulties posed by Aristotle's thought for a distinctly *feminist* theory of change, however, I can safely proceed to an explication of selfhood which builds upon Dewey's metaphysical insights, and his depiction of the self. Nonetheless, there are several shortcomings in Dewey's thought, which prove contentious from a feminist point of view. For instance, Dewey cannot account for the internalisations of oppressive norms women experience in patriarchal societies, and is therefore unable to address these as integral parts of our selves. Feminist theories take such internalisations as a given, and try to unearth and analyse these by shedding light on that which is often hidden and obtuse. By establishing a feminist-pragmatist self, I make use of feminist insights regarding the internalisation of oppressive norms on the one hand, and allow for a coherent picture of the moral agent on the other, for the latter requires an explication of selfhood which is neither too transient, nor too determined to allow for moral responsibility and freedom.

Change as it occurs in selves is further explored via the radical transformative process of coming to feminist consciousness. Questions relating to the malleability of selves, and the capacity of the communities they are a part of in shaping selves, are pertinent in this context, as are epistemological considerations. Indeed, for pragmatists, doubt underlies all critical thought, and since women may live with protracted doubt over extended periods of time, owing to contradictions attendant in patriarchal paradigms of femininity as juxtaposed with

actual life experience, feminist consciousness is rearticulated as a life-altering and seemingly all-encompassing process of critical thinking.

Building upon the feminist recognition of the necessity for changed selves as a requirement for changed systems, I argue that change is best understood in the pragmatist sense, that is, *as transaction*. Transaction acknowledges the reciprocal relationship between selves and environments, hence the dialogical relationship between changing selves and changing systems. Theorising this within the context of a re-visioning of democratic institutions, I employ the model of inclusive democracy expounded by Iris Marion Young, and delineate this in connection with Dewey's explication of democracy as cooperative inquiry. Again, differences and affinities are brought to light, as both explications of democracy require a fuller picture of selfhood, which, I argue, can be provided by the vision of the feminist-pragmatist self presented earlier in the thesis. Additionally, I identify Jane Addams's sensitivity to communicative difference as a means to overcoming shortcomings in Dewey's vision of democracy.

Hence, this exposition of change explains change as it exists in the world; as it takes hold in selves and environments; and as it functions in connection to political systems. It does so by positing the feminist-pragmatist self at its core, for if feminists seek to realise change, they must establish a self possessed of agency, that is, a self capable of effecting change. Similarly, change as a metaphysical phenomenon is explored, as a world devoid of mutability surely also denies change to its existents. Having shown selves and the world they exist in, to be both dynamic and stable, however, the political changes feminists seek to instantiate are broached with the concept of *change as transaction*, which serves to elucidate the flexibility of selves and systems in their ongoing transformative relationship with each other.

While the discussion illuminates important issues pertaining to wider debates, for instance on deliberative democracy, ontology or ethics, I am primarily concerned with elucidating change from a feminist stance, and the thesis should be understood within these parameters. I am generally indebted to those who have already done extensive work on the conduciveness of a joint feminist-pragmatist approach, and although I problematise this conduciveness at certain junctures during the present work, I am not here concerned with a general outline of the affinities between feminism and pragmatism. It is hoped that the discussion will, however, contribute to the growing body of work on feminist-pragmatism by analysing that which acts as a kind of feminist foundational principle, that is, the belief in the imminent need for change.

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Introduction

Wary, experienced men of the world have always been sceptical of schemes of unlimited improvement. They tend to regard plans for social change with an eye of suspicion. They find in them evidences of the proneness of youth to illusion, or of incapacity on the part of those who have grown old to learn anything from experience. This type of conservative has thought to find in the doctrine of native instincts a scientific support for asserting the practical unalterability of human nature. Circumstances may change, but human nature remains from age to age the same.

- Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct

This thesis will concern itself with change – perhaps not the unlimited improvement John Dewey had in mind, but nonetheless with change. It, too, takes as its starting point the necessity for social change, and affords human nature a central role in an elucidation of change. The impetus to do so stems from feminism, which in its normativity requires the realisation of transformation. For, although feminism is many things to many women and men, it uniformly presumes a lack, dysfunction or inadequacy in current states of affairs, and seeks to redress these; whether this be called the realisation of gender equality, the dismantling of capitalist-patriarchy, or the destruction of the “master’s house”¹ – underpinning the manifold of feminisms, is a belief in the need for change.

John Dewey’s philosophy similarly stipulates change as a requirement for the amelioration of dissatisfactory conditions. Taking his cue from present, lived experience, Dewey emphasises the importance of transforming the here-and-now. He criticises philosophical theories which renege on this recognition of the necessity of change, accusing them of an evasion or escapism, as they relish in the irrelevancy of their own, artificial problems. In this regard, then, feminist theories and Deweyan philosophy are of a piece: transformation is an imminent requirement, as *present* circumstances need to be changed.

Feminists share in the frustration Dewey voices with regard to philosophy’s separation from our quotidian existences. It is thus not surprising that much of feminist philosophy and pragmatism, particularly Dewey’s pragmatism, appear akin in their questioning of dominant philosophical assumptions concerning the self, the world we live in, the knowledge we have access to, the political structures we are a part of, and so on. Feminists have used pragmatism

¹ Lorde, A., “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Crossing Press, Trumansburg, N.Y., 1984

“as a valuable ally”² in their opposition to foundationalism, transcendentalism, and abstract universalism; and in support of contextualism, embodied- and embeddedness, and particularism. This thesis will continue in this line, by drawing upon the work of feminists, as well as pragmatists. Indeed, there is a strong and growing tradition of feminist-pragmatism, which has recently intensified with the “revival of pragmatism.”³ Thinkers such as Jane Addams, Charlene Haddock Seigfried and Shannon Sullivan are paradigmatic of this tradition, and this thesis is heavily indebted to their work.⁴ Additionally, the thesis makes use of particular exemplars of ancient Greek philosophies and myths, having been selected for their conduciveness to the task posed by this thesis.

The latter consists of an elucidation of change, which is premised upon the feminist foundational belief in the immediate necessity of change. In particular, it seeks to address questions which remain unanswered or implicit in feminist calls for change. Thus, while feminists have various strategies to implement various specific changes, it has been asserted that the “processes of change are undertheorised in feminist theories.”⁵ This thesis will attempt to undo this shortcoming by shedding light on some of the meta-questions surrounding change. For instance, it will try to answer the following: is the world we live in changing or static? What implications does this hold for us as selves? How can we account for changes in selfhood? Are we agents of change, or does change merely take place according to pre-determined, teleological unfoldings? How does our power to effect change, or not, impact upon us as moral beings? What is the relationship between changes in selfhood and more systemic, structural changes? Are current political institutions adequate or capable of accommodating change?

² Seigfried, C. H., “Shared Communities of Interest: Feminism and Pragmatism”, *Hypatia*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Spring 1993, pp. 1-14

³ Dickstein, M. (ed.), *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture*, Duke University Press, Durham & London, 1998

⁴ Even where these texts are not directly quoted, their influence on my development of a feminist-pragmatism has been invaluable - see, for example, Addams, J., *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964; Addams, J., *Writings on Peace*, Fischer, M. and Whipps, J. D. (eds.), Continuum, London, 2005; Addams, J., *Twenty Years at Hull House: With Autobiographical Notes*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago, 1990; Seigfried, C. H., *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996; Seigfried, C. H. (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of John Dewey*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park PA, 2002; Seigfried, C. H., “The Missing Perspective: Feminist Pragmatism”, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 27, No. 4, Autumn 1991, pp. 405-417; Sullivan, S., *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism, and Feminism*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2001; Sullivan, S., *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2006; and Sullivan, S., “From the Foreign to the Familiar: Confronting Dewey Confronting Racial Prejudice”, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 2004, pp. 193-202

⁵ Miller, P. H., “Contemporary Perspectives from Human Development: Implications for Feminist Scholarship”, *Signs*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Winter 2006, pp. 445 - 471, p. 449

G.E.R. Lloyd and Page duBois,⁷ amongst others, have shown, this polarity increasingly becomes systematised and explicitly theorised in a hierarchical ordering with the burgeoning of philosophy itself.

Parmenides therefore functions as a half-way point between the implicit, loose occurrence of opposites in Greek mythology, and the systematic explication of those opposites in a hierarchy of being, most ardently expressed by Aristotle. Since this development gravely affected subsequent philosophising, I argue that a legacy of thinking which groups women with a host of other ‘negative’ oppositionals, bodes poorly for any possible understanding of change arising therefrom. As we will see, Parmenides’ complete denial of one ‘set’ of oppositionals results in a denial of womanhood itself, while Aristotle’s hierarchical ordering of existents continues and consolidates the philosophical justification of woman’s inferiority. Change plays a central role in all of this, as Parmenides’ rejection of change goes hand in hand with a rejection of woman, while Aristotle is at pains to keep his hierarchical “great chain of being”⁸ intact, thereby treating change, and his prominent opposites of wet and dry, as they pertain to women, inconsistently. Thus, with the aid of feminist theorists Andrea Nye and Vigdis Songe-Møller,⁹ earliest Western philosophical thought on women and change will be shown to be deeply problematic, and in need of a feminist exposition of such.

In Chapter Two, I set out on the path to developing said exposition, and begin by examining the basic metaphysical questions already touched upon in Chapter One. Thus, I will elaborate upon Aristotle’s ‘solution’ to the problem of change – indeed the impasse of change, posed by Parmenides’ famous poem ‘On Nature’ – to determine whether the world is in flux, immutable, or perhaps both. Through his hylomorphism Aristotle manages to account for permanence *and* change, and this has specific implications for the world’s existents. While his explanation of change via the conception of matter and form will be shown to be successful in many regards, its attendant essentialism, which traps beings in the hierarchically graded “chain of being,” will be further problematised not only with regard to its impact upon women, but with regard to change itself. This will be done by means of Dewey’s critique, which views Aristotle’s essentialism, particularly when linked with his teleological ontology, as a limiting force, diminishing the possibility of the mutable and novel outside of preset teleological unfoldings and categorisations of being.

⁷ Lloyd, G. E. R., *Polarity and Analogy*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1966; duBois, P., *Centaurs and Amazons: Women and the Pre-History of the Great Chain of Being*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1994

⁸ A. O. Lovejoy cited in duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, p. 9

⁹ See Nye, A., *Words of Power: A Feminist Reading of the History of Logic*, Routledge, London, 1990; Songe-Møller, V., *Philosophy Without Women: The Birth of Sexism in Western Thought*, Continuum, London, 2002

Aristotle's epistemological assumptions further contribute to a depiction of the world which, for Dewey, is simply too fixed. Thus, this chapter will contrast Aristotle's finished, complete world, in which change and permanence are accommodated – albeit within what appear to be overly constricting restraints – with Dewey's more fluid, unfinished world, wherein events, rather than species, and productive knowledge, rather than reason, result in an unshackling of change. Importantly, Dewey's post-Darwinian explication of change, and his philosophy in general, are not entirely at odds with Aristotle's thought, in fact, quite the contrary is the case. The chapter therefore contains not only a discussion of Dewey's and Aristotle's theorising on change, but on Dewey's relationship to Aristotle and the history of philosophy more generally.

Having thus established a world which is both stable and precarious, mutable and immutable, my comparative analysis of Aristotle and Dewey extends from ontology to selfhood in Chapter Three. The Deweyan self which is similarly assessed with regard to its Aristotelian influences, can here be outlined, as fundamental ideas about the world it inhabits have already been explained in the previous chapter. Hence, we approach the self with an understanding of the universe it exists in, and the role change plays therein. The ensuing analysis of the self takes place within the context of Dewey's and Aristotle's ethics, addressing questions concerning, amongst others, the acquisition of morality, the self's connection to others, agency and moral responsibility. The pragmatist concept of 'habit' will be introduced, and the importance of habituation for moral character in both philosophers' accounts of the moral self will be examined. Added to this is an elucidation of the connection between virtues and habits, and their potential to define what has been termed "paradigmatic character,"¹⁰ or ideal character.

Ultimately, it will be shown, that yet again, there are significant areas of overlap in Dewey's and Aristotle's philosophies, and Aristotle seems to have significantly impacted upon Dewey's vision of selfhood. Nonetheless, there are further limitations placed by Aristotle upon change, which Dewey's moral thought overcomes. For instance, Dewey's ethics does not strictly distinguish between virtuous, vicious, continent and incontinent selves, but rather holds that "all character is speckled."¹¹ Selves are therefore not trapped in an immutable moral categorisation (at least in the case of the permanently vicious or virtuous character), but, just like Dewey's world, are unfinished, and constantly in the making. While Aristotle's essentialism continues in the hierarchical ordering of virtue in accordance with socio-political rank – with men having the potential to achieve full virtue, women to a lesser

¹⁰ Alderman, H., "By Virtue of a Virtue" in *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, Statman, D. (ed.), Georgetown University Press, Washington, D. C., 1997, p. 160

¹¹ Dewey, J., *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dover Publications, New York, 2002, p. 48

degree, children to an even lesser degree, and slaves not at all – Dewey finds this indicative of an elitist conservatism, denying change via a strict delineation of virtue.

Following Chapters Two and Three, and their elucidation of Aristotelian antecedents in Dewey's self and the world it exists in, I identify distinct shortcomings in Dewey's thought as it pertains to women. In particular, his underestimation of the unconscious workings of habits of selfhood (the basic 'building blocks'¹² of Dewey's self), which are informed by and sustain patriarchal norms, is highlighted as a counter-productive and dangerous element of Deweyan selfhood. Since feminist theorists, such as Sandra Bartky, explicitly theorise sexist internalisations, and aim to uncover said internalisations, Dewey's explication of selfhood needs to be re-examined in light of feminist work. Thus, I establish a feminist-pragmatist self capable of addressing the issue of habits which may be working against one, and which have proven, time and again, to be harmful for women and girls.¹³

Chapter Four employs the feminist-pragmatist self in a bid to illuminate the radical transformative process of coming to feminist consciousness. It is argued that this change in selfhood is not as sudden as is often assumed, with much of the feminist literature describing raised consciousness as a matter of abrupt 'conversion' or 'epiphany,' but rather that it constitutes a protracted process rooted in a suspicion of what is generally deemed to be unproblematic – a suspicion which consists of an unformulated, or implicit doubt. Since doubt is, for pragmatists, the basis of critical thought itself, achieving feminist consciousness can be understood as a monumental, life-altering process of "reflective thinking,"¹⁴ being premised upon doubt as a driving force behind the questioning of what was previously taken for granted or normal, and what is now, through raised consciousness, not only questioned, but differently apprehended.

As the quote at the beginning of this introduction already indicates, Dewey's interpretation of change is frequently melioristic. While this in itself is not necessarily problematic, Dewey's conflation of change with improvement, and lack of change with regress, poses difficulties for the feminist-pragmatist self, as selves surely do not always become better, but also have the capacity to become worse. This troubling aspect of Dewey's thought is addressed in Chapter Four, and taken up again in Chapter Five. Following an exploration of Iris Marion Young's model of inclusive democracy, and Dewey's vision of democracy as cooperative inquiry, I propose that appeals to unidirectional improvement, which are typical

¹² As we will be elaborated upon later, Dewey outlines the self by means of an analogy with a house; Dewey, J., *Experience and Nature* in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol. 1: 1925, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1981, p. 64

¹³ This is illustrated by the high incidence of eating disorders and negative body image in women of virtually all ages and backgrounds.

¹⁴ Dewey, J., *How We Think*, Dover Publications, New York, 1997, p. 12

of modernist early 20th century thinking, can be mitigated by allowing for ‘improvement’ or ‘progress’ to be articulated democratically, ensuring (or at least aspiring to) an avoidance of particular, dominant versions of ‘progress’ being foisted onto other members of a polity. Further difficulties in Dewey’s philosophy posed by his inability to recognise power imbalances in democratic inquiry premised upon differences in communicative styles are broached with Addams’s particular regard for such differences, and the chapter builds upon the feminist problematisation of the public/private and ethics/politics distinctions.

Importantly, this chapter is concerned with placing the moral feminist-pragmatist self into its political setting, detailing how the self can effect more systemic, structural socio-political change. I argue that change is best understood in the pragmatist sense of transaction, that is, as a dialogical back and forth between self and environment. There are obvious affinities with Young’s model of deliberative democracy, and these are connected to what seem like deliberativist antecedents in Dewey’s understanding of democracy. Differences between both theorists soon become clear though, and the chapter concludes that the insights Young and Dewey bring to the potential instantiation of change by selves in democracies, require a more adequate understanding of selfhood, thereby situating the feminist-pragmatist self again at the centre of this exploration of change. Additionally, Dewey’s model of democracy benefits from Addams’s capacity to accommodate non-dominant discursive style.

While my approach may seem overly ambitious, covering such diverse types of change – metaphysical, socio-political, and identity change – and such seemingly disparate theorists – Parmenides, Aristotle, Dewey, Bartky, Young, and Addams amongst others – the overall thread of my argument will try to structure all of these in a logical arrangement of ideas and sub-arguments. The pivotal focus of the thesis lies in the establishment of the feminist-pragmatist self, for if we are to explain changes, which feminists seek to instantiate, we must theorise a self capable of realising change. This, indeed, is the problem posed by Ann Ferguson’s “determinism-responsibility problem,”¹⁵ discussed in Chapter Four. Ferguson asks how selves which are overly determined, or portrayed as overly fluid, are capable of effecting changes in oppressive systems. By advancing the vision of a feminist-pragmatist self, I seek to overcome this difficulty, and offer feminists a moral agent capable of transforming said systems.

The system under scrutiny in this thesis is patriarchy, and although I am aware of what Patricia Hill Collins calls “interlocking systems of oppression,”¹⁶ and much of the feminist

¹⁵ Ferguson, A., "Moral Responsibility and Social Change: A New Theory of Self", *Hypatia*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Summer 1997, pp. 116-142, p. 117

¹⁶ Hill Collins, P., "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought", *Signs*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Summer 1989, pp. 745 - 773

literature now refers to as “intersectionality,”¹⁷ an in-depth discussion of systems of class, race, and ethnicity, amongst others, lies beyond the scope of the present work. However, I do elaborate upon the different communities we are a part of and how our particular positionings in these social and political worlds affects the kind of people we are. Additionally, I explicate Young’s and Addams’s interpretation of discursive difference, which is fundamentally concerned with problematising the connection between said positionings and power. This will be shown to be particularly pertinent in relation to the power of selves, who are disempowered and marginalised, to effect change by being enabled to become part of the political processes which result in decisions significantly affecting their lives. Thus, while the thesis does not contain a detailed exposition of the inter-functioning of oppressive systems, it does acknowledge its significance, particularly with regard to the implications this holds for us as selves, and our capacity to instantiate systemic, socio-political change.

This raises the question of whom this thesis is speaking to. Are men assumed to be the subjects, the selves, I theorise in this work? Or is it only relevant to and expressive of the experiences of women? I certainly do not profess to be able to speak on behalf of men, nor of women for that matter. Indeed, the thesis is informed by my own unique life experiences and thoughts, which are mingled with a plethora of insights and lessons arising from my disagreements or affinities with other thinkers. I hope to offer a vision of change, which is of course indicative of *my* interpretation of the world, its beings, communities, political systems, and so forth, but which is supported enough by the arguments and literatures I employ, to make for a convincing picture of transformation.

While some of the experiences detailed in the thesis are reportedly akin to the experiences of other persons, I make general claims based on the repeated occurrence of such phenomena, as they are captured in secondary or primary literature. For instance, the experience of ‘coming to feminist consciousness’ is described in remarkably similar terms by many women, hence its elucidation in Chapter Four is inspired not only by my own experience, but also by the accounts of other women. So far, I have not encountered similar accounts by men, however, I am loath to assert that only women undergo feminist consciousness, and instead want to emphasise that any general statements I make are to be taken merely as such (although they will be grounded in deliberation and supported by the claims of other sources), and not as timeless, immutable universals. As we will see, pragmatists posit

¹⁷ For more on the history of this concept see Davis, K., “Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes a Feminist Theory Successful”, *Feminist Theory*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2008, pp. 67 - 85

knowledge claims as constantly revisable, interim ‘truths,’ and this thesis should be understood within that spirit.

Returning, then, to my above claim that the present work manages to give a coherent account of change – despite of the many philosophical thinkers and ‘settings’ of change it explores – I wish to briefly restate the basic structure of the thesis: the focal point of my argument lies in the feminist-pragmatist self, presented in Chapter Four. This self is anchored in and presumably impacts upon a world, hence the question of what this world looks like, and whether it can accommodate change or not, is addressed as a precursor in Chapter Two. Since my vision of selfhood partially rests upon Dewey’s explication of the self, I of course outline the latter, but also show how it is indebted to Aristotle’s depiction of selfhood. I argue that we can only understand Dewey’s self with regard to Aristotle’s influence, and in fact, the same is true for Dewey’s ontology. Hence, Chapters Two and Three together form a comparative analysis of Dewey and Aristotle with the aim of elucidating the self and the world it exists in.

An adoption of the basic premises of Dewey’s ontology and his explication of selfhood, then, forms the basis from which a feminist-pragmatist self can be established, and assessed with regard to its capacity to effect socio-political change. In Chapter Five, the discussion of the relationship between self and the political communities it is a part of, is deepened, and Addams’s and Young’s insights regarding power and the potential for selves to impact upon democratic deliberative processes, come to bear upon said relationship. Having shown, in Chapter One, that change has been treated rather problematically since philosophy’s inception, and is therefore in need of a feminist explication, the thesis closes by focusing the preceding narrative once again on the feminist-pragmatist exposition of selfhood, which is capable not only of positing moral, political agents, but of explaining their productive role for change within democracy. Hence, the rationale for this thesis will have been met by an exploration of change, which will have highlighted the centrality of the feminist-pragmatist self in countering the difficulties posed by change for feminists.

It is hoped that by proceeding in this manner, the aim of the thesis – to present an elucidation of change from a feminist perspective (necessitated by the undertheorised nature of change in feminist work on the one hand, and, more substantially, by the contentious treatment of change in the philosophical canon on the other) – will be fulfilled, and the questions raised at the beginning of this introduction, answered. During the course of a work of this magnitude, there will naturally be additional questions lying outside of the narrow purview of the professed foci of the thesis, which will come under consideration. One is bound to address other, perhaps unforeseen needs, or intellectual gaps, which may not lie explicitly within the anticipated aims or remit of the study, but which nonetheless add to the store of existing

knowledge on a particular topic. Thus, the section of the thesis devoted to a critical analysis of Dewey's and Aristotle's thought actually serves another purpose, by allowing these two philosophers to dialogue with each other.

There is a dearth of theorising on Dewey and ancient Greek philosophers, a circumstance which is lamented by several commentators, who rightly ask: "Why is it that Dewey's use of ancient thinkers has attracted so little scholarly attention?"¹⁸ Within the context of an analysis of change, my thesis entails a redressing of this lack of material on Dewey and the ancient philosophers. While there are few who have written about Dewey and the ancients on metaphysics,¹⁹ there are even fewer who have done so with regard to moral philosophy. In fact, there is only one text known to me, which constitutes a substantial, in-depth work on the ethical thought of Dewey and Aristotle. Gregory M. Fahy's doctoral thesis, entitled "A Comparison of the Ethical Thought of Aristotle and John Dewey,"²⁰ was completed in 1998 and it seems that since then, there has only been one article written on Aristotle's and Dewey's conception of the moral self, which is Nicholas O. Pagan's "Configuring the Moral Self: Aristotle and Dewey."²¹

This unfortunate scarcity of work on Dewey's and Aristotle's respective moral philosophies can be attributed to the scarcity of work on Dewey's ethics more generally. To date, we have a book on Dewey's early ethical theorising by Jennifer Welchmann entitled *Dewey's Ethical Thought*;²² James Gouinlock's exploration of Dewey's value theory in *John Dewey's Philosophy of Value*;²³ Steven Fesmire's ethico-aesthetic treatise, *John Dewey and Moral Imagination: Pragmatism in Ethics*;²⁴ and most recently, Gregory Fernando Pappas' overview, *John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience*.²⁵ In turn, this rather limited supply of secondary literature on Dewey's ethics may be partially due to his own, rather haphazard presentation of ethical theory. For although he has left us a handful of moral

¹⁸ Epp, R. H., "Review of J. J. Chambliss: The Influence of Plato and Aristotle on John Dewey's Philosophy", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter 1992, pp. 156 - 159

¹⁹ See Chambliss, J. J., *The Influence of Plato and Aristotle on John Dewey's Philosophy*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, Queenston & Lampeter, 1990; Veazie, W. B., "John Dewey and the Revival of Greek Philosophy", *University of Colorado Studies / Series in Philosophy*, 1961, pp. 1 - 10; Anderson, F. M., "Dewey's Experiment with Greek Philosophy", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1967, pp. 86 - 100; and Anton, J. P., "John Dewey and Ancient Philosophies", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1965, pp. 477 - 499;

²⁰ Fahy, G. M., "A Comparison of the Ethical Thought of Aristotle and John Dewey", Ph.D. thesis, Boston University, 1998

²¹ Pagan, N. O., "Configuring the Moral Self: Aristotle and Dewey", *Foundations of Science*, Vol. 13, No. 3/4, 2008, pp. 239 - 250

²² Welchman, J., *Dewey's Ethical Thought*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1995

²³ Gouinlock, J., *John Dewey's Philosophy of Value*, Humanities Press, New York, 1972

²⁴ Fesmire, S., *John Dewey and Moral Imagination: Pragmatism in Ethics*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2003

²⁵ Pappas, G. F., *John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2008

philosophical texts,²⁶ Dewey scholars often bemoan the fact that he never got round to a comprehensive account of his mature ethical thought. Be that as it may, this thesis makes use of all of these existing sources, and draws attention to an underappreciated part of John Dewey's philosophy, that is, his ethical theorising. It does so within the context of a comparative analysis with Aristotle's philosophy, hence the contribution of this thesis not only to the study of Deweyan ethics, but to the study of Dewey *in relation to* Aristotle more generally.

Added to this is what appears to be an entirely novel approach, consisting of an exploration of Dewey's, Jane Addams's and Iris Marion Young's political thought. For, although Dewey has been theorised with regard to deliberative models of democracy before, such analyses have usually taken place within the context of other deliberativist work, such as Habermas's.²⁷ As far as I know, the current study is the only one bringing Young, Addams and Dewey into conversation with each other.²⁸ As we will see, this yields interesting, and often surprising, results for our understanding of each respective theorist.

Dewey once noted that "philosophy is inherently criticism, having its distinctive position among various modes of criticism in its generality; a criticism of criticisms, as it were."²⁹ I find this description particularly pertinent in the context of the present philosophical inquiry, as feminism is also inherently critical. Perhaps this similarity can be explained by philosophy's and feminism's innate normativity, for if there is nothing the matter with the way things currently are, or are understood, then surely philosophy and feminism are superfluous.³⁰ Normativity and criticism go hand in hand, as states of affairs, and our

²⁶ For early moral theorising see Dewey, J., *The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus* in *John Dewey: The Early Works, 1882 - 1898*, Vol. 4, 1893 - 1894, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1975; for a rather text-book like exposition see Dewey, J. and Tufts, J., *Ethics in John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol. 7: 1932, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1985; for a brief comparative analysis of ethical theories see Dewey, J., "Three Independent Factors in Morals" in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol 5: 1929 - 1930, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1984; and for an ethico-metaphysical treatise see what is perhaps his most significant ethical work, Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*. There are also passages of moral import in other writings, as ethical points are raised within discussions on philosophical issues and debates not explicitly or solely concerned with ethics as such.

²⁷ See for example, Aboulafia, M., Bookman, M. and Kemp, C. (eds.), *Habermas and Pragmatism*, Routledge, London, 2002; and the special issue on 'Pragmatism and Deliberative Politics' of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2004

²⁸ Material from Chapter Five was also adapted for a shorter conference paper on Dewey and Young, see Fischer, C., "'Progressive Cannibalism': Progress, Democracy and Ethics", www.inter-disciplinary.net/critical-issues/transformations/ethics-and-public-life/conference-programme-abstracts-and-papers/, accessed 22/02/2010

²⁹ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 298

³⁰ Allusions to 'post-feminism' carry dangerous connotations of this by undermining the relevance of feminism. See for example, Stacey, J., "Sexism by a Subtler Name? Postindustrial Conditions and Postfeminist Consciousness in Silicon Valley" in *Women, Class, and the Feminist Imagination*, Hansen, K. V. and Philipson, I. J. (eds.), Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1990; and Coppock,

theorising thereof, are deemed to be inadequate, incorrect, or dissatisfactory. This may be why Dewey maintains that “in some sense all philosophy is a branch of morals,”³¹ as our identification of something as ‘wrong’ is both a moral assertion, and a criticism.

Feminism is, of course, also deeply philosophical, as it often requires a changed understanding of the world, or constitutes a different way of viewing things, hence allusions to seeing the world through ‘feminist lenses.’ This thesis will explore this change in understanding, but will assess what implications this may hold for a world marked by change, for the political systems we inhabit, and for the communities we are a part of. In doing so, it will constitute a normative, critical inquiry, a “criticism of criticisms,” spurred by the feminist-pragmatist belief in the moral impetus to instantiate change.

V., Haydon, D. and Richter, I., *The Illusions of 'Post-Feminism': New Women, Old Myths*, Taylor & Francis, London, 1995

³¹ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 387

Chapter 1. Women, Change, and the Birth of Philosophy

The car that bears me carried me as far as ever my heart desired, since it brought me and set me on the renowned way of the goddess, which alone leads the man who knows through all things. On that way was I borne along; for on it did the wise steeds carry men, drawing my car, and maidens showed the way.

- Parmenides, *On Nature*

With this verse, Parmenides' poem 'On Nature' invites us to follow the philosopher on a mystical journey – a journey which promises to enlighten us with certain knowledge, by distinguishing between what is merely perception or opinion, and what is truth. The latter, for Parmenides, consists of immutability and singularity, premised upon a strict delineation of Being and Not-Being. That truth should lie in a denial of change and plurality seems intuitively misled, and yet, Parmenides' ideas were highly pertinent for subsequent philosophising. In his startling denial of what most of us take to be obviously true, he rejected change, and, as we will see, woman. Parmenides is indicative of much philosophical theorising on women and change, and it is the objective of this chapter to outline the problematic treatment of women in their relationship to change, and to trace this to the development of philosophy itself.

Women's traditional omission from the philosophical canon has placed them in a rather paradoxical position within male philosophers' expositions of change.³² On the one hand, women are conflated with change, which is seen as threatening and destabilising, on the other hand, women represent stasis and passivity, as forward-looking activity and spirited change are reserved for men. In order to untangle some of these contradictory depictions of women and change, I will draw upon specific sources from ancient Greek mythology and philosophy. Thus, the story of Athens' origination, Pandora's myth, Parmenides' 'On Nature,' and some of Aristotle's thought, will serve to highlight the continuity of certain themes, which come significantly to bear upon Western philosophical understandings of women and change.

³² Such omission continues today, as standard texts on the history of philosophy still fail to include women, or even male philosophers' theorising on women. See for example, the latest edition of Stumpf, S. E. and Fieser, J., *Philosophy: History and Problems*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2008. For feminist texts, which seek to redress the gender imbalance in the historiography of philosophy by uncovering the work of women philosophers, see Warren, K. J. (ed.), *An Unconventional History of Western Philosophy: Conversations between Men and Women Philosophers*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 2009; and Waithe, M. E. (ed.), *A History of Women Philosophers*, Vol. 1 - 4, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1992

For instance, we encounter the motifs of man's fear of death, mortality, and dependence, and his desire to be god-like, immortal and self-sufficient, on a recurrent basis. When such themes are coupled with an analysis of the gradual arrangement of "opposites" in Greek mythology into a hierarchical ordering in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, it becomes obvious how woman assumes not only an inferior position as part of a strict polarity, but eventually becomes part of a system wherein she is 'by nature' lower in rank than man. Thus, following the work of G.E.R. Lloyd and Page duBois,³³ we will see that Aristotle's establishment of a "great chain of being"³⁴ – wherein every existent assumes a position lower in degree from that which comes before it – grows out of the widespread ancient classification of beings and natural phenomena into "opposites." The texts I draw upon in this chapter are representative of key points in this evolution from opposites to hierarchical ordering. Parmenides occupies a historical and intellectual half-way mark in the course of this development, hence my selection of his poem, the preceding myths of Pandora and Athens, and the later philosophy of Aristotle, for the purposes of this chapter.

In *Polarity and Analogy*,³⁵ Lloyd gives a thorough account of the use of opposites by the ancient Greeks. He shows that right/left, light/dark and man/woman, are just some of the contraries the Greeks identified in their myths and early philosophising. These contraries constitute direct polar opposites, with each oppositional being assigned value, hence the analogical relationship between positive oppositionals and negative oppositionals. We know that woman was always grouped with the inferior oppositional, such as left and dark, and man with the superior oppositional, such as right and light. Indeed, Aristotle provides us with a Pythagorean Table of Opposites in *Metaphysics*,³⁶ which details ten contraries, amongst them limited/unlimited, even/odd, one/many, still/moving, and male/female. Notably, the latter of each contrary occupies the same column as evil, while the former is classified alongside the good. Hence, woman is, by analogy, coterminous with all of the subordinate oppositionals, including evil.

While this organisation into diametrically opposed positive and negative poles is implicit in much of Greek mythology, it becomes more explicitly theorised with the onset of philosophy,³⁷ and eventually modulates into a hierarchical systematisation, most obviously

³³ Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*; duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*

³⁴ A. O. Lovejoy cited in duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, p. 9

³⁵ Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*

³⁶ Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, Lawson-Tancred, H. (ed.), Penguin Books, London, 1998, 986a 22ff.

³⁷ As Lloyd notes: "Already in Homer and Hesiod...we find some evidence of a tendency to correlate the positive and the negative poles of different pairs of opposites respectively, even when there is no manifest connection between the terms in question. But where we might have expected these associations to have been soon forgotten or ignored in early Greek philosophy and medicine, we find, on the contrary, that they continued to play a part in quite a number of theories and explanations, and what is more, it was certain philosophers who first explicitly formulated the distinction in value

expressed by Aristotle. Thus, Parmenides' 'On Nature' is littered with opposites, as he argues for Being over Not-Being, immutability over mutability, and singularity over plurality. The contraries of man/woman are inextricably bound up with this, and as I will show, woman, in her analogical relationship with change, is denied.

Parmenides' grouping of woman with change as inferior oppositional is by no means consistently and coherently applied by other thinkers. The axiological correlation of mutability/woman and immutability/woman, which was variously constructed in ancient myth and philosophy by means of a hierarchy or polarity, was often contradictory and contrived to sustain the "chain of being," or the rigid dichotomy of opposites. Thus, woman is categorised alongside *change* as inferior oppositional, or alongside *immutability* as inferior oppositional. While change may be 'good' or 'bad' depending upon the particular context, woman is always classed as negative and ascribed mutability or stasis accordingly. Since gender, and the value placed upon woman in particular, comes to play a central role in the designation of change or immutability, we may refer to this as *gendered (im)mutability*. In what follows, we will see that gendered (im)mutability is part of philosophy since its inception, hence the necessity of a feminist exposition of change. Let us begin by taking a closer look at Parmenides' famous poem 'On Nature.'³⁸

between the opposite terms of certain pairs, and who extended and developed this use of opposites into comprehensive systems." - Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 62

³⁸ This chapter relies upon the important work of feminist philosophers and historians. The novel in my exploration of women in the philosophical canon consists in my focus upon (im)mutability as gendered, and in my acknowledgement that this can be traced from the earliest Greek myths, through Parmenides, to Aristotle. Feminist work dealing specifically with the link between mythology's treatment of women and its effect upon subsequent philosophical theorising is relatively rare. However, in this chapter I make ample use of Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*. While Songe-Møller is more interested in how Greek myths eventually inform the philosophy of Plato, though, I am concerned with their implications for Aristotle's thought. The majority of feminist texts on the history of philosophy begin with Plato, hence their omission not only of mythology, but also of the earliest Greek philosophers. See for example, Tuana, N., *Woman and the History of Philosophy*, Paragon, St. Paul, MN, 1992; Clack, B., *Misogyny in the Western Philosophical Tradition: A Reader*, MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1999; and Warren (ed.), *An Unconventional History of Western Philosophy*

1. Parmenides

a) 'On Nature'

Parmenides is often regarded as the most thoroughly logical thinker of the early philosophers.³⁹ His theory is based upon the belief that something either is, or it is not, or that there is Being, or Not-Being. This tenet is expressed in what remains of the only document of his thought, his poem entitled 'On Nature.'⁴⁰ The poem is structured in three parts, a prologue (or proem), a mid section detailing 'The Way of the Truth' and a final part treating of 'The Way of Belief.' These two ways, of truth and belief, deal with the assumptions of mortals and the true knowledge of the gods respectively. We are introduced to a goddess, who acts as narrator, enlightening us with regard to both divine truth and mortal opinion.

The poem opens with a mystical account of a young man, presumably Parmenides, who is swept away by maidens to a realm where Dikē, the goddess of justice, resides. Upon arrival at the entrance to this abode, Dikē is persuaded by the traveller's companions to open the gates "of the ways of Night and Day."⁴¹

Her [Dikē] did the maidens entreat with gentle words and cunningly persuade to unfasten without demur the bolted bars from the gates.⁴²

Crossing a chasm and avoiding the "rivets and nails"⁴³ swinging from the door posts, the traveller encounters Dikē, who welcomes him by taking his hand and pronounces:

Welcome, O youth, that comest to my abode on the car that bears thee tended by immortal charioteers! It is no ill chance, but right and justice that has sent thee forth to travel on this way. Far, indeed does it lie from the beaten track of men! Meet it is that thou shouldst learn all things, as well the unshaken heart of well-

³⁹ My interpretation of Parmenides falls broadly under what John Palmer calls the "strict monist interpretation," and its further development into the "logical-dialectical interpretation" – see Palmer, J., *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009. These traditional readings are, to my mind, the most convincing interpretations of Parmenides' poem – for examples see Guthrie, W. K. C., *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 1 & 2, Cambridge University Press, London, 1971; and Kirk, G. S., Raven, J. E. and Schofield, M., *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983. There have also been readings ascribing a "third way" to Parmenides' poem, and he has been interpreted as being primarily concerned with essences, rather than with being, broadly conceived (these have been respectively identified as the "modal interpretation" and the "meta-principle interpretation" – again, see Palmer, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy*).

⁴⁰ What has been pieced together to form 'On Nature' as we know it today, is probably only a third of the original text – see Gallop, D., *Parmenides of Elea: Fragments - A Text and Translation*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1991, p. 5

⁴¹ Poem taken from Burnet, J., *Early Greek Philosophy*, A. & C. Black, London, 1920, B 1.11

⁴² B 1.15

⁴³ B 1.18

rounded truth, as the opinions of mortals in which is no true belief at all. Yet none the less shalt thou learn these things also⁴⁴

Thus the youth is invited to partake first in an unfolding of ontological truth, and secondly in an unfolding of cosmological belief, for even though the former is clearly superior to the latter, mortal assumptions about the nature of the universe need to be judged by the youth, or by the listener, as “passing right through all things one should judge the things that seem to be.”⁴⁵

Dikē then begins her account of ‘The Way of Truth.’ This section contains the crucial tenet that Being and Not-Being are not simultaneously possible. Parmenides, through the goddess of justice, argues that we cannot think of that which is not, only Being can be thought of:

what can be thought and spoken of is; for it is possible for it to be, and it is not possible for what is nothing to be.⁴⁶

A direct correlation between thought and reality is set up here, as it is not possible to imagine or think of nothingness, or Not-Being. Being is identified by Parmenides as the first way of truth, “namely that *It is*, and that it is impossible for it not to be,”⁴⁷ while Not-Being forms the second way of truth, “namely, that *It is not*, and that it must needs not be.”⁴⁸ The latter, however, is immediately dismissed as “a path that none can learn of at all,” as knowing Not-Being is rendered impotent by the assertion that “thou canst not know what is not – that is impossible – nor utter it.”⁴⁹ Language and thought thus act as barriers to the hypostatisation of Not-Being.

Because Being and Not-Being are mutually exclusive, all change is denied in this ontology, as transformations of becoming and decay are rejected. Change risks the infection of Being with Not-Being, as a transformed existent no longer is what it used to be, nor may it be in the future what it is now. Hence, Parmenides asks:

How, then, can what *is* be going to be in the future? Or how could it come into being? If it came into being, it is not; nor is it if it is going to be in the future.⁵⁰

Parmenides denies that something can come out of nothing, as Being always already is. Similarly, the loss of something in terms of its disappearance into nothingness, or Not-Being, is repudiated, hence birth and death are ultimate impossibilities:

Thus is becoming extinguished and passing away not to be heard of.⁵¹

⁴⁴ B 1.24 ff.

⁴⁵ B 1.31

⁴⁶ B 6

⁴⁷ B 4,5

⁴⁸ B 4,5

⁴⁹ B 4,5

⁵⁰ B 8.20

Instead, Being should be thought of as a sphere, which is indivisible, “since it is all alike, and there is no more of it in one place than another.”⁵²

Furthermore, it is “full of what is” and “wholly continuous.”⁵³ Being as sphere is held by

the bonds of mighty chains, without beginning and without end; since coming into being and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away.⁵⁴

Dikē’s divine knowledge has ousted birth and death and has left in their stead Being, which is “whole and immovable” and “complete on every side...equally poised from the centre in every direction.”⁵⁵ Being is not afflicted by the effects of change over time, as “there is not, and never shall be, anything besides what is.”⁵⁶

Describing Being as a sphere is important to Parmenides’ argument, as it protects Being from encroachment of Not-Being. A sphere is a perfectly symmetrical three-dimensional object, and as such is the most apt representation of Being which is indivisible, whole and “everywhere the same.” If this were not so, if, for example, our sphere were to be lacking in a segment of Being, then logically, this would have to be termed Not-Being. In turn, this would mean that Being is not “continuous,” but rather fractured and interspersed with what is not. Similarly, an unequal distribution of Being, as we can imagine in a cone for example, where the base of the cone contains more Being than its narrower peak, would be problematic:

For there is nothing that could keep it from reaching out equally, nor can aught that is be more here and less there than what is, since it is all inviolable.⁵⁷

As this rather strong wording shows, Parmenides is at pains to convince us of the impossibility of a mingling of Being and Not-Being, and the danger Not-Being poses for Being, hence his choice of the sphere, as its uninterrupted body captures the totality of Being, making it the One, which is immune from change, and thereby from time.

But what about the common-sense view that change does exist, and that things clearly come to life and die away? Dikē tells us that such beliefs are mere illusions which human beings, or mortals, erringly assume:

⁵¹ B 8.22

⁵² B 8.23

⁵³ B 8.24

⁵⁴ B 8.26

⁵⁵ B 8.44

⁵⁶ B 8.37

⁵⁷ B 8.46 ff.

Wherefore all these things are but the names which mortals have given, believing them, to be true – coming into being and passing away, being and not being, change of place and alteration of bright colour.⁵⁸

All change, be it motion, qualitative transformation, or otherwise, is arbitrary, merely a matter of appearance rather than of reality. And so, the goddess of justice goes on to enlightens us with regard to the false view of mortals in the ‘Way of Belief.’

This final section of Parmenides’ poem consists of a cosmology premised upon the two concepts of fire and night, a theory we are asked to approach with caution:

Mortals have made up their minds to name two forms, one of which they should not name, and that is where they go astray from the truth. They have distinguished them as opposite substance in form, and have assigned to them marks distinct from one another. To the one they allot the fire of heaven, gentle, very light, in every direction the same as itself, but not the same as the other. The other is just the opposite to it, dark night, a compact and heavy body.⁵⁹

Everything is attributable to fire and night, as “all things have been named light and night; and the names which belong to the power of each have been assigned to these things and to those.”⁶⁰ Neither light, nor fire dominates, as “everything is full at once of light and dark night, both equal, since neither has aught to do with the other.”⁶¹

Promising her listeners an illumination of the workings of the heavenly bodies of the sky, Dikē outlines a system of circles, which are made up of pure fire or night respectively, separated only by the rushing of “their portion of fire”⁶² between them. In the centre of all of this is a divinity, who

directs the course of all things; for she is the beginner of all painful birth and all begetting, driving the female to the embrace of the male, and the male to that of the female.⁶³

This divinity is responsible for the creation of Eros before all other gods.

At this stage, the poem is somewhat patchy, as the part detailing ‘The Way of Belief’ is largely incomplete.⁶⁴ We are left with the rather cryptic fragments 16 and 17, which inform us that

⁵⁸ B 8.39 ff.

⁵⁹ B 8.53 ff.

⁶⁰ B 9

⁶¹ B 9

⁶² B 12

⁶³ B 12

⁶⁴ For a detailed account of how ‘On Nature’ was reconstituted from various sources, see Barnes, J., *Early Greek Philosophy*, Penguin, London, 1987

just as thought finds at any time the mixture of its erring organs, so does it come to men; for that which thinks is the same, namely, the substance of the limbs, in each and every man; for their thought is that of which there is more in them.⁶⁵

and

On the right boys; on the left girls.⁶⁶

Following these remarks, the poem ends by reminding us that this is how things are “according to men’s opinions.”⁶⁷ Thus, change exists as part the fallible story of mortals, which relates how things have come to be, how they are now, and how they will “in time...grow up and pass away.”⁶⁸

b) A Feminist Analysis of Parmenides

What are we to make of this rather elusive denial of change, which uses the principle of non-contradiction to underpin a paradoxical ontology and cosmology? Surely the empirical realities of transformation we see all around us cannot be explained away by what seems to be mere word-play involving Being and Not-Being? Why does Parmenides bother to tell us about fire, night and the divinity that brings together women and men, if such musings are established as false, belonging to the realm of belief, and not of truth? And how should we interpret the fleeting references to gender, if we are to situate Parmenides in the context of our present inquiry regarding women and change? To answer these questions, I will draw upon two existing analyses of Parmenides’ poem.

The first chapter of Andrea Nye’s *Words of Power*, explores ‘On Nature’ from a feminist perspective. Although Nye situates her analysis within the context of logic, her insights will be useful for a reading of the text in terms of gendered (im)mutability. My second source is Vigdis Songe-Møller’s *Philosophy Without Women*, which proffers a fascinating interpretation of Parmenides’ text, particularly as it functions with dominant assumptions about women in ancient Greece. Both theorists will help us to understand the rather abstract mentions of women and men, thereby shedding light on other aspects of the poem, which can only be understood within the framework of gender norms observed by Parmenides, and the society he lived in.

Let us begin by restating what should be clear by now: Parmenides bases his rejection of the possibility of change on the separation of Being and Not-Being. A mixing of what is, and

⁶⁵ B 16

⁶⁶ B 17

⁶⁷ B 19

⁶⁸ B 19

what is not, has to be avoided at all costs, in fact Being needs to be protected from Not-Being. We know that Parmenides bases this premise upon the fact that we cannot think or speak of Not-Being, hence everything is – is One, indivisible, unaffected by time, and continuous. But is there a deeper reason for Parmenides' apparent anxiety of the pollution of Being by Not-Being? Why is his tone so urgent, warning us that Being must be "inviolable"?

Both Songe-Møller and Nye trace this angst over the purity of Being to a larger anxiety surrounding women's sexuality and human reproduction. Such apprehension explains why the goddess of Parmenides' poem is abstracted, an other-worldly being bearing hardly any resemblance to substantive womanhood, nor indeed to the more standard, humanised divinities of Greek mythology. This purveyor of truth must be absolutely removed from the wiles of the mortal realm, hence her ethereal nature. Songe-Møller points out that Parmenides' depiction of the aloof goddess is rather unusual, as the divinities of Hesiod and Homer

are always named and associated with specific aspects of the world, or realms of experience, and each has his or her peculiar attributes. Poseidon, for example, is the god of the sea and governs the way mankind relates to that element. Aphrodite is the goddess of love, and so on. In contrast, Parmenides' goddess seems remote from anything we could designate as the 'real world', an impression that is reinforced by her lack of a name.⁶⁹

Not only is the goddess intangible, and utterly removed from the mortal realm, but she remains anonymous throughout the poem. Her role seems to lie in inviting the young traveller, the philosopher, into the divine sphere from which she pronounces the truths of the gods, and the beliefs of mortals.

Further glimpses of who this proselytizer might be, are denied to us, hence, we can assume that she is actually superfluous to the knowledge she imparts. Indeed, she is uninteresting from the philosopher's point of view, who finds relevancy only in her words, not her constitution. In this sense, then, Dikē fails to deliver on her insistence that the philosopher "shouldst learn all things,"⁷⁰ as

she tells us nothing about herself. The goddess constitutes the locus from which everything is told, but that locus itself is not discussed. We have to assume that she is extraneous to what Parmenides regards as 'all things'.⁷¹

As such, the goddess of justice serves to highlight not only her separation from the mortal world, but also her divorce from the human propensity for change, as she occupies the timeless and eternal domain of unalterability. Her immortality, and man's ability and

⁶⁹ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 36

⁷⁰ B 1.28

⁷¹ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 36

willingness to partake in it, form the precursor to man's enlightenment in 'The Way of Truth,' as he is told that his realm, too, is governed by the never-changing. Hence, Dikē's

privileged [external] perspective provides the philosopher himself with a glimpse of immortality. Seen from this vantage point, the world – referred to in the poem as Being – is conceived as something quite dissociated from birth and becoming, decay and death.⁷²

Change, which is intimately bound up with birth and death, is replaced by a gleaming of immortality, where time stands still and all remains the same.

Earlier we noted that language and thought act as inhibitors of Not-Being, as what is not, is deemed unthinkable and unutterable. From this follows that language and thought are somehow more akin to Being, and in fact, fragment 3 informs us of their complete conflation:

for it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be⁷³

which is even more forcefully translated by Songe-Møller:

for thinking and being are the same⁷⁴

This description of thought as pure Being, unspoilt and inhibitive of Not-Being, is in stark contrast to the thought we encounter later on in the poem, the thought of mortals. Such thought is characterised by the influence of the body and its attendant pleasures. Far from being identical to unchanging, continuous Being, thought now becomes the subject of mixing, as physicality enters the picture:

For just as thought finds at any time the mixture of its erring organs, so does it come to men; for that which thinks is the same, namely, the substance of the limbs, in each and every man; for their thought is that of which there is more in them.⁷⁵

Thus humans misleadingly conceive of thought not as Being and protector against Not-Being, but rather as a sullied notion, informed, as it is by a mixing of organs or limbs.

Nye interprets this rather elusory part of the text as a mortal recognition of the interdependence of body and mind. Writes Nye:

the goddess describes a sophisticated psychology of mixing and motion in the body. Changes in the physical body are what causes thought. Here, there is not separation of soul and body; instead the very stuff of the body thinks. Thinking

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ B 4,5

⁷⁴ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 39

⁷⁵ B 16. Andrea Nye's translation is also relevant here, as it seems similarly suggestive:

"For always there is a mixture in the much wandering limbs
So thought comes to men, for this is what the stuff of the body thinks in men
Each and every of them, for satisfaction is thought" - Nye, *Words of Power*, p. 14

is not done by disembodied minds, instead the thought process is initiated as people's physical situations change. Thought reaches towards satiety or satisfaction, the resolution of conflict and the fulfilment of desire.⁷⁶

On this point of the distinction between body and mind, Nye and Songe-Møller diverge. Nye clearly interprets Parmenides as attributing a mingling of the cognitive and the physical to thought, this being another instance of mistaken belief in the Parmenidean catalogue of false human assumptions.

Songe-Møller, on the other hand, argues that for Parmenides, "there is no juxtaposition of thought and sense."⁷⁷ In support of this claim she quotes from fragment 6, where Dikē describes mortals as follows:

for helplessness guides the wandering thought in their breasts, so that they are borne along stupefied like men deaf and blind. Undiscerning crowds, in whose eyes it is, and is not, the same and not the same, and all things travel in opposite directions!⁷⁸

Songe-Møller reads Parmenides' mention of "thought in their breasts" and "men deaf and blind" as a refutation of a privileging of mind over body. In fact, Songe-Møller asserts, quite the contrary is the case, as Parmenides "explicitly claims that these people think, but do not sense; they are both deaf and blind."⁷⁹ Surely, though, Parmenides' intent here is to amplify the confusion of mere mortals, who will permit for Being and Not-Being to coexist. The description of those who adopt such mistaken belief as "deaf and blind," is simply meant to highlight the inability of these poor delusional wretches to grasp the truth. This is why the previous line of 'On Nature' claims that "mortals knowing naught wander in two minds"⁸⁰ – like children, humans "wander" in a stupor ("stupefied") without awareness ("deaf and blind") of the fact that they are heading in different, or "opposite directions" as the contradictions of their thoughts ("in two minds") render them incapable of comprehending how things really are.

Thought *and* sense are impaired in this human world of understanding, where Being and Not-Being, and the cognitive and the physical, are allowed to blend. Since such an amalgamation of these logically and ontologically separate categories is obviously inferior to the account of Being and thought laid out in 'The Way of Truth,' we can conclude that pure thought, and pure Being are, in fact, opposed to thought-*with*-body and Being-*with*-Not-

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 37

⁷⁸ B 6.5 ff. Songe-Møller's translation is slightly different:

"For helplessness guides the wandering thought in their hearts. They are carried deaf and blind at the same time, amazed, a horde incapable of judgment, by whom to be and not to be are considered the same and yet not the same, for whom the path of all things is backward-turning." – Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ B 6.5

Being found in the latter part of the poem. Hence, a dichotomy, a polarity as Lloyd describes it, is set up between thought and body, and Being and Not-Being. Songe-Møller seems to admit as much when she notes that the passage referring to mortals as “deaf and blind” should be understood ironically, and while she concurs that Parmenides depicts humans as those that “both think and sense, but they do neither thing correctly,”⁸¹ she does not follow this insight through to its inevitable conclusion.

The dulled sensory and cognitive powers ascribed to humans are due to their incapacity to heed the superiority of Being over Not-Being, thought over the body, and the changeless over the changing. Since each former oppositional clearly receives favourable treatment in ‘The Way of the Truth,’ which the goddess tells us, is the only correct way of viewing the world,⁸² we have to infer that Not-Being, the body, and the changing are all deemed inferior, even threatening.

Surprisingly, though, Songe-Møller only recognises this in the case of Not-Being, change, and plurality, while she remains unconvinced with regard to Parmenides’ depreciation of the body:

The principle distinction in Parmenides’ ontology is, in my opinion, the distinction between Being and Not-Being, between unity and plurality, between immutability and change, a distinction which in his case does not involve a clear separation of mind and body.⁸³

While a ‘separation’ may be overstating the case, there are distinct antecedents here for the subsequent development of Cartesianism,⁸⁴ as Parmenides sets up a polarity between thought and physicality, which clearly privileges one over the other, as the preferential treatment of pure thought pronounced as truth indicates a denigration of mortal thought, which is compromised by the physical, and which happens to be mere belief. Thus, I tend to agree with Nye, who notes that “mortal opinion” uses “mixtures to explain the nature of thought

⁸¹ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 37

⁸² We should recall fragment 2, which tells us that of the “two ways of search that can be thought of”: “The first, namely that *It is*, and that it is impossible for anything not to be, is the way of conviction, for truth is its companion.” Similarly, fragment 7 states:

“For this shall never be proved, that the things that are not are; and do thou restrain thy thought from this way of inquiry. Nor let habit force thee to cast a wandering eye upon this devious track, or to turn thither thy resounding ear or thy tongue; but do thou judge the subtle refutation of their discourse uttered by me.” The transition from ‘The Way of Truth’ to ‘The Way of Belief’ runs thusly:

“Here shall I close my trustworthy speech and thought about the truth. Henceforward learn the beliefs of mortals, giving ear to the deceptive ordering of my words.” – B 8.50

⁸³ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 37

⁸⁴ Thus, Parmenides has been called “the first Cartesian philosopher” – see Scolnicov, S. (ed.), *Plato's Parmenides*, University of California Press, Berkeley & London, 2003, p. 4. See also Popper, K., *The World of Parmenides: Essays on the Presocratic Enlightenment*, Petersen, A. F. and Mejer, J. (eds.), Routledge, London, 1998

itself,”⁸⁵ while divine truth tells us about the need for avoidance of such mixing. The fact that the beliefs of mortals are obviously held in lower esteem when compared to the infallible truths of the gods, means that the bodily encroachment upon human thought is misled, dangerous and generally degenerative for thought.

This point gains all the more credence when coupled with our earlier remarks about immortality. Parmenides’ poem invites the philosopher to share in a divine, that is, an immortal, experience, as he and the goddess look upon the world from her spiritual seat in the universe, which is thoroughly removed from all that is human. Hence,

implicit in the poem is the conception that, by means of his reflective activity, his thought, the philosopher partakes of something immortal. This notion is not exclusive to Parmenides, but is in fact fundamental to much of Greek philosophy. It is crucial to Plato’s thought...But it also occurs in Aristotle, who, in the first book of his *Metaphysics*, distinguishes philosophy from all other human activities as a ‘divine science.’⁸⁶

We will see in chapters two and three how Aristotle treats thought, and therefore philosophy, as a way of glimpsing the divine. His controversial elevation of the philosopher’s life as the ideal or best life, is symptomatic of this conflation of thought with immortality.

A life of toil, or of practical activity, has the potential to be cumbersome and unpleasant, but importantly, it leaves little room for the most divine of human activities, thinking.⁸⁷ This is why the philosopher’s life, the life of thought, must be superior to the slave’s, the carpenter’s, and even the politician’s. For the latter, too, has to engage in activities of ruling, which deny him the chance to engage in sustained philosophising. Thus, although a politician’s life is noble and worthy of pursuit, it can only ever come second to the life of the philosopher.⁸⁸

This thesis, which is advanced in Book X of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, boldly pronounces that “the best and most pleasant life is the life of the intellect.”⁸⁹ It is its connection to divinity, though, which affords it such superior status, as the intellect constitutes “the highest that is in us.”⁹⁰ As Aristotle expounds:

So if the intellect is divine compared with man, the life of the intellect must be divine compared with the life of a human being. And we ought not to listen to those who warn us that ‘man should think the thoughts of man’, or ‘mortal

⁸⁵ Nye, *Words of Power*, p. 14

⁸⁶ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 36

⁸⁷ Aristotle notes: “contemplation is both the highest form of activity (since the intellect is the highest thing in us, and the objects that it apprehends are the highest things that can be known), and also it is the most continuous, because we are more capable of continuous contemplation than we are of any practical activity.” – NE 1177a20-24

⁸⁸ NE 1177b5-26

⁸⁹ NE 1178a8

⁹⁰ NE 1177b35

thoughts fit mortal minds', but that we ought, so far as in us lies, to put on immortality, and do all that we can to live in conformity with the highest that is in us; for even if it is small in bulk, in power and preciousness it far excels all the rest.⁹¹

Indeed, intellect's definition as the highest element of a person's make-up, leads Aristotle to conclude that "this is the true self of the individual,"⁹² as reason, our capacity to think, makes us truly human and distinguishable from other animals.⁹³ Noteworthy in the above quote, also, is Aristotle's insistence that while reason shares in the divine, this should not deter us from thoroughly embracing our reasoning capacities, and the life of contemplation. In fact, we should don the mantle of divinity in pursuing reason, thus honouring that which is highest in us.

I maintain that this call for a transgression of the mortality/divinity boundary is similarly advocated by Parmenides. The philosopher, and hence the poem's audience, are left without any doubt, that 'The Way of Truth' is superior to 'The Way of Belief.' In fact, Parmenides' juxtaposition of these two ways functions as a depiction of the unequal positioning of the human and the divine. By including the false assumptions of men in the final part of his poem, Parmenides highlights the erring ways of mortals, as they come into stark relief following Dikē's proclamations of truth. Since human beliefs are direct opposites of divine truths (mixing instead of separation, change instead of immutability, plurality instead of singularity, time instead of absence of time), they serve to emphasise the former's falseness. Hence, the listener is asked to put his faith in the goddess of justice, convinced of the mistakenness of mortal insight, as surely this could not be so obviously contradictory of divine truth?

This, then, answers our question about Parmenides' rationale for including 'The Way of Belief' in the first place, for although it is deemed unreliable and erroneous, its very erroneousness reinforces Dikē's divine pronouncements, thereby urging an adoption of the divine in favour of the mortal.⁹⁴ Far from remaining deaf and blind, disoriented in their stupor of illogical and incompatible beliefs, humans are incited by the goddess's words to shed their confounding inferior assumptions, and to adopt her superior knowledge, which comes from the immortal realm of divinity.

⁹¹ NE 1177b30-1178a

⁹² NE 1178a2

⁹³ In his famous function argument Aristotle argues that human happiness is peculiar to man's function. He eliminates both a "life of nutrition and growth" (shared with plants) and a "sort of sentient life" (shared with animals) and declares "a practical life of the rational part [of the soul]" as truly human – see NE 1097b25-1098a5

⁹⁴ That Parmenides should provide us with the 'Way of Belief' when this is clearly described as erroneous and untrustworthy, has been the subject of much debate. For an overview on this see Palmer, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy*.

In this reading, Parmenides' 'On Nature' forms a precursor to the subsequent, explicit theorising of Plato and Aristotle on reason, which places the deliberative faculty in a person's soul and juxtaposes this with the body.⁹⁵ Since reason shares in the immortal, it has the capacity to comprehend what is changeless and eternal, a notion perhaps best exemplified by Aristotle's appeals to 'universals.'⁹⁶ While these later philosophers seem to clearly consolidate immutability, mind and the divine on the one hand, and mutability, the body and the mortal on the other, Parmenides precipitates such a consolidation with his contrasting ways of truth and belief, and the explications of inferior/superior opposites contained therein.

Songe-Møller views this somewhat differently, as she writes:

Although Plato and Aristotle follow Parmenides in...idealising immortality and the divine dimension, they differ from him in linking this dimension to the spirit and the soul, while leaving the body unambiguously in the realm of the ephemeral.⁹⁷

Plato's and Aristotle's positing of the soul in no way undermines the claim, though, that Parmenides already makes a distinction between mind and body, which clearly prioritises the former over the latter.⁹⁸ The fact that Parmenides articulates such a prioritising rather obscurely and perhaps less rigorously than Plato and Aristotle, does not invalidate his favouring of pure thought, especially as contrasted with the physical. His trepidation of the body is further heightened when it comes to the female body and its assumed links to sexuality. In order to fully appreciate this, we must look at two myths of creation: that of Athens and that of woman.

⁹⁵ This privileging of reason over the body, of the life of the philosopher over the practical life, in turn, forms a precursor to Cartesianism.

⁹⁶ As we will also see in chapter 3, Aristotle further distinguishes in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, between a 'calculative' and a 'scientific' part of the rational soul, with the latter treating of immutable universals via theoretical wisdom – see NE 1141a25-26

⁹⁷ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 37

⁹⁸ Notably the 2nd century C.E. skeptic and preserver of large parts of Parmenides' poem, Sextus Empiricus, reinforces the interpretation I advance above: "Xenophanes' friend Parmenides condemned the reason associated with belief, which has weak opinions, and, since he also gave up trust in the senses, supposed that the reason associated with knowledge, or infallible reason, was the criterion of truth." – *Against the Mathematicians* VII 111, in Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 130. Importantly, the latter is juxtaposed by Parmenides with the former, writes Lloyd: "Parmenides...contrasts reason and sensation, but [he] does much more than this, for Parmenides recommends not only that we should use reason *but also* that we should reject the evidence of the senses." – Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 122

2. A Tale of Two Creations

a) Athens, City of Men

The Athenian creation myth is startlingly blatant in its denigration of woman's role in reproduction. Accordingly, Athena, the goddess of Athens, is not the founder and begetter of Athens, and hence of its citizens, but merely a facilitator for the asexual birth of its people. Woman is thus excluded not only as life-giver, but subsequently also as a full and equal member of the polis. The story of the origin of Athens thereby serves to justify woman as inferior, and to attribute irreconcilable and contradictory positions to woman, who is simultaneously nurse, but not creator; genealogical goddess, yet not actual Athenian founder. To clarify, let us outline this account of Athens' beginnings by drawing upon the mythography of Apollodorus' *Bibliothēke*.⁹⁹

Apollodorus notes that one day Athena approached Hephaistos, the blacksmith of the gods, to make some armour for her. However, Hephaistos,

had been jilted by Aphrodite, so he was gripped by lust for Athena and began to chase after her, but she fled. When he came near her after a great deal of trouble (he was lame), he tried to have sex with her. But, being an abstinent virgin she did not let him, and he spilled his seed on the goddess's leg. Disgusted, she wiped off his semen with some wool and threw it onto the ground...Erichthonios was born.¹⁰⁰

Erichthonios, from whom the Athenians descend, is thus neither the product of human reproduction, nor of woman's body and the process of birthing. In fact, Erichthonios appears to have grown naturally from Hephaistos' seed, which has fertilised the soil below Athena. This is why Erichthonios "was also called the 'earth-born' (autochthon), and they [the Athenians] were proud to call themselves 'the earth-born race'."¹⁰¹ The female responsibility for conception, gestation and delivery of the first child of Athens is thus omitted, and replaced by the sole paternity of Hephaistos and the organic growth of Erichthonios from earth.

As Songe-Møller points out, this leaves us with a clear picture of fatherhood, yet the question of maternity remains ambiguous: is earth the mother of the primal Athenian, or is Athena? The latter certainly has no physical involvement in the creation of Erichthonios, yet her subsequent behaviour seems to resemble that of a mother's:

⁹⁹ Apollodorus and Hyginus, *Apollodorus' Library and Hyginus' Fabulae: Two Handbooks of Greek Mythology*, Smith, R. S. and Trzaskoma, S. (eds.), Hackett, Indianapolis, 2007

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 188, p. 68

¹⁰¹ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 4

*Athena raised him without the other gods' knowing about it and wanted to make him immortal. She put him in a chest and entrusted it to Pandrosos daughter of Cecrops, forbidding her to open the chest.*¹⁰²

Unable to resist opening the chest, Pandrosos' sisters look inside, and find the baby with a snake coiled around him. Apollodorus informs us that the sisters encounter death either by the snake, or by Athena's wrath, which causes them to plunge from the Acropolis in insanity (depending on different variations of the myth). Importantly though,

*Erichthonios was brought up by Athena herself in her sanctuary. After he deposed Amphictyon, he became king of the Athenians, set up the *xoanon* [image] of Athena that is on the Acropolis, and established the Panathenaic Festival.*¹⁰³

And so Erichthonios came to be Athens' ancestor, having been raised by Athena.

But why should Athena do this? There is no biological tie between Athena and this first son of Athens, and yet, she looks after him like a mother would. Earth, then, is not supposed to take Athena's place, but rather to fill the gap left by the absence of sexual reproduction, which is rejected in the face of sexual violence and simultaneous protection of virginity. Motherhood subsequently still falls to Athena, despite the myth's repudiation of her role in creating Erichthonios, and despite its rejection of the physical processes typical of womanhood, that is, the capacity to bear children, involving conception, pregnancy and birth. Female physicality and sexuality is thus denied as it is replaced by the vegetative sprouting of Erichthonios from the earth.

The giver of life in this story is clearly the father, hence,

[t]he myth tells us not only that Athenians have a common origin in the same earth, but also that they are the progeny of a single individual ancestor. It could be said that the myth implies a vision of the human as a plant that puts out runners: the man can perpetuate himself to eternity without needing to mix himself with anything that differs in nature from himself.¹⁰⁴

Woman can be written out of the story of creation, serving simply as nurse after man has recreated himself without recourse to her body, or indeed to the necessary mingling of male and female bodies in the act of sexual reproduction. We can already see, at this stage, how this latent anxiety about 'mixing' of the sexed bodily, anticipates Parmenides' exhortations to avoid such combining at all costs. Before looking at this in greater detail, though, it is

¹⁰² Apollodorus and Hyginus, *Apollodorus' Library and Hyginus' Fabulae*, 189, p. 68. Emphasis added in this quote and the next.

¹⁰³ Ibid. We are told in 1.7 (p. 7) that Amphictyon "became king of Attica after Cranaos." Interestingly, there is a possibility that Amphictyon is also born of the earth: "Some say that he was a son of Deucalion, others that he was an autochthon." – 190, p. 67

¹⁰⁴ Sonje-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 5

important to explore some of the other implications stemming from the Athenian myth of origin.

As already noted, this story of organic inception precludes not only woman's reproductive capacity and her role in giving life, but also acts as explanatory account for the lower status afforded to her in the polis. Songe-Møller thus connects man's desire to be able to procreate without woman, evinced in the myth, to the sameness and permanence this implies for its male citizens. Since the latter stem from the same male ancestor, the lineage, which is solely paternal, is guaranteed to ensure brotherliness and equality *for men*. Women, on the other hand, are politically alienated, inhabitants, yet never equals in the polis, excluded by their apparent superfluity in the history of Athens.

As nurse-maids they may resemble the pseudo-maternity of Athena, but they never come close to the real ancestral heritage and genealogical privilege of the sons of Athens. For only men shall benefit from identifying with each other as true descendants of the woman-less Athenian line, finding comfort in being truly subjects of a socio-political order which is defined by its paternity. As Songe-Møller writes:

Thus offspring represent the faithful continuation of their source. Or to put it another way: the source survives in the offspring without alteration. And in its turn this ensures the identity and continuity of the race and of the city state. But not only that. It also guarantees the basic concept on which Athenian democracy is built; Athenians are like identical brothers and as such they have identical rights.¹⁰⁵

The fact that this affording of rights is built upon the denial of sameness to women, not only serves to strengthen woman's invisibility in the political sphere, but renders her very being impossible, as she simply does not figure in the history of the Athenians, which is, in the truest sense of the word a *history*.¹⁰⁶ Hence, Songe-Møller concludes:

The ultimate consequence of this myth is that it denies the woman her right to existence.¹⁰⁷

Woman's inferiority and irrelevancy is therefore cemented, as she is bereft of even her reproductive powers. This seems somewhat counterintuitive, since one would expect nine months of pregnancy, lactation, and the delivery of the child itself, to amount to a larger share of parental responsibility for women. In fact, feminism has often struggled against women's entrapment caused by an overarching identification of woman with motherhood, as

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 5

¹⁰⁶ Feminists have long drawn attention to male bias in historical accounts, hence the feminist project of *herstory*. For more on this see, for example, Forfreedom, A., *Women out of History: A Herstory Anthology*, Ann Forfreedom, Los Angeles, 1972

¹⁰⁷ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 6

patriarchal societies have assumed parenting to be a naturally female vocation.¹⁰⁸ In the Athenian creation myth, this is reversed, with the coextensiveness of motherhood and womanhood giving way to a diminishing, if not a complete negation, of the mother's role. Thus, what I have referred to as the pseudo-mothering undertaken by Athena in the myth of Athenian origins, consists of nothing more than the raising of Erichthonios *after* he is born. As subsequent nurse and carer, woman has been given her remit for parenthood, while the power to create life, and, concomitantly, the right *to* life granted by genealogical legitimacy, lies firmly in the hands of man.¹⁰⁹

This myth acts as a precedent for following philosophers and scientists, who premise woman's inferiority upon her biological deficiencies, including her reproductive inadequacies. Aristotle viewed women as truncated men, trapped, as they are, in their natures, which are capable of accommodating only substandard reasoning capacities.¹¹⁰ If women are mere aberrations of men, however, how can men, or male infants, stem from women without being similarly defective?

An account of creation which lessens or entirely escapes female influence is needed to circumvent this question, and to allow for the continued subordination of women. Aristotle delivers just such an account via his positing of heat, which he believes, indicates the presence of superior existence. According to this theory, heat is responsible for development, hence a being with high levels of heat develops to a greater extent than a being with lower levels of heat. Women are deemed to have less heat than men – an aspect of female physiology meant to explain women's malformation in the absence of developmental perfection.

Rather than thinking of heat as the type of heat emitted from fire, for example, Aristotle asserts that this is a creative heat, to be found in the sun and in animals. He writes:

For within the seed of everything there is present that which makes the seeds to be fertile, the so-called hot. This is not fire or that sort of capability, but the *pneuma* enclosed within the seed [...] This is why fire generates no animal, and

¹⁰⁸ Amongst others, see Rich, A., *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1986

¹⁰⁹ This is not to diminish motherhood as it pertains to adoptive mothers, but to highlight the point that the Athenian denial of woman's capacity to give life serves as a justification for woman's redundancy. In no way am I implying that this capacity is a prerequisite for motherhood, or indeed, that a genetic link somehow defines the mother-child relationship. I would argue, though, that the Greeks did emphasise such a genetic link from father to son, hence Athena's irrelevancy to creation necessitates woman's general irrelevancy.

¹¹⁰ Aristotle, *The Politics*, Sinclair, T. A. (ed.), Penguin, London, 1992 - revised and represented by Saunders, T. J., 1260a9-13

none is seen to be constituted in things subjected to fire, whether wet things or dry. But the heat of the sun and the heat of animals do generate¹¹¹

Heat as a life-giving force can be found in the seed (or semen), which, in the male's case contains the potential soul. While Aristotle holds both women and men to have semen, he denies that this is the same for both sexes.

The menses, which he rightly associates with reproduction, but inaccurately identifies as the female version of semen, are thus said to be rather ineffective, as

the menses are seed but not pure seed; for it lacks one thing only, the source of the soul. This is why in all animals that produce wind-eggs the egg that is being constituted has the parts of both, but has not the source, and therefore does not become ensouled; for the source is brought in by the male's seed. But once it has acquired such a source, the female's residue becomes a foetus.¹¹²

As we know, the soul contains that most distinctively human part of us, the intellect. Not only is this the highest part of us, but it also allows us to share in the divine. By attributing the soul and therefore the intellect to the male semen, Aristotle reinforces woman's denigration in reproduction. She merely contributes matter, or the bodily raw material required for the foetus, while man controls the true life-giving element, semen-with-soul. Like a carpenter, he becomes the shaper of life, as he forms the foetus out of the matter provided by woman, as if he were carving a wooden bed.¹¹³ He is the active creator, while she remains passive, limited by her inferior semen:

the female *qua* female is the patient, while the male *qua* male is the agent and is that from which comes the beginning of the movement. So that if we take the extremes of each, whereby the one is agent and mover while the other is patient and moved, the one thing being produced is not out of these except in the way that the bed is out of the carpenter and wood or the sphere out of the wax and the form.¹¹⁴

Aristotle explains generation as a developmental process, which nonetheless needs to be initiated from the outside before becoming capable of sustaining itself. This external stimulus is provided by the male alone, as it is he who is movement, generator of life.

His responsibility for guaranteeing the foetus's humanness, even its partial divinity, augments his position as true originator, for "the intellect alone enters additionally from outside and alone is divine."¹¹⁵ We can see, then, that Aristotle echoes the Athenian desire for procreation without women. Being a philosopher, and not a poet, though, Aristotle cannot

¹¹¹ Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1953, 736b35-737a4

¹¹² GA 737a28-32

¹¹³ Chapter two explores Aristotle's positing of matter and form in greater detail.

¹¹⁴ GA 729b12-18

¹¹⁵ GA 736b28

figuratively resort to earth as an alternative vessel for bringing forth offspring, but has to remain true the facts of sexual reproduction. A complete denial of pregnancy and birth is thus out of the question. On the other hand, the 'facts' of reproduction are so distorted, that he succeeds at least in diminishing woman's role, indeed her existence, to such an extent that she is almost totally invisible, or absent. The far-fetched assumptions and illogical arguments employed for this all-but-exclusion of woman must have been transparent even to him, though, as his meticulous observations of the empirical, and his emphasis on clear and straightforward reasoning are not met in this exposition of human reproduction.

Take for example, his designation of menses as semen. Besides the former's obvious likeness to blood, several other indicators should have persuaded him not to conflate these two substances. What of the monthly recurrences of menses in adult women, for example? And why, if indeed they are semen, are they not emitted during intercourse? Aristotle's rather unsatisfactory answers revert to the unsubstantiated and somewhat belaboured claims about heat in animals. Accordingly, women's semen is a primitive version of man's, owing to her inability to infuse and refine this fluid with heat. The process of perfecting and fertilising semen through, essentially, boiling it, results in man's superior semen, and in women's menses.

Aristotle attributes a change in colour, and a reduction in quantity to this process of semen perfection, which relies upon the stipulation of man's greater propensity for heat. Similarly, the question of fluid emission during coitus is answered by allowing for the existence of an alternative female fluid, but stipulating that this only exists in some women, and bizarrely, only in those who are more typically feminine.¹¹⁶

We can see then, that Aristotle is at pains to preserve the father to son lineage, while diminishing, if not fully barring, women as they figure in the continuation of human beings. The exclusivity of male genealogy is further strengthened by a depiction of daughters as degenerative. This serves not only to secure male privilege, but also to explain female physiology as defective, and ultimately, women more generally, as expendable:

For just as the offspring of deformed animals are sometimes deformed and sometimes not, so that of a female is sometimes female and sometimes not – but male. For the female is as it were a male deformed¹¹⁷

Being imperfect, underdeveloped, deformed men, women are deprived of full humanity, full citizenship, and full parenthood. They have as much claim upon origins as the earth does in the myth of Athenian beginnings.

¹¹⁶ For more on this see also Tuana, N., "The Weaker Seed: The Sexist Bias of Reproductive Theory", *Hypatia*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring, 1988, pp. 35-59

¹¹⁷ GA 737a27-28

While Aristotle allows for sexual, rather than mythical vegetative reproduction, he reduces all female aspects of this process to such insignificance, that sexual and vegetative reproduction resemble each other in all but the most negligible of details. The sexual act is a mere formality in two strikingly similar accounts of generation, which both emphasise man's creative powers and woman's superfluity. Hence, we can see how the story of Athens has come to shape subsequent theories of reproduction and womanhood, and has cemented woman's inferior status during the development of philosophy. In the next section, I will outline the famous Pandora myth, as we continue to explore themes of anxiety related to women and sexual reproduction.

b) Pandora, Beguiler of Men

The story of Pandora depicts woman as the cause of all evil, and the bringer of man's miseries. In his *Theogony*, the sixth century B.C.E. poet, Hesiod, outlines this myth of woman's origins by telling us about a woman-free, contented world of gods and men. In the beginning, the children of Cronos (spearheaded by Zeus "the father of gods and men"),¹¹⁸ the descendants of Heaven (the Titans), and mortals, live together in harmony. One day, however, a god, cheeky Prometheus, decides to play a prank on Zeus. At the table, where both humans and gods dine together, he carves up a large ox and dishes out portions for everybody. He cleverly disguises Zeus's share, though, by covering mere bones with the animal's fat. Not surprisingly, this vexes Zeus, who pronounces:

'Son of Iapetus [Prometheus], clever above all! So, sir you have not yet forgotten your cunning arts!' So spake Zeus in anger, whose wisdom is everlasting; and from that time he was always mindful of the trick, and would not give the power of unwearying fire to the Melian race of mortal men who live on earth.¹¹⁹

Zeus's ire causes him to take fire, and therefore the capacity to cook food, away from man. But why inflict this revenge upon men, and not upon Prometheus? Hesiod is not entirely clear on this point, however, it seems that perhaps Zeus blamed men for looking on as he was ridiculed. Hence, "Zeus, whose wisdom is everlasting, saw and failed not to perceive the trick, and in his heart he thought mischief against mortal men which also was to be fulfilled."¹²⁰ Retribution, then, must be executed against both Prometheus and mortals.

Having punished the latter by prohibiting their access to fire, Zeus is once again tricked and angered by Prometheus. This time, fire is returned to humans as "the noble son of Iapetus

¹¹⁸ Hesiod, *Hesiod, Homeric Hymns, Epic Cycle, Homeric*, trans. by Hugh G. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, London, (1914) 1998

¹¹⁹ *Theogony* 559 ff.

¹²⁰ *Theogony* 551 ff.

outwitted him [Zeus] and stole the far-seen gleam of unwearying fire in a hollow fennel stalk."¹²¹ This second jibe at Zeus results in his spirit being "stung...and his dear heart was angered when he saw amongst men the far-seen ray of fire. Forthwith he made an evil thing for men as the price of fire."¹²² This "evil thing," Zeus's ultimate revenge for the disregard shown to him by Prometheus, is foisted onto humans in the shape of a woman. The gods fashion a female figure out of earth, decorate her with jewellery, a veil, garlands, and a crown,¹²³ and present her to both gods and men. This creature of "beautiful evil" entrances all who lay eyes upon her, hence "wonder took hold of the deathless gods and mortal men when they saw that which was sheer guile, not to be withstood by men."¹²⁴

The creation of the gods, Pandora, is the first woman, who by her very existence introduces strife and wickedness to the world. Trapped by her irresistible beauty, men become afflicted by this being, whom Zeus made "to be an evil to mortal men, with a nature to do evil."¹²⁵ With their greed and insatiable appetites, women feed upon men, as they are likened to drones exploiting the toil of worker bees. Thus, women "live amongst mortal men to their great trouble, no helpmeets in hateful poverty, but only in wealth."¹²⁶

Even those who try to avoid the iniquities spawned by woman, cannot escape Zeus's punishment. For men who do not marry face another instantiation of malice, as they are given

a second evil to be the price for the good they had: whoever avoids marriage and the sorrows that women cause, and will not wed, reaches deadly old age without anyone to tend his years, and though he at least has no lack of livelihood while he lives, yet, when he is dead, his kinsfolk divide his possessions amongst them.¹²⁷

Although a bachelor can shun the economic ruin induced by woman, old age creeps up on him, leaving him helpless and vulnerable, while his property is dissolved after he dies. He thus has to pay for the freedom of a woman-less life in his later years, and in death. The ubiquity of woman's evil is therefore complete and inevitable.

Even the man who believes that he has married a better specimen of womanhood, embarks upon a constant battle of good and evil:

¹²¹ *Theogony* 564 ff.

¹²² *Theogony* 570 ff.

¹²³ This adornment is given to her by Aphrodite, herself a problematic female figure in Hesiod's poetry. For an analysis of the connections between Pandora and Aphrodite, see Marquardt, P. A., "Hesiod's Ambiguous View of Woman", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 77, No. 4, Oct. 1982, pp. 283-291

¹²⁴ *Theogony* 585 ff.

¹²⁵ *Theogony* 600 ff.

¹²⁶ *Theogony* 593 ff.

¹²⁷ *Theogony* 610

as for the man who chooses the lot of marriage and takes a good wife suited to his mind, evil continually contends with good.¹²⁸

It seems, then, that woman is entrapped by her spite, being fully defined by her evilness. Even if she were to appear good and suited to a particular husband, she would always struggle against her innate wickedness as this constitutes her very nature. As such, she is evil incarnate, a construction of the gods to avenge Zeus. Retribution for the transgressions of Prometheus is thus visited upon mortals in the most severe manner as they become separated from the gods and suffering enters their world in the guise of woman. Prometheus, too, is punished as even he cannot escape the wrath of Zeus, being “bound with inextricable bonds” and “cruel chains.” After driving “a shaft through his middle,” Zeus inflicts “a long-winged eagle”¹²⁹ on Prometheus, who feasts upon his continually regenerating liver. And so, Zeus exercises his thoughts of ill-will both against Prometheus and man.

There are several significant aspects to this account of woman’s creation. Not only is she portrayed as the originator of man’s woes, but she also acts as destroyer of a utopian, sexless era. The only human sex, before Pandora’s existence, is man, who therefore inhabits humanness, rather than a sexed nature. With the introduction of woman, though, the idea of sex itself is produced, as woman serves as marker of sexual difference. Aware of this new difference, evinced by woman’s body and her sexuality, man now has to assert his prior position as truly human, affording her mere second place. As Songe-Møller notes:

it is only after the new race has been named as ‘woman’ (gynē) that he [Hesiod] begins to refer to the original humans (anthrōpoi) as ‘men’ (andres)[...] henceforth it is the men who represent mankind, whereas women merely represent their own sex.¹³⁰

The asexual bliss of a realm of pre-female existence is shattered, however, as the second sex comes fully equipped with the manipulations of the seductive temptress. Men’s powers to resist her are rendered ineffective, as she ensnares them like a spider in her web. Not only does this mean slavish drudgery for man, but it severs his link to immortality. No longer do humans and gods eat at the same table, sharing their lives as peaceful companions, nor do men experience death as a simple slipping away in one’s sleep.¹³¹

Woman’s creation brings with it the true horrors of mortality, as it is she who invokes the spectres of death, illness and aging. Hence, Hesiod notes of Pandora:

¹²⁸ *Theogony* 611

¹²⁹ *Theogony* 521ff. Eventually this eagle is slain by Heracles.

¹³⁰ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 9

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28

from her is the race of women and female kind: of her is the deadly [or death-bringing] race and tribe of women who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble¹³²

Woman as sexed being introduces otherness, which is dangerous in its overpowering attractiveness, but also in the necessary dependency it institutes. The asexual reproduction of a sex-less realm is henceforth replaced by sexual procreation, which diminishes man's self-sufficiency, or *autarkeia*.¹³³

Pandora's formation out of earth resembles the vegetative account of reproduction found in the Athenian creation myth. Once the gods have given woman to man, though, it is impossible to return to this organic generation of beings. Not only that, but the begetting of offspring is itself informed by partaking in otherness, and by the possibility of producing that which is other. Just as the story of the beginnings of Athens ensures the sameness of men, so the pre-female account of man's existence in Hesiod's *Theogony*, is characterised by that very sameness. Difference, otherness, plurality, and importantly change, are all introduced by woman. She is the other sex; she gives rise to the demands of sexual reproduction involving her otherness; she represents another "race" of human where before there was one; and she brings the evils of age and illness, which ultimately result in death.

Whereas the story of Athens remains gleefully unaffected by these ills of womanhood, protected by its plant-like generation of Erichthonios, Hesiod allows for the inevitability of sexual reproduction. Hence, his poem captures the tragedy of man's downfall at the hands of woman, as man loses his sex-less innocence, and becomes ravaged by the evils she realises. Woman's inception thus undoes the harmonious existence of man as self-sufficient being who is united in his sameness to all other humans, and who suffers not from toil, and the effects of mortality.

We can read the myth of the origins of Athens, Pandora's myth, and Aristotle's theory of generation as varying expressions of the same desire to deny woman, albeit with different gradations between complete denial and affordance of some diminished procreative role. In the Athenian myth woman is written out of the story altogether; in Hesiod's *Theogony*, the sex-less male world of Athenian myth is adopted as man's ideal, only to be destroyed by woman's appearance; and in Aristotle's theorising, woman is similarly grudgingly accepted as a necessary part of human generation, though this part is inferior and almost negligible. It

¹³² *Theogony* 585 ff.

¹³³ duBois also notes the following verse from Euripides' *Medea*, where "Jason expresses a desire to return to masculine *autarkeia*, self-sufficiency, recorded long before in Hesiod's myth of the time before Pandora's creation...:

It would have been better far for men [brotous]

To have got their children in some other way, and women

Not to have existed. Then life would have been good." - duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, p. 114

remains for us to see, how Parmenides fits into this gradation of male thinkers' denial of sexual production, female physicality, and woman more generally.

3. Parmenides & Gendered (Im)Mutability

Earlier, I showed that Parmenides constructs opposites, such as mind/body, Being/Not-Being, singularity/plurality, immutability/change, in terms of axiological polarity. We saw that 'On Nature' warns against any mingling of such properly separated categories, as the goddess implores us to heed her divine words in favour of the mistaken opinions of mortals. Having explored myths relating the creation of woman and Athens respectively above, it should be clear why Parmenides ties his anxiety of the immutable becoming infected by the mutable specifically to the female body, and the sexuality and human reproduction she represents. It is she who brings change in its most terrifying forms: in birth and in death. Our creation myths treat of a woman-less paradise without change, that is, without woman and without human procreation.

Hesiod tells us explicitly, however, that woman's very existence introduces otherness, the plurality Parmenides urges us to avoid. Her bodily being means that man is no longer the same with everybody, and it is her (physical) otherness, her difference which attracts him and simultaneously traps him. He is no longer whole, complete, equal, all-encompassing, as Parmenides' sphere of Being is, but he is dependent on her (for reproduction, and presumably sexually, owing to her irresistibility), this new creature who is pure evil. Not only has she introduced the worst possible kind of change through birth and death, but she has completely destroyed the permanence of utopian coexistence with the gods. Man's link to immortality, to the immutable, is forever severed as he toils and lives in slavery to her.

Coupled with these insights from the myths of creation, we can therefore read Parmenides' 'On Nature' as a desire to reverse what Hesiod had already allowed in *Theogony*, the introduction of woman and change. Far from accepting this dreaded fate, Parmenides wants to return man to the self-sufficient, change-less, sex-less humanness of the ideal shared realm of gods and men. Hence, Parmenides is the most efficient and thorough-going thinker in our gradation of the denial of woman, as he calls for an about-face, with man turning his back upon woman, rejecting her very existence. We saw that the myth of Athenian beginnings also repudiates female presence, simply by omitting Athena's procreative powers and by replacing them with vegetative processes of generation. In this story, though, the wicked ways of womanhood are not explicitly addressed, and woman is denied by her non-appearance in *history*. The effects of this in terms of woman's lack of genealogical origin,

her subservient position in the polis, and her complete, existential superfluity have already been noted.

Woman's inferiority is also achieved by Hesiod's Pandora myth, in fact, she is portrayed as inherently evil and dangerous. Man's natural instinct must therefore be to avoid her, but even this is futile, as woman manages to inflict not only a life of never-ending work, but an existence marked by illness, aging and death on man. Hesiod, then, readily acknowledges the fateful consequences of a world containing women. As a myth on woman's origin, it purposefully describes the woes instituted by the female creation, and contrasts this to the woman-less bliss prior to Zeus's revenge.

Parmenides, writing in the fifth century B.C.E., would have been well aware of Hesiod's depiction of women, hence, he tries to undo the terrors associated with her, not by questioning them or undermining them, but rather by reinforcing them and asking men to reject women altogether. Hesiod's acceptance of female sexuality and human reproduction is repudiated, as Parmenides, unbelievably, tries to deny it, and thereby *her*, via a trick of logic involving the principle of non-contradiction. Hence, we are not left in the dark as to the effects of woman's existence, as the Athenian creation myth would have it, nor are we to assume that woman's sexuality and her attendant evils are inevitable, simply 'the way it is.' Parmenides goes beyond both stories of origins, informing us of the wanton and threatening implications of womanhood, while simultaneously asking us to pay heed to the goddess of justice, whose truth of the impossibility of woman must be superior to the questionable beliefs of mortals. Indeed, woman as change is an impossibility, as change, that which both is and is not, is unthinkable, and therefore cannot exist. Gendered (im)mutability, woman as change, is thus utterly denied.

Parmenides does not instantiate this denial by means of woman's omission, or by a detailed account of her characteristics, but by a juxtaposition of 'The Way of Truth' with 'The Way of Belief.' The latter serves as a highlighting of woman's ills, as Parmenides' cosmology contains thought-infecting physicality, and the trappings of human reproduction more generally. This latter part of Parmenides' poem serves to inform us of the ills of a sexed world containing women, hence it captures the evilness of Hesiod's Pandora. Fragment 12, for example, speaks of the goddess standing in the centre of the universal rings of fire and night:

In the midst of these circles is the divinity that directs the course of all things;
for she is the beginner of all painful birth and all begetting, driving the female to
the embrace of the male, and the male to that of the female.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ B 12

Songe-Møller translates this more powerfully:

In the middle of these is the goddess who governs all things. For everywhere she is the beginner of union and of abhorrent birth, sending the female to unite with the male and again to the contrary the male with the female.¹³⁵

Since only women are able to give birth, it should be obvious that Parmenides is charging women in this inferior world of mere mortals with the same ruination of man depicted in Hesiod's *Theogony*. With birth comes the mortal life, aging, and eventually death. Again, woman is the death-bringer of the human realm, subjected, as it is, to woman's wiles and the sexual reproduction she brings with her.

'The Way of Truth,' by contrast, suffers not from such afflictions, as it constitutes eternity and immutability, as here, "coming into being and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away."¹³⁶ The sphere that is Being, protected against change and attendant mortality of Not-Being, "is the same, and it rests in the self-same place, abiding in itself."¹³⁷ There is no need here of woman and man mixing, of a mingling of "limbs" to ensure the continuation of the species, as everything that is simply is. Parmenides thus manages to omit woman in 'The Way of Truth' by removing the unfortunate biological need for her. In a world where everything is, has been, and will continue to be the same, there is no requirement for perpetuation. This exists by virtue of the existence of what is, hence the irrelevance also of time.

This, then, is a world which does not rely upon sexual reproduction, hence "abhorrent birth" can be avoided, as can concomitant death. As Songe-Møller also points out:

The word Parmenides uses for the first characteristic of Being is *agenēton*. This is translated here as 'ungenerated' but it can also mean 'not born'. It is no coincidence that he starts with this: 'Being ungenerated is also imperishable', or, as it might also be rendered, 'Being unborn is also without death.'¹³⁸

Parmenides' approach seems straight-forward enough: no woman, no sexual reproduction, no birth, no death. He precludes woman not by accepting sexual reproduction as the spite of Zeus, nor by replacing it with vegetative generation, but by erasing the necessity of origination itself. Parmenides' poem, then, is not a tale of origins, but a call to persuade us of the very uselessness of such origins. All change must be rejected, as ultimately it means death for us, while the immutable must be protected and guarded. And since change is coextensive with womanhood, as it is she who gives birth, woman, too, must be denied. This is not to imply that Parmenides thought he could undo biology or obliterate womankind, but

¹³⁵ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 48

¹³⁶ B 8.28

¹³⁷ B 8.29

¹³⁸ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*, p. 41

rather that a denial of woman constitutes the ideal world for man, regardless of whether this is realisable or not.

Fragment 17's mention of a segregation of boys to the right and girls to the left is perhaps a way in which Parmenides believed he could bring man closer to 'The Way of Truth.'¹³⁹

Indeed, gender segregation often functions as a method for excluding women, rendering them invisible, thereby enacting such a denial of their being. Perhaps, if we had access to the missing lines of Parmenides' poem, we would be informed of other ways of diminishing woman's presence, and the effects of her existence. What we can tell, though, from the fragments that we do have, is that the woman-infected sexual realm of change is inferior to the male, uniform, asexual realm of permanence and immortality, and as such, should be escaped. By transgressing the mortal/divine dichotomy, man can return to his original place by the gods, where everything is the same, permanent and changeless.

4. Gendered (Im)Mutability & Difference

Having thus outlined a prominent philosophical theory of mutability and immutability, we have seen how woman has become identified with change through the female body and her sexuality in Parmenides' 'On Nature.' Since Parmenides intends for his audience to heed 'The Way of Truth,' he argues against change, and hence against woman. On the other hand, even philosophers who are clearly influenced by 'On Nature,' ascribe changelessness to woman. As we saw, Aristotle's reproductive theory views woman as passive, while man is movement, instigator of change. It seems then, that woman is or is not change, depending on how she is suited to the particular point the male philosopher is trying to make.

This frequently takes place by analogy of opposites, which, although critiqued in certain instances and eventually reordered in a hierarchical axiological schema, nonetheless still play a role even in Aristotle's thought.¹⁴⁰ Significantly though, Aristotle treats these inconsistently as his theorising falls victim to a contrived connection between inferior oppositionals and womanhood, which must be maintained at all cost. As Lloyd explains:

The pair dry and wet occupies...a rather ambivalent position in Aristotle's system...On the one hand he notices a connection between humidity and life, and between dryness and death...Yet this does not prevent him from suggesting

¹³⁹ Nye interprets this fragment as a prohibition against the mixing of women and men. However, it has also been interpreted as an assertion for boys being conceived in the right of the womb, and girls on the left. See Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 140; and Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 50

¹⁴⁰ Noting the Aristotle debunked the belief in a correlation between right and left and the sex of a child through knowledge gained from anatomical dissections, Lloyd writes: "Yet if his use of the decisive evidence of dissections in this context clearly marks an important advance on previous theorists, it is far from being the case that Aristotle himself was free from preconceptions on the subject of right and left and other opposites." - Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 51

or implying, in other contexts, that the wet is the inferior, privative term, when he correlates it with female, left and cold.¹⁴¹

It is thus, that women often find themselves occupying contradictory positions in relation to change, even within the thought of the same philosopher. Rather than encountering a coherent and thorough-going identification of woman with change, or with woman as permanence, gendered (im)mutability seems to fluctuate within the canon, and within philosophical theories. The common thread, though, is that woman, through her body, her sexuality, or otherwise, is identified as different. This difference means that she is portrayed as static, unchanging, when the male is engaged and transforming; while vice versa, she is unsettlingly unstable, changing and transient, while man provides structure and reliability through permanence.

The misogyny and obvious anxiety surrounding the female sexed body, harboured by the earliest Greek philosophers and poets, becomes manifest in the development of hierarchical theorising. We see the beginnings of this in Parmenides, as 'The Way of Truth' privileges certain categories over others to be found in 'The Way of Belief.' Being/Not-Being, Mind/Body, Oneness/Plurality, Asexuality/Sexuality, Man/Woman – the former of each of these pairs of opposites is clearly preferred in Dikē's tale of two worlds, the divine and the mortal. Indeed, these, too, are axiological polar opposites as man desires to become better, god-like. That indeed he can, and should believe in such a deifying, is evinced by Parmenides' exhortations to follow the eternal knowledge of 'The Way of Truth,' and by Aristotle's assertion that we should "put on immortality." Pure thought, unaffected by the body, enables us to tap into this divine realm, hence in Aristotle's theorising the life of the philosopher becomes exalted.

While Parmenides sets a precedent in the explicit theorising of polar opposites, this axiological privileging becomes fully integrated and consolidated in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Note the prioritising of form over matter and male over female in the below:

the proximate moving cause (in which is present the definition and the form) is better and more divine in its nature than the matter; and it is better that the more excellent be separated from the worse. Because of this the male is separated from the female wherever possible and as far as possible¹⁴²

Again, segregation is advised by Aristotle, as that which is inferior should remain separate from that which is superior. This is reminiscent of Parmenides' placement of girls to the left, and boys to the right, and of his calls to avoid mixing at all costs. Notably, Aristotle moves beyond early Greek categorisations of beings and natural phenomena by establishing his

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 62

¹⁴² GA 732a2-6

hierarchical “chain of being.” This means that the world is no longer solely understood in terms of two mutually exclusive, different types, but rather that there are degrees of difference between existents.

No doubt this more nuanced approach to difference is due to advances in philosophical theorising, which undermined simple classification into pairs. For instance, in logic, Aristotle recognised that a choice between two statements, presented as absolutes, is misleading in that it might exclude other alternatives, or ‘intermediates.’ Hence, as Lloyd points out, “we may...give him credit for drawing attention to the common tendency to state a problem in terms of a choice between opposite extreme alternatives (as we say in terms of black and white) and for showing how misleading the statement of a problem in these terms may be.”¹⁴³ Also, as we will see in the next chapter, his exposition of matter and form allowed for a theory of change wherein two predicates could be articulated for the same subject. This question – how can the same thing be both hot and cold, solid and liquid, empty and full? – troubled thinkers, particularly in the wake of Parmenides’ poem, which left one with an absolute choice between change and immutability, singularity and plurality, Being and Not-Being, and so on.

Aristotle’s ‘solution’ to the problem posed by Parmenides’ speculative thought was no small feat, as ‘On Nature’ caused such theoretical perplexity, that “no one who wrote could avoid confronting his [Parmenides’] legacy, the extent to which his arguments seemed to make any further speculations into metaphysics not just difficult or discomforting but literally impossible.”¹⁴⁴ While subsequent philosophers tried to free themselves of incommensurable immutability, they did little by way of assuaging womanlessness. Thus, philosophers like Plato and Aristotle thought of new theories to accommodate mutability in a permanent world, but continued to resist woman’s complete and equal existence. This is particularly true for Aristotle, who repudiated woman’s humanity by attributing inferior reasoning capacities to her.¹⁴⁵ In Aristotle’s hierarchical ordering of beings, woman assumes the role of permanent inferior, rigidly ensconced in her subordination by ‘nature.’

DuBois traces this establishment of the “great chain of being” to the particular historical setting of Plato’s and Aristotle’s theorising, and explains that difference took on an altered form for thinkers of the fourth century B.C.E., owing largely to the insecurities spawned by the Peloponnesian War. Writes duBois:

¹⁴³ Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 169

¹⁴⁴ Bernick, S. E., “The Logic of the Development of Feminism; or, Is MacKinnon to Feminism as Parmenides Is to Greek Philosophy?”, *Hypatia*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Winter 1992, pp. 1-15, p. 6

¹⁴⁵ Plato is sometimes depicted as woman-friendly, or even feminist, however this is rejected by several feminist analyses. See, for example, Tuana, *Woman and the History of Philosophy* and Warren (ed.), *An Unconventional History of Western Philosophy*.

The Peloponnesian War clearly aggravated the social tensions within Athens. The oligarchic revolution of 411 revealed the difficulty citizens were having in sustaining a myth of democracy in which all participated equally for the city's good. Slaves, extreme oligarchs, democrats, even women were exposed as separate entities within the polis...The mode of speculation concerning difference, reasoning through polarity and analogy, no longer described the divisions and breaks which had erupted within.¹⁴⁶

Unlike the Persian war, this war seemed to be fought by like against like, and although

Greeks had fought among themselves before, this was a war of a new form...The Greek himself had become an other, and more importantly, the other could no longer be recognised by mere appearance.¹⁴⁷

No longer was the division between Greeks and barbarians, but differences *within* the polis came to light, as clear identifications between polar opposites could no longer be made.

Thus,

The Peloponnesian War revealed the inability of the old system of oppositions to guarantee internal stability. If, in the social and economic situation, the enemy was discovered within, a new rationalisation of internal political control was necessary; the theory of natural hierarchy is that rationalisation.¹⁴⁸

Hence, difference is now a matter of degrees, as the axiological opposition becomes an axiological chain of being.

Rather than setting existents up as superior and inferior, there are now degrees of superiority and inferiority, which correspond directly to degrees of difference from the standard human, the Greek male citizen. Thus, he occupies the top of the hierarchy, followed by woman, then by the child, and finally, by the slave.¹⁴⁹ Given this continuation of axiological designation, albeit in the new form of gradations, we find an attendant continuation of the familiar themes of anxiety surrounding women's bodies and their role in reproduction. In turn, this necessitates a diminishing of woman's life-giving capacity, as male self-sufficiency, *autarkeia*, is still pursued, albeit within the new context of divine reason.¹⁵⁰

What does this mean for the way women and change are theorised in philosophy? It means that women are still assigned negative value, and then deemed paradigmatic of mutability/immutability, as the case may be, as mutability/immutability is still gendered. Despite a more nuanced understanding of change, she remains problematic through her difference, whether by degree or by absolute opposition, hence the contentiousness of accounts of change, which are rooted in the recurring ancient motifs of man's self-

¹⁴⁶ duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, p. 121

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 114

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 145

¹⁴⁹ Pol. 1260a9; duBois also identifies the "growing dependence on slavery" as an important factor in the establishment of hierarchical theories – see p. 131

¹⁵⁰ See duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, p. 151

sufficiency, his desire to live in a woman-less, sex-less world, and his fear of her power to ensnare him with her inherent otherness.

Since this contentiousness can be traced to philosophy's very inception, and since women were, by and large, written out of the philosophical cannon, thereby being effectively silenced and denied the chance to reply to gendered (im)mutability, I wish to establish such a response in this thesis, by exploring the topic from a feminist perspective. I am of course indebted to the work of feminist philosophers who have come to tackle many of the egregious assumptions and outgrowths of the ancient ideas explored above, and will make use of some of their wisdoms in constructing a feminist exposition of change. To this end, I will present a vision of selfhood premised upon feminist insights, and the insights of pragmatist philosopher John Dewey.

Since Dewey is best understood within an elucidation of Aristotle's philosophy, though, the following two chapters will outline both thinkers' affinities and distinctions. Such a comparative analysis will allow us to delve deeper into the ontological issues raised in this chapter, and to further problematise Aristotle's positing of a hierarchical ordering of beings in accordance 'with nature.' Our preceding discussion about gendered (im)mutability should be kept in mind throughout, though. For, as Dewey recognises, Aristotle privileges immutability over mutability in many regards, and while Dewey attributes this to a general, human fear of change and unpredictability, the gendered dimension of this is important from our point of view. Let us, then, take a closer look at the metaphysical theories of change proffered by Aristotle and John Dewey.

Chapter 2. Change in Dewey's and Aristotle's Metaphysics

Some things exist by nature, others are due to other causes. Natural objects include animals and their parts, plants and simple bodies like earth, fire, air, and water; at any rate, we do say that these kinds of things exist naturally. The obvious difference between all these things and things which are not natural is that each of the natural ones contains within itself a source of change and of stability, in respect of either movement or increase and decrease or alteration.

- Aristotle, *Physics*

The previous chapter established the need for a feminist elucidation of change, as woman in her relationship to change has been treated problematically – a fact which we have traced to philosophy's very inception. Following on from this conclusion, I will embark upon an exploration of change, which will take up the remainder of this thesis. My analysis will draw particularly from feminist theory and pragmatism, and will lead to a depiction of selfhood which endows selves with agency, and hence the capacity to effect change as morally responsible beings. Before I can outline this feminist-pragmatist self, however, I think it is important to ascertain what kind of world this self exists in. This is pertinent, because a world which does not allow for mutability must also preclude mutable beings, and the ability of beings to bring about change. We must therefore clarify whether the world is permanent, stable, precarious or mutable, as this will give us a basis from which to theorise the self as it exists in the world. This chapter will therefore deepen some of the ontological questions raised in the previous chapter, as the metaphysics of change takes centre-stage. We will also continue our investigation of Aristotle's thought, and will examine how his positing of matter and form overcomes the difficulties raised by Parmenides' theorising of opposites with its juxtaposition of mutability with immutability, Being with Not-Being, and singularity with plurality.¹⁵¹

While we will return to the development of a reconfiguration of opposites into a hierarchical ordering of existents, we will see how Aristotle underpinned this with an attribution of essences to species, thereby fixing beings firmly in the "great chain of being," and limiting their capacity to change outside of preset confines of transformation according to 'nature.' Again, early Greek antecedents will be pertinent here, as the axiological privileging of

¹⁵¹ For instance, Lloyd notes that the problems posed by these apparently incommensurable opposites posed significant obstacles for subsequent thinkers. For an overview of the rather unsatisfactory attempts to deal with these prior to the theories of Plato and Aristotle, see Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, especially pp. 86 - 148

opposites continues to play a role in Aristotle's ontology. This will be contrasted with the metaphysical theorising of pragmatist philosopher, John Dewey. Dewey rejects the favourable treatment of one category or contrary over another, indeed, he frequently criticises the canon's extensive development of philosophical 'dualisms.' Aristotle's chain of being is critiqued by Dewey, as is his theory of change, which appears to diminish the possibility of the novel and the mutable. We must remember that Dewey was writing over two thousand years after Aristotle, though, and in light of a theory, advanced by Charles Darwin, which questioned the permanence and mutability of species themselves. The historicity of philosophy is thus probed in this chapter, as heuristic complexities play a role in our appraisal of theories from vastly different ages and settings.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: firstly, to elucidate the world selves exist in with respect to change; and secondly, to determine the affinities between Dewey's thought and Aristotle's. As we will see, Dewey is best understood in his relationship to Aristotle, for despite his often overly critical stance toward the Stagirite, there are distinct Aristotelian elements in Dewey's interpretation of the natural world and its existents. Similarities between both thinkers extend also to their respective accounts of the moral self, a topic to be broached in chapter three. Since Dewey's vision of selfhood is detrimental to my presentation of a feminist-pragmatist self, and since the former is indebted to Aristotle's philosophy, it follows that a comparative analysis of the Deweyan and Aristotelian visions of self, and the world it inhabits, is in order. Thus, taken together, the present chapter and the next, constitute a contrasting of Dewey's and Aristotle's philosophies, as change is explored within the context of both thinkers' expositions of selfhood and metaphysics.

Following Raymond Boisvert, I will explicate the likeness between these two philosophers in terms of their categorisation as friends of *Bios*. Thus, in "Heteronomous Freedom,"¹⁵² Raymond Boisvert notes that philosophers can be distinguished either as friends of *Mathema*, or as friends of *Bios*. Friends of *Mathema* favour the certain and calculable, and can count among their members Kant, Pythagoras and Quine; while friends of *Bios* are inclined toward contingency and the relational, prominent exemplars being Dewey, Bergson and Whitehead. By placing Dewey next to the Ur-friend of *Bios*, Aristotle, it will become apparent not only how closely related these two thinkers are, but also what particular features mark them as philosophers of *Bios*.

While such a comparative undertaking could of course form the better part of one, or indeed several theses, I must limit our discussion to those aspects which are most relevant in the context of the present inquiry. Since this is primarily concerned with change, and since

¹⁵² Boisvert, "Heteronomous Freedom", p. 132

“friends of Bios...see change and interdependence as basic to any ontology of existence,”¹⁵³ we must explore change as it figures in Dewey's and Aristotle's metaphysics before moving on to an analysis of change of the self in the following chapter. By no means will this be an exhaustive account of the interconnections residing in these two philosophies of *biophilia*, nor even of the concept of change within said philosophies.¹⁵⁴ We will, however, gain a clearer picture of Dewey's and Aristotle's respective accounts of the world, which, in turn, will allow us to understand their expositions of the moral self. While not wishing to diminish the very real differences that do exist between both thinkers, we will see that neither Dewey's ontology, nor his vision of selfhood, can be understood in isolation from Aristotle's influences.

1. Dewey and Aristotle – Friends or Foes?

Several commentators have written about Dewey's often contentious relationship with Aristotle. Joseph Ratner, for example, notes that “Dewey, in his criticism of Greek philosophy, has always been unduly partial toward Plato and unnecessarily harsh toward Aristotle.”¹⁵⁵ It is true that Aristotle seems to bear the brunt of Dewey's somewhat disgruntled appraisal of the philosophical tradition. Dewey sometimes employs a rhetorical style which leaves one with the impression that there is little merit in much of his intellectual forerunners' work, and that the original sins of philosophy – created by the Greeks, most notably by Aristotle – have continued to contribute to a fundamental skewing of philosophical thought.¹⁵⁶ Despite the fact that Dewey has “never...written specifically on the history of philosophy...he has rarely set forth his own position save in detailed and lengthy critical opposition to the view and methods of his numerous predecessors.”¹⁵⁷

This kind of critical self-positioning within the annals of philosophical history is not necessarily counterproductive, particularly if we keep in mind Dewey's insistence on philosophy as a kind of “criticism of criticisms.”¹⁵⁸ Indeed, we certainly should not condemn

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 132. Following Boisvert and Dewey, I shall treat the terms “metaphysics” and “ontology” interchangeably.

¹⁵⁴ For an in-depth study of Aristotelianism in Dewey's metaphysics, see Boisvert, R. D., *Dewey's Metaphysics*, Fordham University Press, New York, 1988. Change plays an important role in Boisvert's analysis.

¹⁵⁵ Ratner, J. (ed.), *Intelligence in The Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy*, Random House, Inc., New York, 1939, p. 210

¹⁵⁶ Dewey actually uses the word ‘sin’ in his critique of Aristotle's philosophy – see Dewey, J., “Intelligence and Morals” in *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1910, p.50. We will return to this later on in the chapter.

¹⁵⁷ Randall Jr., J. H., “Dewey's Interpretation of the History of Philosophy” in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, Schilpp, P. A. (ed.), Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1951, p. 80

¹⁵⁸ See Introduction.

Dewey's willingness to defy academic conservatism and to reappraise past figures, whose enormous stature possibly risks idolisation.

On the other hand, Dewey's methodology is rather inappropriate at times, and even lacking in scholarly rigour and precision. Thus, when speaking of a particular aspect of Plato's or Aristotle's thought, he tends to gloss over the differences between these and other thinkers, and simply lumps them in together under the generic heading of 'the Greeks.'¹⁵⁹ It is not surprising, then, that Walter Veazie, a student of Dewey's, detects a fundamental chasm between Dewey the teacher, whose fastidiousness is expressed by verbatim recitations of philosophic work, and Dewey the preacher.¹⁶⁰ It is perhaps only in light of this stark contrast between the two Deweys, that we can begin to comprehend the more sloppy historical excursions, "for which [Dewey himself] would have flattened a student."¹⁶¹

While a division of Dewey into incommensurable teacher and preacher may allow us to turn a blind eye to Dewey's treatment of 'the Greeks,' it still does not explain his unfavourable position on Aristotle. Hence, philosophers and philosophical historians have been forced to fill in the gaps of an otherwise ambivalent, and even positive appraisal of ancient thought. For some, Dewey simply exaggerates Aristotle's shortcomings in order to further his own agenda, or he does not fully grasp Aristotle. Designating the "biological setting of experience" as common ground between Dewey and Aristotle, John Anton maintains that "Dewey did not fully see this side of Aristotle,"¹⁶² and "not being a trained historian of philosophy, he missed some of the deeper subtleties in the broader view of Greek intelligence."¹⁶³ Such misinterpretation is said to have taken place in conjunction with a tendency to exaggerate, thus "while criticising the Greeks from that his position *he overstated his case.*"¹⁶⁴

Alternatively, it has been asserted that Dewey's tension with Aristotle lies precisely in his recognition of philosophical affinity. For example, Tiles notes that the Aristotelianism of Dewey's colleague, F. J. E. Woodbridge, "left a pronounced mark on Dewey's thinking,

¹⁵⁹ Also, Anderson points out: "To Dewey, "Greek philosophy" is, practically speaking, synonymous with "Athenian philosophy"; this in itself is a significant equation." – Anderson, "Dewey's Experiment with Greek Philosophy", p. 87, n.2

¹⁶⁰ The account runs as follows: "On one occasion a member of the faculty was outlining to us an article subsequently published. He summed up a paragraph of the "Transcendental Dialectic" of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Dewey: "Wait a minute. It's been 25 years since I have seen the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but if I remember rightly the passage runs thusly", and Dewey quoted the paragraph verbatim. No, Dewey the preacher and Dewey the teacher were two persons though the same substance" – Veazie, "John Dewey and the Revival of Greek Philosophy", p. 3

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Anton, "John Dewey and Ancient Philosophies", p. 497

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 480

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 477

which may explain why Dewey seems at times over-eager to distance himself from Aristotle.”¹⁶⁵

It is indeed true, that Dewey experienced several Aristotelian influences over the years. In fact, George Sylvester Morris, Dewey's teacher at Johns Hopkins, had studied with a prominent Aristotelian scholar in Berlin, Friedrich Adolph Trendelenburg. Trendelenburg tried to synthesise Hegelianism with Aristotelianism. This, coupled with his interest in Darwin, led to a kind of naturalism, or “a Hegelianism without the dialectic of Spirit.”¹⁶⁶ While Morris was a self-proclaimed idealist and champion of Hegel, and even though he dropped many of Trendelenburg's Aristotelian insights, it is likely that his Hegelian-Aristotelian training had an effect on the young Dewey.

As we do not want to fall prey to the charge of gross generalisation levelled earlier against Dewey, it may be useful at this stage, to mention the development of Dewey's thought. Dewey's work has been divided into three phases: the first is his Hegelian, idealist phase in which Morris's teaching is most prominent; the second is his experimental phase, in which he distances himself from idealism; and the third, is a naturalistic phase in which, according to Boisvert, “Dewey reverts to Trendelenburg and Aristotle.”¹⁶⁷ So strong is this likeness with Aristotle in the final phase,¹⁶⁸ that Boisvert permits:

An interpreter who favours eponyms could describe this naturalistic phase as “Aristotelian” with as much warrant as Dewey himself had in labelling his idealist phase “Hegelian.”¹⁶⁹

But the question remains: why didn't *he* refer to his work in the third phase as Aristotelian - or at least acknowledge the many commonalities of his and Aristotle's thought? As we've seen, in lieu of an answer to this question, commentators have suggested that Dewey was either incapable of seeing such commonalities due to his misreading of Aristotle; or else, he *did* see them, which gave him all the more impetus to deny them. Both interpretations, I think, are incomplete and unsatisfactory. Perhaps a return to the role of philosophy as criticism can shed more light on our discussion.

¹⁶⁵ Tiles, J. E., “John Dewey, 1859 - 1952” in *John Dewey: Critical Assessments*, Vol 1, Tiles, J. E. (ed.), Routledge, London, 1992, p. xxvii

¹⁶⁶ Boisvert, *Dewey's Metaphysics*, p. 23

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 27. Each phase spans around twenty years starting in 1882. Notably, some of Dewey's most important works, such as *Experience and Nature* and *Logic - The Theory of Inquiry*, were written during his naturalistic phase. For more on the ‘phases’ of Dewey's thought and the impact of Morris and Trendelenburg, see Boisvert, *Dewey's Metaphysics*.

¹⁶⁸ My analysis will draw predominantly on texts written during the Aristotelian phase, and hence post-“Aristotelian turn” – for more on this see Sleeper, R., *The Necessity of Pragmatism: John Dewey's Conception of Philosophy*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1986. While this might prejudice the usefulness of an assessment of Dewey's and Aristotle's, we will see that this affinity is often far from obvious or unproblematic.

¹⁶⁹ Boisvert, *Dewey's Metaphysics*, p. 27

In "John Dewey and Ancient Philosophies", Anton writes:

It is...surprising that despite the fact that he was fully equipped to do so, Dewey did not "reconstruct" his own way of reading Aristotle and thus bring his interpretations to do justice to Aristotle's biological and pluralistic contextualism of experience.¹⁷⁰

"Reconstruction" is a term that Dewey uses in relation to the philosophic tradition, most conspicuously in his *Reconstruction in Philosophy*.¹⁷¹ However, it also appears in different contexts, such as in his theorising on education and politics, for example.¹⁷² What the term denotes in each instance, is a rethinking of traditional terminology and theory. Such a rethinking is aimed at a reinvigoration and redirection of concepts which have become severed from the circumstances that gave rise to them and have therefore lost their original meaning and appropriateness. Reconstruction allows us to reclaim those original meanings and to adapt them to our current needs in the service of amelioration, as "the task of future philosophy is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day."¹⁷³

Needless to say, criticism is an intrinsic part of reconstruction. Thus,

reconstruction involves first criticism, the careful appraisal, the exact determination of powers and potentialities, with their limits and their promise, the verification and testing of the values which tradition transmits and emotion suggests. But it also demands a freedom of speculation, a search for new hypotheses and more fertile principles.¹⁷⁴

Underlying all philosophical reconstruction is a critical engagement with what has come before. This is indicative of Dewey's emphasis on historicism and contextualism. When applied to philosophy, it leads him to assert that all philosophies are a product of their time. Hence, the "utmost to be said in praise of Plato and Aristotle is not that they invented excellent moral theories, but that they rose to the opportunity which the spectacle of Greek life afforded."¹⁷⁵ This may seem like feeble praise for these towering figures of philosophy, but it must be understood within Dewey's view of the limitations history places upon the tradition.

For example, he frequently critiques the elitist nature of the Greek city-state, which formed the milieu for a vast amount of ancient thought. It is telling, that in this context, he even says of Plato,¹⁷⁶ whom he greatly admires as a radical reformer, that "the most generously

¹⁷⁰ Anton, "John Dewey and Ancient Philosophies", p. 497

¹⁷¹ Dewey, J., *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1920

¹⁷² See, amongst others, Dewey, J., *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, Macmillan, London, 1951, especially pp. 76 - 80

¹⁷³ Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 26

¹⁷⁴ Randall Jr., "Dewey's Interpretation of the History of Philosophy", p. 87

¹⁷⁵ Dewey, "Intelligence and Morals", p. 46

¹⁷⁶ Plato is by and large not revered by feminist as a radical reformer, and although he is often portrayed as pro-women, or feminist, these analyses undermine this depiction. See, for example,

imaginative soul of all philosophy [Plato] could not far outrun the institutional practices of his people and his times.”¹⁷⁷ But shouldn't this restrictive interpretation of philosophical vision contribute to a kinder and more forgiving assessment of previous philosophers? Sometimes it does appear so, especially in Dewey's discussions of Plato. And yet, lack of foresight or imagination is not something Dewey tolerates lightly. In this regard, Aristotle seems to suffer most, as he is depicted as defender of conservatism and creator of original philosophic sin. So, it seems that we have arrived, yet again, at an intrinsic dislike for Aristotle, which even Dewey's contextual and historically conditioned view of philosophising cannot diminish.

Having said that, I do believe that the key to an appreciation of Dewey's stance on Aristotle, lies in the Deweyan project of critical reconstruction. Surely philosophical theories and concepts which are deemed outmoded and therefore need to be readapted for contemporary usage belie their irrelevancy and uselessness. In other words, *because* Dewey finds philosophical theories and concepts worthy of reconstruction, does he insist on their re-articulation for present times in the first place.¹⁷⁸ As we know, criticism is central to such reconstruction, hence criticism of Aristotelian paradigms actually highlights Dewey's esteem for the latter. When this is taken into account, we can see that Dewey is perhaps more impatient with Aristotle, precisely because he values his insights.¹⁷⁹

On this view, we can assert that Dewey *was* capable of seeing affinities with Aristotle's work, and it is indeed this likeness which allows Dewey to get all the more irritated by what he perceives Aristotle's shortcomings to be. For example, in his most comprehensive work on metaphysics, *Experience and Nature*, Dewey writes:

Aristotle perhaps came the nearest to a start in that direction [of a naturalistic metaphysics]. But his thought did not go far on the road, though it may be used to suggest the road which he failed to take. Aristotle acknowledges contingency, but he never surrenders his bias in favour of the fixed, certain and finished.¹⁸⁰

Here, Dewey recognises Aristotle as the progenitor of *Bios*, and thus their similitude. Of course this is immediately followed by criticism, which, we have noted, is not necessarily a

Tuana, *Woman and the History of Philosophy*. DuBois' discussion on hierarchy and difference in Plato's philosophy is also instructive – see duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, especially p. 124 & pp. 129 - 146

¹⁷⁷ Dewey, "Intelligence and Morals", p. 50

¹⁷⁸ Randall Jr. also points out: "Dewey meant not destruction but reconstruction; he knew that criticism demands a tradition as the material on which to work." - Randall Jr., "Dewey's Interpretation of the History of Philosophy", p. 94. It is for this reason that Dewey's text is called *Reconstruction IN Philosophy*, rather than *Reconstruction OF Philosophy*.

¹⁷⁹ Anderson similarly notes: "For even if one finds Dewey's eulogies of the Greeks to be stunted, or even slightly forced, he does not reproach them for having developed theories, whereas modern philosophers, if only by implication, are surely chided for the continuation of speculative theorising within a different historic situation." - Anderson, "Dewey's Experiment with Greek Philosophy", p. 98

¹⁸⁰ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 47

symptom of misinterpretation or antagonism, but rather of impatient familiarity. In this light, Dewey's criticisms seem to express filial cantankerousness rather than unjustified, one-sided philosophic critique.

This is not to belittle the serious grievances Dewey has against Aristotle, but simply to position those grievances within the context of Dewey's ongoing intellectual relationship with the Greeks, and Aristotle in particular. Thus, if we consider the above in conjunction with Dewey's gradual softening toward Aristotle,¹⁸¹ we can begin to understand the apparent inconsistency between the severity of Dewey's critique on the one hand, and the obvious areas of philosophic overlap, on the other. I am sure that there are instances where Dewey *did* misread Aristotle, and he may occasionally even have deliberately detracted from his affinities with the Stagirite, however, I believe that it is only within the context of Dewey's project of critical reconstruction, and his recognition of their shared *Bios* bonds, that we can appreciate not only his position on Aristotle, but his theorising more generally. This is certainly attested by Dewey's self-professed classification as a philosopher engaged in "the revival of Greek Philosophy."¹⁸²

2. Metaphysics of Bios, Naturalism and Change

Much has been made of the friendship between Dewey and Aristotle, which naturally follows from their placement in the realm of *Bios*. An elucidation of this realm and its attendant philosophical manifestations is thus in order. The type of philosophies which most obviously display their *Bios* origination, are naturalistic philosophies. The term 'naturalism' is certainly not straight-forward or uncontested, however, the "approximate idea is one according to which the world is a unitary causally interconnected system, without 'gods' or systemic 'purposes,' and best understood, or only rationally intelligible, by scientific means."¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ During his experimental phase, Dewey was rather sceptical of metaphysics, and particularly of Aristotle's metaphysics as first philosophy. However, by the beginning of his naturalistic phase, this had changed somewhat: "In the introductory piece he wrote for Sidney Hook's *The Metaphysics of Pragmatism*, he admits that the pairing of the words "metaphysics" and "pragmatism" in the book's title might not appear at first sight to be an enlightened choice, and then goes on to explain how the two terms do indeed belong together." - Boisvert, *Dewey's Metaphysics*, p. 127. More on Dewey's and Aristotle's metaphysics below.

¹⁸² Veazie, "John Dewey and the Revival of Greek Philosophy", p. 3

¹⁸³ Loftson, P., "Naturalism" in *Columbia Companion to Twentieth-Century Philosophies*, Boundas, C. V. (ed.), Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, p. 116

For Dewey and Aristotle, an understanding of the world as “interconnected system” begins with nature as discovered by us. Thus, there is no transcendental Platonic sphere of Forms,¹⁸⁴ where the real resides separately from our experiences. Hence,

the traits possessed by the subject-matters of experience are as genuine as the characteristics of sun and electron. They are *found*, experienced, and are not shoved out of being by some trick of logic. When found, their ideal qualities are as relevant to the philosophic theory of nature as are the traits found by physical inquiry.¹⁸⁵

This means that what is usually deemed ‘moral’ or ‘aesthetic’ is also as naturally a part of our experience of the world as any other.

But what is experience and how is it connected to nature? Dewey writes:

experience, if scientific inquiry is justified, is no infinitesimally thin layer or foreground of nature, but...it penetrates into it, reaching down into its depths, and in such a way that its grasp is capable of expansion; it tunnels in all directions and in so doing brings to the surface things at first hidden – as miners pile high on the surface of the earth treasures brought from below. Experience is *of* as well as *in* nature. It is not experience which is experienced, but nature – stones, plants, animals, diseases, health, temperature, electricity and so on.¹⁸⁶

Dewey's emphasis on experience enables him to start from the here-and-now, to work from our experiences as a given. For Dewey, human beings are embedded in nature, hence spectator theories, which try to explain the world from an Archimedean standpoint, are fundamentally misled. This is not to reduce all knowledge to unverifiable subjectivity, but rather to recognise ‘the view from here’ over and above ‘the view from nowhere.’¹⁸⁷ On this account, a search for ‘the truth’ becomes replaced by what Dewey calls “warranted assertibility.”¹⁸⁸ Here, truth is a matter of working hypotheses devised by a community of inquirers. Thus, inquiry as a social venture comprises temporary probabilities, which are always open to revision and change. Importantly, “‘thought’ does not exist in a “pure,” isolated, “formal” realm...It serves to mediate our interactions with the world.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ Plato's theory of knowledge posits forms as universals, knowledge of which we are born with, yet forget. This needs to be recollected, lest we be subject to a certain blindness, never able to see things as they really are, a scenario aptly depicted by the allegory of the cave – for more on this see Plato, *Republic*, Waterfield, R. (ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998

¹⁸⁵ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 14

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11

¹⁸⁷ For more on this see Droege, P., “Reclaiming the Subject, or A View from Here” in *Feminist Interpretations of John Dewey*, Seigfried, C. H. (ed.), The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park PA, 2002

¹⁸⁸ Dewey, J., *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol. 12: 1938, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1986, p. 15

¹⁸⁹ Boisvert, R. D., “From the Biological to the Logical: John Dewey's Logic as a Theory of Inquiry” in *Classical American Pragmatism: Its Contemporary Vitality*, Rosenthal, S. B., Hausman, Carl R. and Anderson, Douglas R. (ed.), University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago, 1999, p. 50

Additionally, thinking is productive in the sense that we are actively engaged in its processes. This is where Dewey's frequent references to 'scientific method' come in, as our working hypotheses are tested by experimentation and evaluated in relation to the consequences they instantiate. This productive aspect of inquiry is a result of Dewey's organic worldview, in which existents are always involved in interaction:

Things interacting in certain ways *are* experience; they are what is experienced. Linked in certain other ways with another natural object – the human organism – they are *how* things are experienced as well.¹⁹⁰

Similarly, the social nature of inquiry is indicative of the greater significance Dewey attributes to 'the social' as part of his metaphysics. Thus, our transactions involve a constant renegotiation between our selves and the environments we inhabit.¹⁹¹

Such environments naturally include other beings, including other human beings, who have an effect on us, and whom we, in turn, effect. We will explore this social aspect in relation to selfhood in more detail in chapter three. Suffice it to say at this stage, that 'the social' is a central component of Dewey's ontology:

it would appear that metaphysical description and understanding is demarcated as that which has to do with the widest and fullest range of associated activity...there appears to be a fairly straight road to the conclusion that a just gauge of the adequacy of any philosophic account of things is found in the extent to which that account is based upon taking things in the widest and most complex scale of associations open to observation.¹⁹²

Dewey's world is temporally conditioned, which means that existents are not eternal, nor fixed and final. In fact, for Dewey, the world is constantly changing, as are we. This is not the same as asserting that the world is in constant flux. Instead, continuous transaction and adaptation are complemented by permanence and structure.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 12

¹⁹¹ I will treat the terms 'transaction' and 'interaction' as largely synonymous in this chapter, although it is important to note that 'transaction' "reflects a rejection of sharp dualisms between subject and object, and self and world, as well as a rejection of the atomistic, compartmentalised conceptions of the subject and self that often accompany such dualisms." - Sullivan, *Living Across and Through Skins*, p. 1. I will elaborate upon this in the next chapter.

¹⁹² Dewey, J., "The Inclusive Philosophic Idea" in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol 3: 1927 - 1928, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1984, p. 42

¹⁹³ The affinities with Darwin are obvious here. Having been born the year Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859, Dewey was greatly influenced by his work. This, according to Randall Jr., is typical of 19th and 20th century naturalisms: "'Naturalism' came into vogue as the name for a recognised philosophic position during the great scientific movement of the nineteenth century, which put man and his experience squarely into the Nature over against which he had hitherto been set. The obliteration of the gulf between the nature of the "natural scientist" and human life was then associated with the discovery of the facts of biological evolution and of the descent of man." – quoted in Boisvert, *Dewey's Metaphysics*, p. 68

But what are the existents change and structure apply to? For Dewey, “every existence is an event.”¹⁹⁴ Events can be described as either process or structure, as “the important thing is measure, relation, ratio, knowledge of the comparative tempos of change.”¹⁹⁵ Accordingly, Dewey terms “the slower and the regular rhythmic events structure, and more rapid and irregular ones process.”¹⁹⁶ Dewey elucidates by means of an analogy of a house:

A set of traits is called structure, because of its limiting function in relation to other traits of events. A house has a structure; in comparison with the disintegration and collapse that would occur without its presence, this structure is fixed. Yet it is not something external to which the changes involved in building and using the house have to submit. It is rather an arrangement of changing events such that properties which change slowly, and direct a series of quick changes and give them an order which they do not otherwise possess.¹⁹⁷

We can see that events are relational, temporal and ordered according to the rapidity or slowness of their occurrence.

Dewey's mention of “building and using the house” returns us to a productive view of ontological categories. Thus, “building” refers to means, while “using the house” refers to its purpose. As Robert Dewey points out:

“Structure” refers to those semi-permanent properties of an entity which we may count upon as means. Since any given complex of events may serve as a means for a variety of ends, it follows that there is no one set of properties which can be said to constitute *the* structure of an event. Structure must thus be understood in terms of the relation and function of whatever properties are in point. The properties in themselves are neither structural nor non-structural until regarded in the light of their possible use as means to some end.¹⁹⁸

Thus, structure is a function of the temporal sequencing of relational events. Interaction of events is closely connected to means and ends, which guide the manner and purpose of changing properties. Here, process and structure are shown to be fluid, conditioned by time, means and purpose.¹⁹⁹ Hence, Dewey's original distinction between process and structure should be treated as “relational and functional”, rather than “as something fixed and absolute.”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁴ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 63

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 64

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Dewey, R. E., *The Philosophy of John Dewey: A Critical Exposition of his Method, Metaphysics, and Theory of Knowledge*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1977, p. 104

¹⁹⁹ In relation to purpose and structure, Robert Dewey notes: “the properties which render glass transparent are structural for one who would have windows; whereas, the properties which make glass non-permeable are structural for one who would have vases. Similarly, in science, the properties of a human being which render him subject to the law of falling bodies may be structural for the physicist yet be considered as irrelevant to the structure of a human being by the biologist, or the psychologist, or the sociologist.” - Ibid., p. 105

²⁰⁰ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 64

For this is exactly where idealism and materialism have gone wrong. Instead of accepting the flexible relationship of structure and process, in which “no event is *either* a structure *or* a process,”²⁰¹ idealism and materialism have fixated on an immutable separation of both. Thus,

One doctrine finds structure in a framework of ideal forms, the other finds it in matter. They agree in supposing that structure has some superlative reality. This supposition is another form taken by preference for the stable over the precarious and uncompleted. The fact is that all structure is a character of events, not something intrinsic and *per se*.²⁰²

Since idealism and materialism take structure to be something inherent in existents, they fail to appreciate the contingency involved in structure and process, which are made up of interacting events.

Having said that, we can see how Dewey's worldview replaces stasis and fixity with a far more fluid explication of the basics of ontology. Thus, events are the ‘building blocks’ of Dewey's metaphysics, instead of substances, for example. Processes and structures weave in and out of existence depending on their temporal ordering. The world ceases to be a realm to be treated with sceptical apprehension, doomed to incomprehensibility beyond subjectivity on the one hand, and immune to our active role – cognitive and ontological - *within* it, on the other.²⁰³ Instead, through our firm positioning in nature, we come to know the world as agents and producers of knowledge. Organic emergence characterises every aspect of this Deweyan universe where change is continuous, yet tempered by structure and permanence. Indeed, even structure is a function of change, but merely as a slower ordering of events. Hence, change lies at the very heart of Dewey's metaphysics.

This is further attested to by Dewey's explication of ‘universal’ or ‘generic’ traits. One criticism levelled by Dewey against metaphysicians, is a belief in metaphysics as a solid basis or system, from which further theorising can take place as a matter of certainty. Thus, the discipline “whose remit is being *qua* being and the things pertaining to that which is *per se*”²⁰⁴ should not be understood as a philosophical foundation of unshakable truth upon which an epistemological superstructure can be erected. In fact, Dewey's rather critical stance on metaphysics during his experimental phase can be attributed to this anti-

²⁰¹ Dewey, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 103

²⁰² Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 64

²⁰³ For Dewey, realism and idealism are both equally misled, as neither theory adequately connects knowledge to the world it claims to elucidate. While idealism may try to undermine the view of an independent onlooker, it falls short of this as “we are at the end just exactly where we were at the beginning – in the sphere of ideas, and of ideas only, plus a consciousness of the necessity of referring these ideas to a reality which is beyond them, which is utterly inaccessible to them, which is out of reach of any influence which they may exercise, and which transcends any possible comparison with their results” – Dewey, quoted in Boisvert, *Dewey's Metaphysics*, p. 78

²⁰⁴ Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, Met. IV, 1 1003a5-6. Aristotle, of course, did not refer to his own system as ‘metaphysics.’ Instead the writings which we now know as his *Metaphysics*, gained their title by coming ‘after the *Physics*.’

foundationalism. Dewey gradually mitigated his opposition to metaphysics, though, and eventually came to express his ontology in terms of a "ground-map" rather than a system complete with hierarchies, forming foundations in the 'quest for certainty.'²⁰⁵

By the time of *Experience and Nature*, Dewey had come to understand metaphysics as treating of "the generic traits manifested by existences of all kinds without regard to their differentiation into physical and mental."²⁰⁶ This is strikingly similar to Aristotle's insistence on a discipline dedicated to investigating being, as none of the other sciences "engages in this general speculation about that which is *qua* that which is. Rather, they delimit some section of what is and study its accidental features (a prime example is mathematics)."²⁰⁷ Rather than study the attributes of certain plants and animals (as biology does) or of chemical elements (as chemistry does) for example, metaphysics concerns itself with the study of being itself, or as Dewey says with "the generic traits manifested by existences of all kinds."

For Dewey, there are several generic traits which all existences share. Several of these complement each other. Thus, generic traits include, among others, stability and precariousness, incompleteness and finishedness, temporality, indeterminateness and continuity.²⁰⁸ Importantly for our context, Dewey defines change as a universal trait, meaning that all existences are characterised by change. There are several problematic aspects of Dewey's approach to metaphysics in terms of generic traits, the most obvious being the risk of reduction to a mere 'shopping list' of what is common to all existence. While Dewey does stipulate that his traits are open to revision, this does little by way of alleviating this risk. However, for now, we shall note that change plays a vital role in Dewey's worldview, which depicts a world of becoming and movement rather than a world of stasis and fixity. At the same time, permanence and structure can also be accommodated by Dewey's naturalism, albeit as an expression of organic interaction of events.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ For more on this see Boisvert, R. D., "Dewey's Metaphysics: Ground-Map of the Prototypically Real" in *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation*, Hickman, L. A. (ed.), Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1998; and Dewey, J., *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action in John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol. 4: 1929, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1984

²⁰⁶ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 308. Woodbridge, Dewey's colleague at Columbia, mentioned in the previous section, is said to have played a major role in this "rethinking of metaphysics in the "descriptive," rather than the supraphysical sense." - Boisvert, "Dewey's Metaphysics: Ground-Map of the Prototypically Real", p. 155

²⁰⁷ Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, Met. IV, 1 1003a23-25

²⁰⁸ Craig Cunningham details some of the traits identified by Dewey "in *Experience and Nature* and elsewhere", which number "at least 30" – see Cunningham, C. A., "The Metaphysics of Dewey's Conception of the Self", *Philosophy of Education* 1995, available from www.ed.uiuc.edu/eps/PES-Yearbook/95_docs/cunningham.html, accessed 07.02.2009, p. 2

²⁰⁹ My intent is not here to add to what has been termed the "caricature of Dewey as the consummate metaphysician of flux" - Boisvert, *Dewey's Metaphysics*, p. 5. Indeed, as we noted above, the fluidity of the Deweyan world also contains structure and permanence. It is true, however, that Dewey's

The philosophical *Bios* friendship attributed to Dewey and Aristotle can be further understood in relation to the subject matters of their respective theories. Both thinkers developed their philosophies with a fundamental concern for an elucidation of the *coexistence* of change and permanence. Dewey approaches this via his ground-map of metaphysics, in which events exist in constant interaction, providing processes and structures in accordance with their ordering. Aristotle, on the other hand, explains permanence and change by adopting Plato's forms and grounding them in worldly existence, and by introducing the notion of potentiality. Hence, 'the raw material' of existents is provided by matter, allowing for forms to variously manifest themselves within matter, thus giving each existent a specific changeable nature.²¹⁰

Many of the more puzzling aspects of change raised by Parmenides' 'On Nature,' such as the incommensurability of 'what is' with 'what is not,' could thereby be answered, as issues around the predication of a subject, for example, could be resolved. Thus, as Lloyd points out, to explain how "something (white) came to be from 'what is not' (i.e. not-white), some thinkers claimed...that a thing which became white was both not-white and white in the first place."²¹¹ By establishing change in terms of matter and form, Aristotle could account for change occurring in the same subject. Similarly, a mistaken attribution of change to qualities themselves, rather than to qualities as they pertain to a subject, could be debunked. Processes of change were no longer simply understood in terms of a quality becoming something entirely different, but rather as matter shaped by a different form. Hence, heat does not turn into coldness, but rather a specific hot thing becomes cold.²¹²

How, though, can this change in form come about? For Aristotle, a thing contains within itself the potential (*dunamis*) of becoming something else – a thesis held so commonly today, its significance seems almost negligible. On this account, hot water has the potential to become ice, just as a seed has the potential to become a tree. Actuality (*energeia*) is achieved when an existent, "which has in itself its own source of motion and change,"²¹³ fulfils its potential. This teleological account of change and permanence stipulates that every natural

opposition to a philosophical clinging to the latter may have led him to overemphasise fluidity. More on this below.

²¹⁰ Aristotle's explication of existents in terms of matter and form is called *hylomorphism* from the Greek *hylē* (matter) and *morphē* (form).

²¹¹ Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 113.

²¹² Thus, rather than being confounded by change in opposites, Aristotle's positing of a substratum shaped by form allowed for change to take place in a natural object defined "as a compound of the two" – Aristotle, *Physics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, *Phys.* 193b5. This meant that a conflation of "hotness and coldness" with "this hot and cold thing" could be undone.

²¹³ *Phys.* 193b4. Aristotle asserts that "it cannot be that the substrate itself forces itself to change. I mean that, for instance, neither wood nor bronze is the cause of either of them changing, neither does wood make a bed or bronze a statue, but there is some other cause of the change." – *Met.* 984a23-26

object contains within itself the telos or end it strives to obtain. Ultimately, such striving comes from a desire to become non-matter, or God.²¹⁴

Aristotle's elegant reply to the difficulties posed by the problem of permanence and change did not go unnoticed by Dewey. Having already made his "Aristotelian turn,"²¹⁵ Dewey was able to recognise the importance of Aristotle's scheme:

The distinction and relation of the permanent, the fixed, from and to the variable and changing, was the ultimate problem of science and philosophy. The philosophy of Aristotle is a systematic exposition and organised solution of this problem carried through all subjects with which inquiry was then concerned²¹⁶

Indeed, this is where we arrive at the heart of the matter: both Aristotle and Dewey were faced by the same questions, which they tried to situate in nature, hence the affinity of these two thinkers and their location in the sphere of *Bios*.

One central question common to both philosophers was that of change and permanence. It is precisely in their quest for an answer to this problem, that Aristotle and Dewey had to reject transcendentalism. Thus, Guthrie notes of Aristotle:

Aristotle's common sense revolted [against Platonic transcendental Forms], because the relationship between the two worlds, the causality of the Ideas, remained unaccounted for. Above all they offered no help in explaining what had been the crux of early Greek philosophy and seemed to Aristotle *the one thing above all that needed explanation; that is, the phenomena of motion and change*.²¹⁷

Aristotle deemed the supranatural Forms otiose in an explication of permanence and change. Hence he brought them to bear upon nature instead of placing them in an inaccessible abstract realm.

By giving natural objects potential and by giving existents of the present world both matter and form, Aristotle tried to undo the perplexity posed by a world which appeared to be constantly changing (the world of flux as understood by Heraclitus and Cratylus) and a world containing stable, permanent elements (favoured by Parmenides as the 'real'). Thus, Aristotle was crucially concerned with the following questions:

How bring within the compass of philosophic knowledge a world of unstable phenomena, always changing, coming into existence and passing away again,

²¹⁴ A more detailed account of Aristotle's metaphysics would be misplaced here, see however, Reeve, C. D. C., *Substantial Knowledge: Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis, 2002, and Broadie, S., *Aristotle and Beyond: Essays on Metaphysics and Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007

²¹⁵ See Sleeper, *The Necessity of Pragmatism*, especially chapter four entitled "Dewey's Aristotelian Turn"

²¹⁶ Dewey, *Logic*, p. 88

²¹⁷ Guthrie, W. K. C., *The Greek Philosophers: from Thales to Aristotle*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 127. Emphasis mine.

never the same for two instants together? Where is that stability which...the human mind demands?²¹⁸

While Dewey also sought to accommodate permanence and change, his particular historical positioning meant that he arrived at these same questions within a different context.

For Dewey, philosophers had fixated upon the permanent and stable in favour of the transient and changeable. Thus, Dewey sought to undermine this adherence to permanence, which had been strengthened by a Cartesian mind-body dualism and the subsequent privileging of the cognitive. It is for this reason that Dewey treats change in greater detail and with more attentiveness than he does permanence, and yet, as we've noted before, this does not make him a philosopher of flux.²¹⁹ Thus, we can say that Dewey and Aristotle are philosophical kin as they sought to ameliorate the difficulties posed by permanence and change by seeking *an accommodation of both* in the context of a metaphysics of nature.

Additionally Dewey wanted to bring balance to a philosophical tradition which, in his view, had consistently displayed its preference for the fixed and permanent. Fundamentally though, despite their different starting points, Dewey and Aristotle grappled with the same philosophical questions and made use of their *Bios* positioning in search for answers to these questions. Drawing upon John Herman Randall Jr.'s explication of Dewey's sense of philosophic history, Chambliss notes:

we can expect to find in Plato and Aristotle problems which not only are continued in Dewey's thinking, but make up certain of its components.²²⁰

The problem posed by permanence and change certainly was continued by Dewey and not only did its explication form a component of his philosophy, but it formed perhaps *the* component. For Dewey's fluctuating and flexible treatment of permanence and change seems to permeate not only the rest of his ontology, but his philosophy more generally. Hence, his description of a world of balance, of change and permanence, of certainty and insecurity, and of being and non-being:

Qualities have defects as necessary conditions of their excellencies; the instrumentalities of truth are the causes of error; change gives meaning to permanence and recurrence makes novelty possible. A world that was wholly risky would be a world in which adventure is impossible, and only a living world can include death.²²¹

Such a fluid account of the world is typical of philosophies of *Bios*, which find themselves in direct opposition to the more rigid and inflexible accounts of *Mathema*. While we have

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 128

²¹⁹ See n. 57.

²²⁰ Chambliss, *The Influence of Plato and Aristotle on John Dewey's Philosophy*, p. 3

²²¹ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 47

situated both Dewey and Aristotle, and their understanding of permanence and change in the former, Dewey's critique of Aristotle remains to be explored. The capacity of their biocompatibility to withstand the harsher Deweyan criticisms, is an issue we will address throughout rest of this chapter.

3. Trouble in the Biosphere

What makes Dewey's approach to change novel and unique, is his sustained critique of the presumption inherent in the second question quoted above: "Where is the stability which...the human mind demands?" For Dewey - philosopher of common sense (another affinity with Aristotle)²²² - such a question poses several problems. Firstly, stability is not something to be conjured up and demanded by the mind, but rather *it is there*, it exists in the natural world as we experience it. Secondly, a mind understood separately from this natural world, capable of making demands as an independent entity, fundamentally misinterprets the organic role mind plays in the acquisition and production of knowledge.

This is precisely where Cartesianism has fed into the philosophical fixation with the stable and immutable. Chambliss rightly points out that "in the world of the Cartesians, the objects of knowing, standing apart from the nature of mind, are no longer in and of mind, no longer exist as a part of the natural world."²²³ Instead, Cartesianism severs mind from nature with the possibility of knowledge lying solely in the cognitive. It is thus that knowledge becomes subjective, residing in the individual mind of the knower. On the other hand,

for Plato and Aristotle, objectivity is not a problem inasmuch as human beings (including their minds) are a part of the objective world; for them, it is no less natural to perceive or to know syllogisms than it is to breathe or to digest food; each activity, while different in its subject matter from the others, is a part of what makes life worth living.²²⁴

Objectivity, in this sense, is not something acknowledged by Plato and Aristotle, simply because a separation of mind from the natural world had not yet been realised.

Nowhere is this separation more obvious than in the mechanistic worldview depicted by what Dewey calls "philosophers of science" and their expression of the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The contrast between the ancient and new scientific approach to knowledge is described by Dewey in *Democracy and Education* :

Greek and medieval knowledge accepted the world in its qualitative variety, and regarded nature's processes as having ends, or in technical phrase as

²²² In fact, Dewey refers to Aristotle as "a systematiser of common sense" – quoted in Chambliss, *The Influence of Plato and Aristotle on John Dewey's Philosophy*, p. 23

²²³ Ibid., p. 15

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 14

teleological. New science was expounded so as to deny the reality of all qualities in real, or objective, existence. Sound, colours, ends, as well as goods and bads, were regarded as purely subjective – as mere impressions in the mind. Objective existence was then treated as having only quantitative aspects...Lacking qualitative distinctions, nature lacked significant variety. Uniformities were emphasised, not diversities; the ideal was supposed to be the discovery of a single mathematical formula applying to the whole universe at once from which all the seeming variety of phenomena could be derived. This is what a mechanical *philosophy* means.²²⁵

We can see Dewey resisting philosophies of *Mathema* here, as such philosophies tend to provide an impoverished worldview.

“Philosophers of science” had confused the methodology of science with its account of the world. Thus, “such a philosophy...takes the technique for the thing itself; the apparatus and the terminology for reality, the method for its subject matter.”²²⁶ By doing so, it fuelled a reductionism which led to a bland and depleted universe. Thus,

while in fact the progress of science was increasing man's power over nature, enabling him to place his cherished ends on a firmer basis than ever before, and also to diversify his activities almost at will, the philosophy which professed to formulate its accomplishments reduced the world to a barren and monotonous redistribution of matter in space. Thus the immediate effect of modern science was to accentuate the dualism of matter and mind²²⁷

This is not to assert Dewey's outright opposition to philosophies of science, indeed, he frequently wrote with great admiration on Bacon as paving the way for ‘scientific method’, thereby allowing for an experimental, productive force in our understanding of knowledge.²²⁸

At the same time, however, Dewey's naturalism was opposed to “the dualism of matter and mind” which these philosophies largely seemed to contain.

As we've noted, such a dualism was not present in Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies, as mind and knowledge are naturally a part of our lives. This objectivism meant that a fuller account of the world with all its qualitative variety could be given. Thus, knowledge and mind are not something separated from the world, but rather are part and parcel of the same objective reality. As Chambliss points out:

the beauty of Greek objectivism lay in its holding together mind and world; or, rather, due to its naiveté, its utter lack of a need to hold them together, inasmuch as they were not perceived to be separated.²²⁹

²²⁵ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 284

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ See Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, particularly chapter 2

²²⁹ Chambliss, *The Influence of Plato and Aristotle on John Dewey's Philosophy*, p. 19

Having said that, Dewey was still critical of the 'Greek' approach to knowledge and of Aristotle's logic in particular. To fully understand this it might be apt at this stage to outline Dewey's view on the origins of ancient philosophy.

For Dewey, this emerged due to a growing dissatisfaction with explanations of the world based on custom and elitist traditions. Hence, "the more acute and active minds, like that of Plato himself, could no longer be content to accept, along with the conservative citizen of the time, the old beliefs in the old way. The growth of a positive knowledge and of the critical, inquiring spirit undermined these in their old form."²³⁰ Instead, philosophers had to find another authority upon whose command genuine knowledge claims could be made. Dewey asks: "What was to be done? Develop a method of rational investigation and proof which should place the essential elements of traditional belief upon an unshakable basis."²³¹ Thus, reason came to replace custom as guarantor of knowledge, and as establisher of universal rules.

While one might suspect that this could lead to a radical rethinking of the axiological privileging of opposites attendant in early philosophical thought, this new emphasis merely replicated such privileging and gave it a different grounding. Hence, "that which had rested upon custom was to be restored, resting no longer upon the habits of the past, but upon the very metaphysics of Being and the Universe."²³² The new emphasis on reason, backed by metaphysics, led to a kind of logic in which universal laws arbitrated on matters of knowledge and truth. Dewey uses the courtroom as a metaphor to describe this:

The judge was firmly seated on the bench. The parties in controversy recognised his jurisdiction, and their respective claims were submitted for adjudication. The need was for rules of procedure by which the judge might, in an obvious and impartial way, bring the recognised universal or decisive law to bear upon particular matters. Hence the elaboration of those rules of evidence, those canons of demonstrative force, which are the backbone of the Aristotelian logic.²³³

This logic, with its abstract rules and principles, still had to engage with the empirical world, a venture Dewey relates in terms of dismay:

There is a certain portion of the intellectual sphere, that derived from experience, which is infected throughout by its unworthy origin. It stands forever condemned to be merely empirical – particular, more or less accidental, inherently irrational. You cannot make gold from dross, and the best that can be

²³⁰ Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 16

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ Dewey, J., *Essays in Experimental Logic*, Dover Publications, New York, 1953, p. 201

done for and with material of this sort is to bring it under the protection of truth which has warrant and weight in itself.²³⁴

Dewey's somewhat disparaging remarks on Aristotle's treatment of the empirical can be explained by the latter's emphasis on contemplation and reason. We know that Aristotle is a philosopher of *Bios*, and that he values the empirical, hence his theorising on nature.

However, it is also true that Aristotle values thought and knowledge arising from thought above all else. Hence, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle asserts that "the best and most pleasant life is the life of the intellect."²³⁵ While we have already seen this favouring of thought over thought-with-body, or mixing, in Parmenides, it is continued in Aristotle, as reason is upheld as the source of certain truths. Again, the similarities to Parmenides' 'Way of Truth,' where disembodied, pure thought reigns over sullied, physical 'mixing of limbs' in the world of mere mortals, are apparent. Rather than constituting a Cartesianism, however, Aristotle's objectivism maintains mind and knowledge in the world, albeit within the framework of a privileging of reason over the empirical. Hence, instead of a severance, Aristotle proposes an intense axiological favouring of one over the other, exhibiting overtones of Parmenidean polarity.

Aristotle's exaltation of the life of contemplation is for Dewey indicative of the classist nature of the Greek polis.²³⁶ Here, leisure was equated with status, hence to have the leisure time to engage in a life of contemplation indicated a certain social standing. Similarly, Aristotle's favouring of *theoria* (theoretical knowledge) over other forms of knowledge (including productive and practical knowledge) is problematic from a Deweyan point of view, where knowledge is always inherently productive *and* practical.²³⁷ Of course Dewey does not deny the importance of pure thought, however, an idealisation of *theoria* risks for him a severance of mind from the world and renders knowledge as productive activity incomprehensible.

The metaphysical foundation given to Aristotelian logic is also something Dewey is critical of. He writes:

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 206

²³⁵ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Penguin, London, 2004, 1178a7-8.

²³⁶ For a reading of Aristotle's philosophy wherein the elevation of contemplation is somewhat mitigated, see Broadie, S., *Ethics With Aristotle*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991, esp. chapter 7, section XI entitled 'The Best Life'

²³⁷ Again, this is linked to the elitist nature of the Greek city-state: "The scheme of knowledge and of Nature became, without conscious intent, a mirror of a social order in which craftsmen, mechanics, artisans generally, held a low position in comparison with a leisure class... Completely self-contained and self-sufficient activity ... was exemplified only in the exercise of Pure Reason untainted by need for anything outside itself and hence independent of all operations of doing and making." –Dewey, *Logic*, p. 64

The logic of Aristotle was no formal logic in the modern sense; it was a reflection of his metaphysics and even more directly of his cosmology. It was a logic appropriate to the view of the world as a system of fixed qualitative kinds, like the species of animals and plants, of a closed physical or astronomical world formulated in terms of an arbitrary application of Euclidean geometry, and a variety of qualitative movements that corresponded to the qualitative divisions of the cosmos.²³⁸

As we noted before, Aristotle rescued Form from its Platonic transcendentalism, and instead placed it in the natural realm. However, by doing so, he gave each form of being, or species,²³⁹ an inherent essence.²⁴⁰ This essentialism is connected to the teleological account of the world, in which each entity contains within itself the potential for becoming, for change toward actuality.

For Dewey such an account of self-realisation by means of a telos, and its attendant notion of essence, was ultimately limiting in terms of the possibility of the novel and the precarious. In his view, change itself was contained to occur in accordance with a fixed plan within a specific entity. All of this is expressed in the Aristotelian system of logic:

The distinction between immutable Being, existing at all times in identical form, and the mutable, which in its mutability is convincing proof of partial and incomplete Being provided the ground of the distinction made between induction and rationally complete, scientific demonstration or deduction. Since the immutable was constituted by fixed species, each of which was defined by an essence, it followed that strictly scientific or demonstrative knowledge consisted in a classificatory ordering of fixed species, in which inclusive species hierarchically determined included species of a more limited range. This ordering is effected in the demonstrative syllogism. Scientific knowledge of changing things is, on the contrary, possible only when and as these things are caught and placed within the fixed limits constituted by essences that define species.²⁴¹

Thus, according to Dewey, Aristotelian logic tries to reduce all that is unquantifiable or uncertain to the certain, to force it into the “fixed limits” set by the essences of species. Logic, on this account, is like a sieve through which changing aspects of the world are pushed in order to arrive at purified certainty. In this sense, Aristotle is no different than any

²³⁸ Dewey, J., “Philosophy” in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol 5: 1929 - 1930, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1984, p. 166

²³⁹ Boisvert points out that “the term “species” is a translation of the Greek *eidōs*, which we render in English as “form.”” - Boisvert, *Dewey's Metaphysics*, p. 86

²⁴⁰ In *The Metaphysics*, Aristotle writes: “Nothing, then, which is not a species of a genus will have an essence – only species will have it” – *Met.* 1030a13

²⁴¹ Dewey, *Logic*, p. 416. Dewey expresses this in similar terms in *The Quest for Certainty*: “Logic provided the patterns to which ultimately real objects had to conform, while physical science was possible in the degree in which the natural world, even in its mutabilities, exhibited exemplification of ultimate immutable rational objects.” – Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 13

of the other philosophers Dewey takes to task for their dislike of the mutable and their championing of the immutable.²⁴²

This view of Aristotelian favouring of stasis and certainty is reinforced by the theological dimension of Aristotle's metaphysics. For Dewey, ancient philosophy had set itself the task of freeing ideas from their mythological past of customs and superstitions by basing their 'truths' about the world on reason, complete with universal laws and self-evident decrees.²⁴³ Since "philosophy inherited the realm with which religion had been concerned,"²⁴⁴ divinity could no longer reside in the myths and religious traditions philosophy sought to undermine, but had to be explained in different terms. Hence,

the belief that the divine encompasses the world was detached from its mythical context and made the basis of philosophy, and it became also the foundation of physical science...Telling the story of the universe in the form of rational discourse instead of emotionalised imagination signified the discovery of logic as a rational science.²⁴⁵

Such a rational science, when fused with an explanation of divinity, led to an exaltation of the unchangeable and certain. Hence,

Conformity on the part of supreme reality to the requirements of logic conferred upon its constitutive objects necessary and immutable characteristics. Pure contemplation of these forms was man's highest and most divine bliss, a communion with unchangeable truth.²⁴⁶

In order to fully appreciate this, more needs to be said about Aristotle's cosmology.

We have already noted that the teleological account of change is rooted in all existents striving to become pure form, or God. Thus, while all natural objects have as their relative end the fulfilment of their potential in accordance with their particular species, they also ultimately aim to become non-matter. Non-matter, or God, is the only thing in the universe which does not change, hence this state would constitute a final, immutable resting place for existents. According to Aristotle, even the heavenly bodies strive to become God, which accounts for their continuous movement.²⁴⁷ While this constant drive to attaining pure form

²⁴² Dewey's use of the generic 'philosophers' in *The Quest for Certainty* leads one to assume that this is the entire - or at least a substantial part of the - philosophic tradition; see in particular chapter 1.

²⁴³ He writes: "Aristotle tells us that from remote antiquity tradition has handed down the idea, in story form, that the heavenly bodies are gods, and that the divine encompasses the entire natural world. This core of truth, he goes on to say in effect, was embroidered with myths for the benefit of the masses, for reasons of expediency, namely, the preservation of social institutions. The negative work of philosophy was then to strip away these imaginative accretions." - Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 12

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 11

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 13

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 13

²⁴⁷ Aristotle explains movement of the stars and the existence of the divine as follows: "There is...something which is always moved with an unceasing motion, which is motion in a circle; and this is plain not in theory only but in fact. Therefore the first heavens must be eternal. There is therefore

must necessarily be frustrated, as all natural objects are composed of matter *and* form, human beings can come close by contemplating pure form and thereby gaining a glimpse of the divine.²⁴⁸ Thus, for Aristotle contemplation enables us to come into contact with perfection.

By positing God as the unmoved mover, the one unchanging and permanent entity of the universe, toward whom all other entities strive, a world of change and movement can be explained as originating in a divinity which is itself the final end of all that lives. Hence, Aristotle writes:

And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's essential actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this *is* God.²⁴⁹

Now we can see what Dewey meant by contemplation being "man's highest and most divine bliss,"²⁵⁰ as thought, Aristotle tells us, is life and therefore divine.

This elevated status of contemplation, according to Dewey, has as its counterpart a deprecation of the practical, an obsession with the stable and certain, and a suspicion of change and the precarious. Writes Dewey:

the depreciation of practice was given a philosophic, an ontological, justification... Because ultimate Being or reality is fixed, permanent, admitting of no change or variation, it may be grasped by rational intuition and set forth in rational, that is, universal and necessary, demonstration... Thus the predisposition of philosophy toward the universal, invariant and eternal was fixed.²⁵¹

Since Aristotle's essences are fixed, it is understandable that Dewey felt change, novelty, precariousness and uncertainty to be stifled in the Aristotelian scheme. While both philosophers treat nature as a given, Aristotelian metaphysics defines this given as preset and determined. Thus, those changes which do occur, unfold in accordance with a divine plan in which all natural objects seek to become pure form; or else they occur in accordance with an empirical plan, in which all natural objects seek the actuality of form specific to their species.

Dewey, on the other hand has a much more fluid view of the world, lacking a teleological account of being and the divine, and instead positing an organicism constituted by continuous interaction of events. Hence, in contrast to the "common identification of reality

also something which moves them. And since that which is moved and moves is intermediate, there is a mover which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality." – *Met.* 1072a21-26

²⁴⁸ Aristotle notes: "all things that change have matter" – *Met.* 1069b25

²⁴⁹ *Met.* 1072b26-30

²⁵⁰ See n. 88

²⁵¹ Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 16

with what is sure, regular and finished, experience in unsophisticated forms gives evidence of a different world and points to a different metaphysics.”²⁵² According to Dewey, such a metaphysics should recognise the world as “an impressive and irresistible mixture of sufficiencies, tight completenesses, order, recurrences which make possible prediction and control, and singularities, ambiguities, uncertain possibilities, processes going on to consequences as yet indeterminate.”²⁵³ Underlying this mutable worldview which simultaneously contains permanence, structure, and order, is the lively and dynamic interaction of events.²⁵⁴

This emphasis on transaction explains what is perhaps the greatest difference between Aristotle's and Dewey's philosophies. As existents are constantly interacting with each other, they effect changes and are themselves effected by change. Thus, existents have a productive role to play in the realities they inhabit. Similarly, thought and knowledge, for Dewey, are productive, hence logic is not a matter of discovering antecedently existing truths or rules which can reveal such truths, rather we play an active role in the creation of truths, which in this light become probabilities or working hypotheses.²⁵⁵ The world, although it is given, does not exist independently from the productive capacities of its existents.

It is for this reason that Boisvert finds Dewey paradigmatic of *techné*, or art, which is productive, and Aristotle of *physis*, or nature, reflecting “nature as the source of its own being and development.”²⁵⁶ Indeed, Aristotle seems to treat nature with its unmoved mover as complete in itself, while for Dewey, nature is much more emergent and dependent on the productive elements existing therein. Hence, a metaphysics which presupposes a finished and contained world, and a logic which posits universal laws capable of determining truth as a matter of certainty, fall short of the vitality and plasticity of the Deweyan worldview.

Speaking about differing “theories of knowledge,” Dewey claims that

the common essence of all these theories, in short, is that what is known is antecedent to the mental act of observation and inquiry, and is totally unaffected by these acts; otherwise it would not be fixed and unchangeable. This negative condition, that the processes of search, investigation, reflection, involved in knowledge relate to something having prior being, fixes once for all the main characters attributed to mind, and to the organs of knowing...If the word

²⁵² Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 47

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ The quote continues: “They are mixed not mechanically but vitally like the wheat and tares of the parable. We may recognise them separately but we cannot divide them, for unlike wheat and tares they grow from the same root.” - Ibid.

²⁵⁵ This productive aspect of knowledge and inquiry is also noted by Chambliss in relation to Plato's and Aristotle's objectivism: “their very objectivity limited them to the subject matters of their direct experience, and denied them the opportunity which *possible* objects provide for deliberately attempting to bring a subject matter into existence, for actually *making* subject matter.” - Chambliss, *The Influence of Plato and Aristotle on John Dewey's Philosophy*, p. 19

²⁵⁶ Boisvert, *Dewey's Metaphysics*, p. 103

“interaction” be used, it cannot denote that overt production of change it signifies in its ordinary and practical use.²⁵⁷

Interaction is the key to appreciating the role change plays in Dewey's metaphysics. On Dewey's account, Aristotelian cosmology inhibits change with its non-productive understanding of knowledge and the world, as fixed essences and truths take the place of precariousness and mutability.²⁵⁸ Thus, an organic and dynamic world is truncated and reduced to a pre-existing nature in which change occurs in accordance with the empirical plan and the divine plan of Aristotle's teleology.

What's more, many of these shortcomings have lived on, not only within philosophy, but in our societies more generally. Hence, Dewey writes:

Although this Greek formulation was made long ago and much of it is now strange in its specific terms, certain features of it are as relevant to present thought as they were significant in their original formulation. For in spite of the great, the enormous changes in the subject-matter and method of the sciences and the tremendous expansion of practical activities by means of arts and technologies, the main tradition of western culture has retained intact this framework of ideas.²⁵⁹

Such are some of the charges levelled by Dewey against philosophy, and against Aristotle more specifically. But what are the implications of these charges? And what can they tell us about the relationship between Dewey and Aristotle?

4. Biocompatibility re-examined

Dewey's more disparaging remarks on Aristotle can now be viewed in a different light, as the real significance of a universe in which change and novelty are stunted, becomes clear. Such a universe, when coupled with an overemphasis on reason and a designation of the life of contemplation as paramount, simply absolves us from acting in the world and bringing about change. Thus, passivity and inactivity, even in the face of injustice, are sanctioned as acceptable stances. Hence, for Dewey, the metaphysical account of change is not just a matter of accurate or inaccurate depiction of the world, but rather it is a moral and political concern. Dewey, the social reformer who champions meliorism and the employment of philosophy in the solution of people's present problems, understands limitations placed on the possibility of change as a reinforcement of the status quo, and as a hindrance to the betterment of our lives.

²⁵⁷ Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 19

²⁵⁸ Dewey writes of the 'Greek' stance on knowledge: "Things that change are too unstable to be subjects of knowledge in its exact and complete sense. *Knowledge* as distinct from sense and opinion is fixed; truth does not alter." – Dewey, *Logic*, p. 89

²⁵⁹ Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 17

It is therefore no surprise to find Aristotle deemed upholder of hierarchical structures and defender of an elitist conservatism. Thus,

Aristotle promptly yielded to the besetting sin of all philosophers, the idealization of the existent: he declared that the class distinction of superiority and inferiority as between man and woman, master and slave, liberal-minded and base mechanic, exist and are justified by nature – a nature which aims at embodied reason.²⁶⁰

Since it is Aristotle who so greatly magnifies the importance of reason and the life of contemplation, he becomes the figurehead of the “arrested development”²⁶¹ endured by philosophy more generally.²⁶² Such arrested development is a direct result of the philosophical validation of indifference to political and social problems in the name of contemplation. As Anderson notes:

whereas with Plato, justice signified a harmonious relation of classes and souls to be achieved by active regulation of social life, to Aristotle moral wisdom was the passive contemplation of justice in nature – i.e., the objective teleological order of species according to their own proper purpose or place. The intended implication, and frequent assertion, is that Aristotle's philosophy of nature afforded a fitting basis for the conservative attitude of the aristocrat.²⁶³

According to Dewey, Aristotle's teleological explication of the world with its fixed essences and hierarchy of species enshrines existing inequalities and renders them unalterable.

Since novelty and change only take place within the confines of the divine or the empirical plan of species, a true transformation outside of these confines is rendered impotent. Therefore, social and political problems can be viewed as part of a natural order, and their respective justice or injustice relegated to the realm of contemplation, rather than to active amelioration. This, to Dewey, is the sin of Aristotle, which has come to infect much of the philosophic tradition. John Herman Randall Jr. explains:

The cardinal philosophic sin has been to shrink from practical action to take refuge in an unshakable higher realm of fixed and antecedent Reality. Afraid to seek a shifting and relative security by the efforts of intelligence, men have found consolation in the exaltation of pure intellect and the eternal intelligible perfection it has beheld. This cowardly choice, to accept a world understood instead of trying to change it, Dewey connects, by a somewhat dubious logic,

²⁶⁰ Dewey, "Intelligence and Morals", p. 50

²⁶¹ See Anderson, "Dewey's Experiment with Greek Philosophy", p. 98

²⁶² This also explains Dewey's rather positive view of Plato when compared with Aristotle. As Anderson notes: "If...Plato introduced and gave initial form to the central theme of classic Greek philosophy, it was Aristotle who supplied its decisive content and direction through his extended expression and carefully wrought enhancement of the high significance of the rational spectator." – Ibid., p. 95

²⁶³ Ibid.

with the quest for an absolute and immutable certainty in the things of the mind.²⁶⁴

This 'dubious logic' not only connects the sin of the sanctification of contemplation, and hence of inactivity, to certainty in knowledge and inquiry, but also to the degradation of practical activity more generally, of physicality, and of all things precarious.

Hence, as we also saw with respect to Parmenides, fear of change and uncertainty are intimately linked to a favouring of contemplation over the practical, of mind over the body, and of universality over context. For Dewey:

Practical activity deals with individualised and unique situations which are never exactly duplicable and about which, accordingly, no complete assurance is possible. All activity, moreover, involves change. The intellect, however, according to the traditional doctrine, may grasp universal Being, and Being which is universal is fixed and immutable.²⁶⁵

Metaphysical certainty thus allows for epistemological certainty, both of which result in moral and political resignation due to an overemphasis on rationality.²⁶⁶ It is for this reason that Dewey is sceptical of the term epistemology, as it appears to contain the negative connotations of 'the quest for certainty,' and of the Aristotelian elevation of reason and the life of contemplation.

Epistemology is problematic as "every conscious subject has been thought of, in effect, as a contemplator – as a knower in the classic sense. Consequently, the conditions for epistemology were created through the emergence of the "intellectualist fallacy," or the notion that to be a conscious subject is to be a knower."²⁶⁷ Dewey, of course, counters this with his 'theory of inquiry,' which instead proffers a productive view of knowledge and knower, in which 'the truth' is not an antecedently existing reality, simply to be discovered by the knower by means of correct procedure, but rather it is a potentiality, to be created by the knower in conjunction with the circumstances that give rise to the particular situation. Thus, while 'Greek' objectivism is praised for leaving knowledge naturally in the world, it is rejected for the limitations this entails. As Anderson notes, "the key assumption that genuine knowledge has reality as its object, with the corollary that the knower is a rational spectator, calls for continuing criticism"²⁶⁸ as it neglects the productive aspect involved in inquiry.

Interestingly, Dewey mitigates this criticism with appeals to the historical restrictions of philosophy itself. This means that despite Dewey's opposition to fixed essences and forms,

²⁶⁴ Randall Jr., "Dewey's Interpretation of the History of Philosophy", p. 98

²⁶⁵ Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 6

²⁶⁶ This is similarly expressed by Dewey's assertion that "practical action, as distinct from self-revolving rational self-activity, belongs in the realm of generation and decay, a realm inferior in value as in Being." - Ibid., p. 16

²⁶⁷ Anderson, "Dewey's Experiment with Greek Philosophy", p. 99

²⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 99. See also the previous section for objectivism.

to the life of contemplation, and to logic as a system of universal rules for the discovery of truth, and despite the rigid philosophical adherence to permanence over precariousness and change, he still manages to give some leeway to all of these perceived shortcomings by stipulating that they need to be understood within the context of their time. Seen in this light, Aristotle can even garner praise as Dewey writes in *Logic – The Theory of Inquiry*:

It would be completely erroneous to regard the foregoing as a criticism of the Aristotelian logic in its original formulation in connection with Greek culture. As a *historic* document it deserves the admiration it has received. As a comprehensive, penetrating and thoroughgoing intellectual transcript of discourse in isolation from the operations in which discourse takes effect it is above need for praise²⁶⁹

In fact, as Sleeper rightly points out, Dewey's 'Aristotelian turn' allows him to recognise Aristotle's contributions beyond the irksome shortcomings listed above. Thus,

once the notion of static essences is put aside, Aristotle's theory of inquiry can be seen to be rooted in Greek common sense and the cultural institutions that gave meaning and coherence to the lives of those dependent on them...For the Greeks...it was an organon by means of which man's experiences of nature in all its diversity and evident discontinuity could be made intelligible, a means of unifying man with the world of nature of which he is a part.²⁷⁰

Indeed, this is Dewey's praise for 'Greek' objectivism, which allows for a world of qualitative richness and vitality.

The fact that this objectivism is stifled by its lack of consideration for potentiality in inquiry is a limitation Dewey discusses in detail. However, when placed within its historical and cultural context, even this limitation loses its severity. For Dewey, contemporary philosophers should engage in theorising which is as much an expression of the present as Aristotle's was of its day. Thus, Aristotle's logic ceases to be an instrument of epistemological authoritarianism, and becomes a fitting organon for the cultural and scientific concerns of 'ancient' Zeitgeist. Historical contextualism thereby comes to soften some of the heavier blows against Aristotelianism, while demanding a more adequate philosophising for the present.²⁷¹ Hence the final verdict: "the more adequate that [Aristotle's] logic was in its own day, the less fitted is it to form the framework of present logical theory."²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Dewey, *Logic*, p. 98

²⁷⁰ Sleeper, *The Necessity of Pragmatism*, p. 97

²⁷¹ This is also evident in Dewey's assertion that Greek art contributed to 'the quest for certainty': "Greek culture in its characteristic attitudes was definitely esthetic. Works of art are qualitative wholes; "pieces" of them are merely physical. The Greek urn as well as the Greek statue and temple were works of art; complete and, as we still say, *finished*. Measure, fixed limits, fixed ration and proportions, are the mark of everything that truly is." – Dewey, *Logic*, p. 89

²⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 87

Another mitigating factor in relation to Dewey's assessment of Aristotle, is his assertion that philosophy frequently reinforces pre-existing underlying tendencies, which occur naturally and are therefore not spurred by ulterior motives. Thus, the "arrested development" of philosophy mentioned above can be understood as a naturally occurring conservatism, not only in philosophy but in human association more generally. While such conservatism, of course, holds the potential to strengthen hierarchical and exploitative structures and relationships, Dewey sometimes explains this by means of an inherent inclination of human existence.

Thus, Aristotle's preferential treatment of reason and the life of contemplation are expressed in universal, almost essentialist terms: "Man's distrust of himself has caused him to desire to get beyond and above himself; in pure knowledge he has thought he could attain this self-transcendence."²⁷³ Such self-transcendence is sought by human beings due to an instinctive fear of risk and insecurity, implied by the precarious, uncertain and changing, hence the natural tendency toward the stable and immutable. Aristotle's stifling of change and the novel can therefore be read as an expression of the human apprehension of danger. Writes Dewey:

All the fear, disesteem and lack of confidence which gather about the thought of ourselves, cluster also about the thought of the actions in which we are partners...There is no need to expatiate upon the risk which attends overt actions...Hence men have longed to find a realm in which there is an activity which is not overt and which has no external consequences. "Safety first" has played a large role in effecting a preference for knowing over doing and making.²⁷⁴

DuBois' historical analysis of the development of hierarchical thinking is also insightful here.²⁷⁵ She argues that the instability of wars, fought by Greeks against Greeks in the fourth century B.C.E., and an attendant intensification of slavery, led to the intellectual realisation of the desire for permanence premised upon dominance and control. Importantly, this need for security in the face of extreme unrest, however, was also expressed in terms of the threat posed by woman. As we saw in the previous chapter, woman was seen as destroyer of *autarkeia*, bringing dependency, illness and even death with her otherness. It is because of this that she must be subservient and lower in rank than man, forming a lesser rung in the great chain of being.

Dewey, of course, criticises Aristotle's hierarchical ordering of beings with their innate essences, however, he softens this criticism by asserting that Aristotle was merely giving

²⁷³ Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 6

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, especially chapter six

voice to a sincere and intuitive human aversion to change and the precarious as a source of peril. This, when coupled with Dewey's historical contextualism, which similarly depicts Aristotle as merely giving voice to his particular culture in time, certainly allows for a far less austere interpretation of Deweyan critique. However, before we can make any definitive statement on what has been one of the central questions of this chapter – are Dewey and Aristotle *bio*-related or not? – we must look at one further area of disharmony between both philosophers.

5. Naturalist Credentials

We began section two with a definition of naturalism as an expression of the “approximate idea” of the world as “a unitary causally interconnected system, without ‘gods’ or systemic ‘purposes,’ and best understood, or only rationally intelligible, by scientific means.”²⁷⁶ Despite his objections to Aristotle's logic and theory of knowledge, Dewey did grant, true to his historical contextualism, that Aristotle aptly captured the scientific advances of the time. Thus, “his logic is significant for present logic in that it included in a single unified scheme the contents of both the common sense and the science of his day.”²⁷⁷ This, when taken in conjunction with our above outline of both Dewey's and Aristotle's accounts of the world as “unitary causally interconnected system,” fulfils almost every part of our definition of naturalism. However, one discrepancy remains: Aristotle's metaphysics *does* contain “‘gods’ and systemic ‘purposes.’” As we know, Aristotle posits God as non-matter or pure form, which all existences strive to be, and which we can come closest to in contemplation. But this inclusion of the divine as ultimate driving principle for the rest of the world, is blatantly at odds with our given definition. This therefore raises the question: should Aristotle really be classed as a naturalist, and hence as a member of *Bios*?

We've already discussed Dewey's opposition to a conflation of reason with the divine, and the problems he sees issuing therefrom, such as a devaluing of the practical, of the body, and of change and the novel more generally. On top of this, however, the notion of a God simply does not fit into the Deweyan, organic worldview, in which events interact to produce change and structure. Lacking a teleological account of permanence and change, and rejecting an ordering of species and essences, Dewey undermines the necessity of a final end, God. Since transaction characterises everything in this emergent universe, the possibility of an existence immune from such transaction is arrested. Thus, Dewey notes:

Whatever influences the changes of other things is itself changed. The idea of an activity proceeding only in one direction, of an unmoved mover, is a survival

²⁷⁶ Lopton, "Naturalism", p. 116

²⁷⁷ Dewey, *Logic*, p. 100

of Greek physics. It has been banished from science, but remains to haunt philosophy.²⁷⁸

For Dewey, all change is reflexive, in the sense that everything is both changed and capable of changing other things - *transaction* demands this. As existents typically emerge in the Deweyan universe, a pure, abstract existent outside of the realm of transaction and association would be misplaced in Dewey's "naturalistic empiricism."²⁷⁹

Philosophical misgivings in relation to change are intimately connected to a positing of God, the only existence in Aristotle's scheme unaffected by change. Postulating all living things as innately desiring this very immutability by achieving divinity, is for Dewey nothing more than a flight from the present, and a reiteration of the fear of change. Thus, Dewey notes:

Change [in Aristotle's metaphysics] is honestly recognised as a genuine feature of some things, but the point of the recognition is avoided by imputing alteration to inherent deficiency of Being over against complete Being which never changes. Changing things belong to a purgatorial realm, where they wander aimlessly until redeemed by love of finality of form, the acquisition of which lifts them to a paradise of self-sufficient Being.²⁸⁰

Such self-sufficient Being does not exist in Dewey's metaphysics, but represents philosophy's 'quest for certainty.' By omitting "complete Being," or an immutable existence, God, Dewey allows for an account of the world which is much more dynamic and unpredictable. The divine plan of Aristotle's teleology is dismantled, and the notion of God as the ultimate driving force of the universe is rejected. Hence, the world can be understood on its own, natural terms, while permanence and change are accommodated not by means of movement toward the divine, but rather as vital interaction of events.

Having said this, it remains to answer our question on Aristotle's status as naturalist and philosopher of *Bios*. Peter Loftson, whose definition of naturalism we've used so far, finds in Aristotle's positing of the divine an obstacle, which is nonetheless mitigated by the *type* of God Aristotle includes in his metaphysics. Thus, "Aristotle's God is a (pre-modern) physicist's god, postulated to explain (features of) the world, and importantly part of – and, apart from his explanatory role, really rather a minor part of – the whole system of the world."²⁸¹ This is certainly true, as Aristotle's God is unaware of the world, its²⁸² only role being to act as the end of perfection to which all other existences direct their movement of change (kinesis).

And yet,

²⁷⁸ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 65

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 10

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 48

²⁸¹ Loftson, "Naturalism", p. 120

²⁸² Since Aristotle's God is non-matter, ascribing a gender to God seems nonsensical.

Aristotle fails...as a naturalist primarily because of the pervasive presence of teleology in his system, including for non-living things; and also because of his acceptance of too many brute facts...the naturalist commitment is to a unitary system of the world that should actively be expected to involve components that are not apparent, and that underlie and unite appearance into larger systemic coherencies.²⁸³

We've already discussed the problematic aspects of Aristotle's teleology with its imposition of plans, which place strictures on change and the possibility of the novel. This adds a level of determinism to the universe and seems contrary to a philosophy which works from the present, from nature as a given. At the same time, taking nature as a given does not imply a fixing of nature within the confines of objectivism and a denial of *the possible* in inquiry. Hence, Loptson's allusion to "components that are not apparent," directly relates to the productive element of Dewey's conception of knowledge, which is absent in Aristotle's philosophy. On this account then, Aristotle falls short of a classification as naturalist and friend of *Bios*.

On the other hand, nature and the natural *do* play a tremendous role in Aristotle's thought. Indeed, Loptson admits that "Aristotle does have, consistently the attitude of the empirical observer and inquirer, and the target of his investigation is a single, unitary world (with the diversities that inquiry will disclose)."²⁸⁴ Not only has Aristotle been at the forefront in the development of the life sciences, but the intimacy between human existence and nature permeates his philosophy. Thus, Dewey points out that "Greek culture...is noted...for acute and varied observations of natural phenomena and for comprehensive generalizations of what was observed."²⁸⁵ In this sense, Aristotle's "philosophy was closer to empirical facts than most modern philosophies, in that it was neither monistic nor dualistic but openly pluralistic."²⁸⁶ While such pluralism is somewhat restricted by Aristotle's positing of species attendant with essences,²⁸⁷ he nonetheless appreciated nature as a multiplicity of occurring existences.

Most apposite, however, is Aristotle's treatment of human beings as beings of nature. Indeed, as Dewey also recognised: "Man was conceived in relation to nature, not as something set apart."²⁸⁸ This is precisely where Dewey and Aristotle appear to be most closely related. For both Dewey and Aristotle there is no rift between nature and human beings, as we are

²⁸³ Loptson, "Naturalism"

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Dewey, *Logic*, p. 87

²⁸⁶ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 48

²⁸⁷ Dewey continues: "his plurals fall however, within a grammatical system, to each portion of which a corresponding cosmic status is allotted. Thus his pluralism solved the problem of how to have your cake and eat it too, for a classified and hierarchically ordered set of pluralities, of variants, has none of the sting of the miscellaneous and uncoordinated plurals of our actual world." - Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Dewey, *Logic*, p. 87

embedded and naturally inhabit our environments. Reiterating Dewey's famous words, Ratner notes:

"Experience is of as well as *in* Nature." And knowledge is one of the consequences of modes of experience. In this general sense, every naturalist, philosophic or scientific, is an Aristotelian. Not because he follows Aristotle, but because, in this general sense, Aristotle followed Nature. But Aristotle also followed Plato – and therein lies the difference."²⁸⁹

Certainly Dewey's and Aristotle's affinity can be located in this esteem for nature, and while Aristotle's adoption of Platonic forms may have led to the philosophical shortcomings Dewey identifies, both philosophers are perhaps the most obvious and significant naturalists - for, as Ratner rightly claims, "Aristotle followed Nature."

This is particularly apparent, when we consider that those aspects of Aristotle's philosophy which, on Loftson's definition disqualify him from being a naturalist, can be traced to this very following of nature. Thus, Aristotle's teleological account of the world, in which all living things strive to become perfection, or God, is modelled on what he perceived to be naturally occurring processes. Just as a seed becomes a tree, or an infant becomes an adult, growth, or movement toward a mature state, seems a most plausible explanation of change and permanence, and one which necessarily must include species and essences, as this is the only way change from a specific seed, say an apple seed, to a specific actuality, an apple tree, could be understood.²⁹⁰ The alternative, of a world lacking in essences and species, would have raised the uncomfortable possibility of bizarre processes of change e.g. from an apple seed to a cow.²⁹¹

When Aristotle's explication of change is understood as a direct apprehension of movement in nature, the cosmological account of a perfect being responsible for all this movement seems most intuitive:

Those who suppose, as the Pythagoreans and Speusippus do, that supreme beauty and goodness are not present in the beginning, because the beginnings both of plants and of animals are *causes*, but beauty and completeness are in the *effects* of these, are wrong in their opinion. For the seed comes from other individuals which are prior and complete, and the first thing is not seed but the complete being, e.g. we must say that before the seed there is a man, - not the man produced from the seed, but another from whom the seed comes.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Ratner (ed.), *Intelligence in The Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy*, p. 211

²⁹⁰ Aristotle writes in the *Generation of Animals*, that beings "do not become simultaneously animal and man, or animal and horse, and so on; for the end is the last to be produced, and the end of each animal's generation is that which is peculiar to it." – GA 736b2-4

²⁹¹ 'Greek' objectivism prohibited a more fluid metaphysical explication, such as Dewey's, in which the world is not made up of individual things, e.g. a cow or an apple. In fact, "Dewey avoids the assumption that there are sharp divisions in reality between one entity and another." - Dewey, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 108

²⁹² *Met.* 1072b 31- 1073a3

And so it is ultimately with Aristotle's God, from whom the movement of all existents stems. We can see, then, that the naturalist disqualifiers of 'God' and 'teleology' are actually incorporated into Aristotle's metaphysics out of his regard for nature. Similarly, we previously²⁹³ noted that an omission of the Deweyan productive element of inquiry was a result of 'Greek' objectivism, which again, is rooted in direct perception of nature. Indeed, it is due to this objectivism that knowledge remained *in* nature. Thus, of all three disqualifying aspects – God, teleology and occlusion of the non-apparent - we can say they are expressive of the centrality of nature in Aristotle's philosophy. Surely then we can concede that naturalism should in some sense be a term applying thereto.

Perhaps we have been working with a too narrow definition of naturalism. Dewey's former student, Walter Veazie, provides the following:

The thesis of naturalism, Aristotelian and modern, is this: man is a piece of the earth – not an exception, nor one with something added from outside.²⁹⁴

'As we said, this is the most important commonality between Dewey and Aristotle. Veazie continues:

man and his behaviour are as illustrative of nature as is an atom or a solar system. There are not two world...Nature becomes, among other things, that which includes man with all his ways and byways. Nature is that, and a good deal of Dewey's metaphysics is an attempt to make sure it is not forgotten. With Aristotle it was taken for granted.²⁹⁵

Veazie's definition of naturalism entitles both philosophers to the term 'naturalist.' Their rejection of transcendentalism and atomism, and their ensconcing of the human being in nature, give credence to their general commitment to nature. Adopting this broader definition of Veazie's then, allows us to tie the forgoing account of Aristotle's philosophy of nature to our underlying thesis which identifies both Dewey and Aristotle as naturalists, and as friends of *Bios*. The latter designation, however, requires some more scrutinising, which we will undertake in the context of a summation of the main points made in this chapter.

²⁹³ See section three.

²⁹⁴ Veazie, "John Dewey and the Revival of Greek Philosophy", p. 4

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

6. To Bio or not to Bio?

We began with an elucidation of Aristotle and Dewey as friends of *Bios*, related by their common emphasis on contingency and the relational. Accordingly, "friends of Bios tend...to root themselves in the biological realm and utilise organic metaphors...They prize relationships, connections, and continuities."²⁹⁶ This emphasis on the biological was indeed made obvious in our account of both philosophers' metaphysical systems. And yet, despite our initial identification of harsh Deweyan criticism as mere family infighting, we soon encountered misgivings reminiscent of philosophies of *Mathema*. Explicating ancient Greek metaphysics in its echoing of Greek art, Dewey writes: "Measure, fixed limits, fixed ration and proportions, are the mark of everything that truly is."²⁹⁷

This surely is a description of the characteristics of that other group of philosophers, the friends of *Mathema*, who favour the measurable and immutable. Indeed, the immutable, fixity, and a limiting of change, for Dewey, seem to be present ubiquitously in Aristotle's philosophy, hence Dewey's rather serious indictment:

With slight exaggeration, it may be said that the thoroughgoing way in which Aristotle defined, distinguished and classified rest and movement, the finished and the incomplete, the actual and potential, did more to fix tradition, *the* genteel tradition one is tempted to add, which identifies the fixed and regular with reality of Being and the changing and hazardous with deficiency of Being than ever was accomplished by those who took the shorter path of asserting that change is illusory.²⁹⁸

This certainly is an exaggeration, and one Dewey is unlikely to have sustained, as even he recognised Aristotle's aiming at an *accommodation* of both permanence and change.²⁹⁹ And yet, Dewey felt that this accommodation placed restrictions on change, and stifled the possibility of the novel.

Not only was the Aristotelian circumscriptive treatment of change present in his metaphysics, but also in his epistemology and logic. Thus,

Change *as such* escapes intellectual apprehension. It can be known only in so far as change tends to *move toward* a final and unchanging limit. Change is known, in other words, only as it is enclosed within fixed limits. From the side of knowledge and logical forms, the changing is sensible, particular or partial, while the measured whole, defined by limits, is the rational.³⁰⁰

Indeed, this elevation of the rational further reinforces, for Dewey, the inferiority of the mutable, and lies at the heart of the gravest of philosophic sins, the abdication of

²⁹⁶ Boisvert, "Heteronomous Freedom", p. 132

²⁹⁷ Dewey, *Logic*, p. 89

²⁹⁸ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 48

²⁹⁹ We already noted this in section two.

³⁰⁰ Dewey, *Logic*, p. 89

responsibility for the amelioration of present problems. All of this takes place in the name of 'the quest for certainty,'³⁰¹ itself an expression of the antagonism met by change, the novel and the precarious.

Having said this, there are mitigating factors, which seem to cushion Dewey's heavier blows. When we take into consideration Dewey's assertion that there is an innate, *human* tendency to avoid change and uncertainty, Aristotle's longing for permanence and the immutable seems understandable, almost inevitable. Similarly, Dewey's historico-cultural contextualist interpretation of philosophy somewhat diminishes criticisms levelled against Aristotle's teleological account of the universe with the divine as ultimate driving force; his favouring of reason and the life of contemplation; his positing of species with their inherent essences; and of his objectivism.

In fact, in relation to the latter, it appears inconceivable that Aristotle should have stepped outside of the confines of his particular historical situation and adopted an understanding of change, the full development of which Dewey locates in a theory of evolution published more than two millennia after Aristotle's death. Speaking of a "*reversed attitude of science toward change*,"³⁰² Dewey writes:

Completion of the cycle of scientific reversal may be conveniently dated from the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. The very title of the book expresses a revolution in science, for the conception of biological species had been a conspicuous manifestation of the assumption of complete immutability.³⁰³

In contrast to this philosophy of immutability, Dewey believes that modern-day philosophers are capable of interpreting nature as a dynamic and limitless realm.³⁰⁴ Hence, the fundamental difference between modern and ancient conceptions of Nature lies "in the idea that the universe is now conceived as open and in process while classical Greece thought of it as finite in the sense in which finite means finished, complete and perfect."³⁰⁵ Thus, the closed, complete universe of Aristotle with its substances, species and essences, becomes much more fluid as permanence and change are no longer a function of teleological unfolding.

We must reiterate, though, that this does not imply a replacement of a world of stasis with a world of flux – this would be an unkind and inaccurate characterisation of both metaphysical

³⁰¹ Thus, "exaltation of pure intellect and its activity above practical affairs is fundamentally connected with the quest for a certainty which shall be absolute and unshakeable." – Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 5

³⁰² Dewey, *Logic*, p. 97. Emphasis mine.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ For more on Dewey and Darwin see Dewey, J., *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1910

³⁰⁵ Dewey, *Logic*, p. 98

accounts. Nor would it serve the purpose of Dewey's critique, as "philosophies of flux also indicate the intensity of the craving for the sure and fixed. They have deified change by making it universal, regular, sure."³⁰⁶ Positing change as that which is certain, philosophies of flux feed into the 'quest for certainty' by overemphasising mutability, thus distorting the balance between change and permanence. As we know, such balance is also what Aristotle sought, and it is *this* quest which ultimately binds Dewey and Aristotle.

Having said all this, we can conclude that Aristotle's perceived *Mathema* tendencies can be undone, especially in light of Dewey's historical contextualism, and his emphasis on innate human apprehension of change and the precarious - but most importantly because of Aristotle's primary concern with a harmonious explication of change and permanence. Since this question is pivotal in both thinkers' philosophies, and since we have already established Aristotle's naturalist credentials in the previous section, we can rightfully restore Aristotle to the realm of *Bios*, and reconnect those bonds of friendship which so obviously link Dewey and Aristotle.

Placing this recognition within the context of the overarching narrative of this thesis, we can now move on to explore Aristotle's impact upon Dewey's understanding of the self, having outlined the many common assumptions of their respective metaphysical theories. We have established what the world Dewey's self inhabits, looks like, and we can trace many of its features to the thought of Aristotle. There are also significant differences between both philosophers, which come to the fore in Dewey's critique of Aristotle's establishment of the "great chain of being," rationalised by Aristotle via essences, and an emphasis on reason as guarantor of certain truth. While Dewey may not have fully appreciated the role women were assigned in this systematisation in the name of the 'quest for certainty,' his undermining of Aristotle's hierarchical essentialism, his rejection of teleology, and his view of knowledge as productive, lead me to conclude that Dewey's metaphysics forms a useful base from which to eventually construct a feminist-pragmatist self in chapter four.

By moving from the finished, complete world of Aristotle to the ongoing, incomplete world of Dewey, we can overcome many of the limitations placed upon change out of a fear of instability (often understood as originating in woman), to a much more flexible understanding of change. What shape this takes in terms of the self, and how it corresponds to Aristotle's more rigid conception of the mutability of selves, will be the topic of the next chapter.

³⁰⁶ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 49

Chapter 3. Change in Dewey's and Aristotle's Self

The young are not as yet as subject to the full impact of established customs. Their life of impulsive activity is vivid, flexible, experimenting, curious. Adults have their habits formed, fixed, at least comparatively. They are the subjects, not to say victims, of an environment which they can directly change only by a maximum of effort and disturbance...Yet they wish a different life for the generation to come. In order to realise that wish they may create a special environment whose main function is education.

- Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*

The previous chapter determined the kind of world selves are a part of, and designated Dewey and Aristotle philosophers of *Bios*. The common identification of these two philosophers as naturalists gives some credence to Randall's assertion that it would be easy to "exhibit Dewey as an Aristotelian more Aristotelian than Aristotle himself."³⁰⁷ While we can certainly say that Dewey and Aristotle share a bond owing to their naturalism and their placement in the sphere of *Bios*, we should remain cautious, though, of a conflation of their respective philosophies. There are several areas of discord where these two philosophies of nature are concerned, some of which we will return to in this chapter within the context of an analysis of Dewey's and Aristotle's ethics. Having outlined change and its implications in relation to Dewey's "ground-map of metaphysics" and Aristotle's study of "being qua being," we are now in a position to explore change as it functions in terms of Dewey's and Aristotle's explication of the self. As we will see, this explication is intimately linked to the ethical thought of both philosophers, hence the chapter will begin with a general discussion of ethics as expounded by Aristotle and Dewey.

This examination of the self as moral being will help to further clarify the relationship between Dewey and Aristotle on the one hand, and will provide us with a clearer picture of Dewey's view of selfhood, on the other. In turn, this will enable us to use Dewey's depiction of the self (which we will have shown to be informed by Aristotle's philosophy) in explicating a feminist-pragmatist self, and its experience of transformative processes, in the next chapter. Since Dewey can only be understood in terms of his relationship to Aristotle's thought, it is vital that we illuminate this with regard to change, before setting about the establishment of the feminist-pragmatist self.

³⁰⁷ Randall Jr., "Dewey's Interpretation of the History of Philosophy", p. 102

I should point out also, at this point, that several aspects of Dewey's and Aristotle's ethical thought will be covered only in passing, if at all (such as Aristotle's positing of contemplation in the good life, for example).³⁰⁸ This is not to indicate the irrelevance of such topics, indeed, they may be fruitfully explored elsewhere, however, a streamlining of the ethical thought of both philosophers is unavoidable in the context of the overall argumentation of this thesis.

1. Moral Naturalism and Action

Let us begin then, with some general remarks on Dewey's and Aristotle's moral philosophy. In both cases, metaphysical tenets are translated into the realm of ethics. This is not surprising, as ethics and metaphysics, like most areas of philosophical study, cannot be clearly cordoned off and isolated from each other. The conterminality of metaphysics and ethics is particularly pronounced in the philosophies of Aristotle and Dewey, though, as we can see their naturalistic metaphysics reflected in their respective naturalistic moral philosophies. Since human beings are embedded in nature, and since this forms the starting point of any naturalistic metaphysics, then surely morality must also be a natural part of our experiences and of us as moral selves? Dewey clearly seems to think so. Refuting the claim that naturalism equates to materialism, "depriving [experience] of all ideal significance,"³⁰⁹ Dewey places the ideal within an unfinished world, waiting to be discovered and influenced by us. Hence, "ideal qualities are as relevant to the philosophic theory of nature as are the traits found by physical inquiry."³¹⁰

Experience, for Dewey, "reaches down into nature," and so it is with morality:

If experience actually presents esthetic and moral traits, then these traits may also be supposed to reach down into nature, and to testify to something that belongs to nature as truly as does the mechanical structure attributed to it in physical science.³¹¹

Here, then, we have the naturalism of the organic Deweyan worldview incorporating a naturalistic account of morality. Such an account necessarily recognises the moral potential of even the most apparently mundane situation. This is illustrated by the following example:

³⁰⁸ Unfortunately I am unable to discuss Aristotle's theorising on friendship, which has been cited by both Fahy and Pagan as an aspect of Aristotelian philosophy which somewhat mitigates the charge of ethical egoism levelled against the Stagirite, thereby bringing him more in line with pragmatist philosophy. For more on this see Pagan, "Configuring the Moral Self: Aristotle and Dewey", and Fahy, "A Comparison of the Ethical Thought of Aristotle and John Dewey", especially chapter four

³⁰⁹ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 13

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13

more deliberation than physical training does, inasmuch as it has not been reduced to such a precise system³⁵⁷

While making the point that we would not deliberate about things we cannot affect, Aristotle notes that deliberation is concerned with "practical measures,"³⁵⁸ hence its connection to practical wisdom. By noting that our agency affects things "not always in the same way," he is drawing attention to the contingency of action, which is always situated in a particular context. This context-specificity, and the resultant unpredictability and spontaneity of actions, for Aristotle, is particularly amplified in the fields of medicine and navigation, which, like politics more generally, are not 'exact sciences,' but rather sciences of inexactness and trial-and-error.

This is not to assert the ineptitude of these sciences, but rather to highlight the importance of context and practice in learning how to become a good doctor or navigator. Just as a coach has to consider the variables of a particular training regime for a particular athlete, so a doctor has to consider the variables of prescribing medication for a particular patient. Such variables can include the patient's weight, age, gender, previous record of physical and mental health, living arrangements, and so on. Even when the physician decides upon a suitable treatment in *this* specific situation with *this* specific patient, she may still find the treatment ineffective or counterproductive, and want to change course.

We can see, then, that medicine, like navigation, is a matter of steering the patient in the right direction, rather than clearly setting out the exact path to recovery. This steering involves attempts, which in practice may turn out to be the direction one wants to go in, or may not, in which case alternative courses will have to be decided upon, and this is where deliberation and *phronesis* play their part. Aristotle's explication of virtue via the doctrine of the mean in accordance with the *orthos logos*, adopts this experimental aspect of medicine and navigation and applies it to moral conduct.³⁵⁹ Thus, having come to the conclusion that "in all our conduct it is the mean that is to be commended,"³⁶⁰ Aristotle notes:

but one should incline sometimes toward excess and sometimes towards deficiency, because in this way we shall most easily hit upon the mean, that is, the right course.³⁶¹

³⁵⁷ NE 1112b1-6

³⁵⁸ NE 1112a31

³⁵⁹ Drawing upon D.S. Hutchinson's work, Gerasimos X. Santas also notes that the inexactness of medicine was "standard theory," simply adopted by Aristotle in the context of the character virtues. For more on this see Santas, G. X., "Does Aristotle Have a Virtue Ethics?" in *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, Statman, D. (ed.), Georgetown University Press, Washington, D. C., 1997, pp. 275-276

³⁶⁰ NE 1109b24

³⁶¹ NE 1109b25-27

Responding to Sidgwick's critique of lack of method determining the mean, we can now see that Aristotle does give us a method, an experimental one, which again reminds us of the philosophical affinity between Aristotle and Dewey.

4. The Habituated Self in the Moral Situation

Experimentation, as we know, plays a vital role in Dewey's philosophy, including in his moral thought. Indeed, his theory of inquiry, which advocates experimentation in its positing of a productive view of knowledge, was devised specifically with the aim of undoing the rigid distinction between knowledge and moral knowledge already remarked upon earlier in this chapter. Dewey makes this point in "From Absolutism to Experimentalism,"³⁶² where he traces his intellectual development and its culmination in pragmatism, or "experimentalism" as he calls it:

I became more and more troubled by the intellectual scandal that seemed to me involved in the current (and traditional) dualism in logical standpoint and method between something called "science" on the one hand and something called "morals" on the other. I have long felt that the construction of a logic, that is, a method of effective inquiry, which would apply without abrupt breach of continuity to the fields designated by both of these words, is at once our needed theoretical solvent and the supply of our greatest practical want.³⁶³

The arbitrary dichotomy between science and morals is further undermined by a recognition of the abundant potential of morality in our day-to-day interactions with others, which Dewey so aptly illustrates with the case of the open/shut window. Having thus established the importance of a unified approach to knowledge – moral or otherwise – it remains to be seen what place Dewey assigns to this in the context of moral action.

In typically pragmatist fashion, Dewey begins by looking closely at the concrete situation a moral agent may find herself in. Not all situations, for Dewey, are moral ones, as we have learnt to deal with certain situations in more or less profitable ways. Having found our solution to a situation appropriate and useful, there is obviously no need to substitute this particular solution for another, hence the rather straight-forward application of the same solution to the familiar problem. Matters become somewhat more complicated in a situation wherein we do not know which way to act. These situations, then, are problematic in the truest sense of the word, hence the frequent conflation of "problematic situation" and "moral situation."³⁶⁴

³⁶² Dewey, J., "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol 5: 1929 - 1930, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1984

³⁶³ Ibid., p. 156

³⁶⁴ See also Welchman, *Dewey's Ethical Thought*, p. 170

Determining and obtaining the good for oneself and for the community is not simply a matter of obtaining knowledge, but is a matter of action – that is, we must *do* ethics and politics.

Aristotle returns to this in Book X when, having outlined *eudaimonia* and the virtues, he asks:

Should we, then, think that our decision [to study these] has achieved its end? On the contrary, the aim of studies about action, as we say, is surely not to study and know about a given thing, but rather to act on our knowledge. Hence knowing about virtue is not enough, but we must also try to possess and exercise virtue, or become good in any other way.³²⁰

Action, then, is a hallmark of the successful student of the poliscraft, who is assumed to become an active citizen-ruler,³²¹ promoting the good on an even grander scale than mere individual *eudaimonia*. This emphasis on action and its role in the context of a joint understanding of ethics and politics, is clearly shared by Dewey and Aristotle. Further areas of accord between these two thinkers' respective moral philosophies will be explored below.

2. Moral Certainty

Aristotle qualifies his lectures known to us as the *Nicomachean Ethics* with the statement that “the same degree of precision is not to be expected in all discussions,”³²² hence “our account of this science [politics] will be adequate if it achieves such clarity as the subject-matter allows.”³²³ We should not think of politics as an ‘exact science,’ as it were, as its subject-matter does not permit for exactitude. Instead,

we must be satisfied with a broad outline of the truth; that is, in arguing about what is for the most part so from premises which are for the most part true we must be content to draw conclusions that are similarly qualified. The same procedure, then, should be observed in receiving our several types of statement; for it is a mark of the trained mind never to expect more precision in the treatment of any subject than the nature of that subject permits; for demanding

Athens, 1974, where it is defined as “the art or craft of creating a polis, keeping it going, guiding it into change for the better, guarding it from change for the worse”, n. 1, p. 142 in Chambliss

³¹⁹ NE 1103b26-31

³²⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Irwin, T. (ed.), Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis, 1999, NE 1179a35-1179b4

³²¹ Schofield points out that in the *Politics*, Aristotle ascribes the virtue of practical wisdom (*phronesis*) only to rulers of a polis. He interprets this as follows: “Aristotle’s thought must be that mere subjects – subjects of free status though they may be – have too little opportunity to develop properly the disposition enabling them to make important life choices which practical wisdom gives a person. They may to an extent be courageous and restrained: private individuals are thought to engage in decent behaviour no less than despots – in fact, rather more so (NE X.8.11179a6-8). But they will not achieve the complete virtue of a truly good man. Only a citizen who participates in rule will be capable of the practical wisdom needed for that.” - Schofield, M., “Aristotle’s Political Ethics” in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, Kraut, R. (ed.), Blackwell, Oxford, 2006, p. 321. More on *phronesis* below.

³²² NE 1094b3

³²³ NE 1094b2

logical demonstrations from a teacher of rhetoric is clearly about as reasonable as accepting mere plausibility from a mathematician.³²⁴

Politics, and its subcategory ethics, are concerned with what is “for the most part true” rather than with truth as an absolute. Unlike logic, politics is only able to deal with what is likely. In this context, ‘truth’ is somewhat indeterminate, to be understood simply as a “broad outline of the truth.” This epistemological uncertainty is reminiscent of the theory of inquiry held by Dewey. As we noted in the previous chapter, ‘truth,’ for Dewey, is rather a misleading term, and one he replaces with ‘warranted assertibility.’ This is typical of the pragmatist tradition more generally, which is sceptical of appeals to a singular ‘truth,’ and instead posits an interpretation of knowledge referred to as ‘fallibilism.’

Fallibilism rejects the absolute and universal truth presumed by Aristotle’s logic, for example, and finds knowledge claims subject to revision and flexible alteration. This is not the same as a complete denial of supposed givens, which would equally confine us in an elevation of unassailable uncertainty, but rather constitutes an openness toward those givens, allowing for re-examination.³²⁵ Dewey’s ‘warranted assertibility’ substitutes ‘truths’ with working hypotheses, thereby enabling agency in a world which is determined and certain to some extent, yet indeterminate and uncertain in its receptivity to a re-evaluation of knowledge claims. Here, epistemology informs and is informed by a naturalistic metaphysics which is fundamentally structured by the problem of permanence and change.

As we know, Dewey thought Aristotle to drastically undermine the precarious and changing nature of the world, and indeed the latter’s teleology seems to imply a constriction of the novel and mutable. Aristotle’s reliance upon absolute truth appears to reflect this, as there is no need for doubt or a revisiting of ‘truth’ in a fixed and unalterable universe, in which change only occurs within the confines of a divine, or a species plan. And yet, in politics and ethics, ‘truth’ in this absolute sense, is deemed impossible. We are told that the subject-matter of this particular field of study is too vague and cannot provide us with *the* truth, but rather with an approximation of truth. Thus, Dewey and Aristotle share an appreciation of uncertainty in ethico-political knowledge. While Aristotle drops what we would now term a ‘fallibilistic’ epistemological approach when it comes to his systems of logic and metaphysics, Dewey’s entire philosophy is permeated by relative uncertainty, reserved by Aristotle solely for political science.

³²⁴ NE 1094b21-27; see also NE 1103b34-1104a3

³²⁵ See Grey, T. C., “Freestanding Legal Pragmatism” in *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture*, Dickstein, M. (ed.), Duke University Press, Durham & London, 1998, p. 260

3. Context, Duty Ethics, and the Virtues

The indeterminateness of knowledge claims assumed by pragmatists is strengthened by a regard for context, as 'truths' discovered in one situation may not hold for another, and therefore need to be re-evaluated. This is also acknowledged by Aristotle in his discussion of justice in Book V of the *Ethics*.³²⁶ Here Aristotle notes the difficulty of legislating for a diversity of situations, and the necessary problem universal generalisations hold for the particular. Writes Aristotle:

all law is universal, but in some areas no universal rule can be correct; and so where a universal rule has to be made, but cannot be correct, the law chooses the [universal rule] that is usually [correct], well aware of the error being made.³²⁷

In politics, universalisations and appeals to *the* truth are rather tricky. Having already warned us that we may only expect to deal with insights permitting of a "broad outline of truth," Aristotle points out that determining what to do in particular situations is especially difficult:

Now questions of conduct and expedience have as little fixity about them as questions of what is healthful; and if this is true of the general rule, it is still more true that its application to particular problems admits of no precision. For they do not fall under any art or professional tradition, but the agents are compelled at every step to think out for themselves what the circumstances demand, just as happens in the arts of medicine and navigation.³²⁸

Aristotle is telling us that the imprecision characteristic of politics, and therefore of ethics, is particularly pronounced when considering the right course of action in specific circumstances. This implies an uncertainty and lack of moral command, making us the sole reference point for the appropriate action in the particular situation. For Aristotle, there are no rules or mathematical formulae to be followed, guiding us in moral conduct. Instead, each person needs to ascertain for herself whether a specific act is an act of virtue or of vice *in the context of* the situation she finds herself in.

In *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey rejects the reliance of duty ethics on rules and calculations, and instead places the onus of moral decision-making on the individual rather than on a universal formula.³²⁹ Noting that rule-based ethics often descend into casuistry due to their inability to accommodate the particular, he writes:

³²⁶ For the sake of brevity, I will sometimes refer to the *Nicomachean Ethics* as the *Ethics*, the main text under scrutiny here. Where appropriate I will also draw upon the *Eudemian Ethics*, however, this will be clearly indicated (EE).

³²⁷ NE 1137b14-17. We are to remedy this as the following passages states: "And so, whenever the law makes a universal rule, but in this particular case what happens violates the [intended scope of] the universal rule, on this point of the legislator falls short, and has made an error by making an unqualified rule. Then it is correct to rectify the deficiency" – NE 1137b20-25

³²⁸ NE 1104a4-10

³²⁹ By duty ethics I mean Kantian and utilitarian ethical theories.

rigid moral codes that attempt to lay down definite injunctions and prohibitions for every occasion in life turn out in fact loose and slack. Stretch ten commandments or any other number as far as you will by ingenious exegesis, yet acts unprovided for by them will occur...The only truly severe code is the one which foregoes codification, throwing responsibility for judging each case upon the agents concerned, imposing upon them the burden of discovery and adaptation.³³⁰

Just like Aristotle, Dewey asserts the role of the particular person in the particular situation over and above any certain, universal rule or formula of moral conduct.

In the absence of moral imperatives and instructions, both philosophers admit a degree of inexactness and uncertainty in their respective accounts of ethics. This has led duty theorists to deny the adequacy of moral philosophies lacking in what they perceive to be *clear* guidance in *all* moral situations. While the absolute moral certainty and universality sought by such critics certainly cannot be accommodated in either the Deweyan or the Aristotelian ethical scheme, we are not, however, totally left to our own devices in terms of moral action. Thus, Dewey locates the usefulness of rules not in their exact prescription of action, but in their generality. Moral rules should be treated like rules-of-thumb rather than as literal commands to be applied uniformly and without any regard for context-specificity.

Instinctively, moral rules, such as the 'golden rule,' generally constitute a good indication of how one is to act. However, when such a rule becomes fixed, to be followed in every possible instance, the potential for moral harm is abundant. Morality is reduced to obedience to commands, "depriv[ing] moral life of freedom and spontaneity"³³¹ and "magnify[ing] the letter of morality at the expense of its spirit."³³² Besides, rule-based ethics often fall short of their self-proclaimed capacity to command the right action in every conceivable situation.³³³ Instead, rules should be treated as guiding principles, as rough aids in determining which action to take. The context of a particular situation can never take second place to a moral rule, imposed from without. For Dewey, "a moral principle, then, is not a command to act or forbear acting in a given way: *it is a tool for analyzing a special situation*, the right or wrong being determined by the situation in its entirety, and not by the rule as such."³³⁴

Aristotle also mentions a principle in the context of moral action, the *orthos logos*, or right principle. The same passage which likens politics to medicine and navigation, tells us that we have recourse to this principle, and that this should be obvious:

³³⁰ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 103. See also p. 277 of Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics* for more on casuistry and its implications.

³³¹ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 278

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 277

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 280

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

Now, that we should act according to the right principle is common ground and may be assumed as a basis for discussion (the point will be discussed later, both what 'the right principle' is, and how it is related to the other virtues).³³⁵

It is less clear why, exactly, resorting to the *orthos logos* should be so apparent, and yet he reiterates this when he returns to his discussion of the right principle in Book VI.³³⁶ Some translations suggest 'contemporary academics' as common proponents of the *orthos logos*, and generally we can assume these to come under the *endoxa*, or reputable opinions, used by Aristotle as part of his endoxic method. Aristotle often begins by establishing these reputable opinions and works from them to arrive at certain insights by untangling contradictions, or puzzles (*aporiai*).³³⁷ References to commonly held beliefs are therefore not unusual in Aristotle's philosophising.

What does seem rather perplexing, is the fact that the *orthos logos* in fact tells us very little about what we should do in a moral situation. Aristotle's later equation of the *orthos logos* with *phronesis*, practical wisdom or prudence,³³⁸ does little by way of assuaging those with a hunger for certainty and universality. While we know *phronesis* to be paramount for the attainment of the good,³³⁹ to be truly virtuous,³⁴⁰ it is similarly lacking in rules and formulae. *Phronesis* is an intellectual virtue possessed by the practically wise person (*phronimos*), enabling one to deliberate as to the best course of action in a given situation.³⁴¹ What this course of action may consist in, is dependent on the particular situation of the moral agent, indeed it *must* be so, for *phronesis* deals with action, which is always context-dependent. Thus, prudence must "take cognisance of particulars, because it is concerned with conduct, and conduct has its sphere in particular circumstances."³⁴²

This is also the reason *phronesis* should be understood separately from theoretical wisdom which treats of necessary truths, rather than practical wisdom's contingent truths. In Book VI.6, Aristotle writes: "if what is good and healthy for human beings and for fish is not the same, whereas what is white or straight is always the same, everyone would also say that the

³³⁵ NE 1103b32-34

³³⁶ NE 1144b22-24

³³⁷ For more on this see Kraut, R., "How to Justify Ethical Propositions: Aristotle's Method" in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, Kraut, R. (ed.), Blackwell, Oxford, 2006

³³⁸ NE 1144b24-29: "the right principle is that which accords with prudence. So it appears that everybody as it were divines that virtue is a state of this kind, namely in conformity with prudence. But we must go a little further than this, because virtue is not merely a state in conformity with the right principle, but one that implies the right principle; and the right principle in moral conduct is prudence."

³³⁹ NE 1144b30-33: "Thus we see from these arguments that it is not possible to be good in the true sense of the word without prudence, or to be prudent without moral goodness." See also NE 1145a1-3.

³⁴⁰ NE 1144b15-17

³⁴¹ NE 1141b9-14; 1140a26-29; 1140b5-7; 1140b20-25

³⁴² NE 1141b16

content of wisdom is the same in every case, but the content of prudence is not."³⁴³ Since whiteness and straightness are presumed to be 'universals,' unchanging and "the same in every case," they come under the purview of theoretical wisdom, while the changing and unpredictable fall under practical wisdom.³⁴⁴ We can see, then, how Aristotle's metaphysical beliefs in relation to permanence and mutability explored in the previous chapter come critically to inform his positing of knowledge and the intellectual virtues in relation to moral conduct.

Returning to the issue of moral guidance, though, we still have to contend with the charge of a lack of direction in determining which way to act in moral situations. The *orthos logos*, and later *phronesis*, need to be understood in conjunction with Aristotle's explication of virtue as a mean state, outlined in the doctrine of the mean.³⁴⁵ For Aristotle, virtue "is a mean condition, inasmuch as it aims at hitting the mean."³⁴⁶ Far from being a straight-forward midpoint, such as four is between two and six, Aristotle's mean is *relative*. He explains this via an analogy with an athlete's training regime:

Supposing that ten pounds of food is a large and two pounds a small allowance for an athlete, it does not follow that the trainer will prescribe six pounds; for even this is perhaps too much or too little for the person who is to receive it – too little for Milo [a famous wrestler] but too much for one who is only beginning to train. In this way, then, every knowledgeable person avoids excess and deficiency, but looks for the mean and chooses it – not the mean of the thing, but the mean relative to us.³⁴⁷

This elucidation of virtue, then, which posits deficiency and excess as vice, and virtue as a mean state relative to us, functions under the auspices of the *orthos logos* exercised by the *phronimos*.³⁴⁸

As we know, *phronesis* and its subject matter moral conduct, have to do with particulars, and so Aristotle reminds us that when "we are discussing actions, although general statements

³⁴³ NE 1141a25-26; emphasis added

³⁴⁴ As C.D.C. Reeve points out, Aristotle "thinks that (true) sciences mirror the structure of the world, and that such sciences themselves have a particular structure: they consist of syllogistic deductions (*sullogismoi*) from first principles, which are necessarily true definitions of the essences of the beings with which the sciences deal...he thinks that this divide among the beings and sciences must itself be mirrored in the structure of our souls." We will discuss the implications of the division of the soul at a later stage. For more on this see Reeve, C. D. C., "Aristotle on the Virtues of Thought" in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, Kraut, R. (ed.), Blackwell, Oxford, 2006, p. 198 ff.

³⁴⁵ The doctrine of the mean applies only to the character virtues, not the intellectual virtues, as Aristotle clarifies: "By virtue I mean virtue of character; for this is about feelings and actions, and these admit of excess, deficiency, and an intermediate condition." – NE 1106b17-19

³⁴⁶ NE 1106b27

³⁴⁷ NE 1106a35-1106b7

³⁴⁸ NE 1107a1-3: "So virtue is a purposive disposition, lying in a mean that is relative to us and determined by a rational principle, and by that which a prudent man would use to determine it."

have a wider application, particular statements are closer to the truth.”³⁴⁹ This then allows him to discuss the virtues in greater detail, drawing attention to his list of virtues and vices, which include, among others, the virtue of ‘courage’ of which the deficiency is ‘cowardice’ and the excess ‘rashness’; or the virtue of ‘truthfulness,’ a mean between the deficiency ‘understatement’ and the excess ‘boastfulness.’ In this manner, Aristotle explicates the character virtues with his doctrine of the mean.³⁵⁰

It will be said at this juncture, that even this exposition of virtue as a mean condition between two vices derived in conjunction with the *orthos logos*, is still lacking in precise instructions as to what to do in a moral situation. Aristotle’s remarks indicating a later elucidation of the right principle seem only to refer to the conflation of the *orthos logos* with prudence in Book VI, and therefore don’t give us any further insight into the content of the *orthos logos*. This has been lamented as a serious shortcoming in Aristotle’s moral philosophy. For example, Henry Sidgwick notes in his *The Methods of Ethics*, that Aristotle merely “tell[s] us that the Good in conduct is to be found somewhere between different kinds of Bad. This at best only indicates the *whereabouts* of Virtue: it does not give us a method for finding it.”³⁵¹ What critics such as Sidgwick fail to take account of is Aristotle’s *awareness* of the somewhat indeterminate nature of virtue and moral action. It is precisely this indeterminateness which makes it so difficult for us to be virtuous. Thus, having defined virtue as a mean state between deficiency and excess, he writes that it is

for this reason...difficult business to be good; because in any given case it is difficult to find the mid-point – for instance, not everyone can find the centre of a circle; only the man who knows how.³⁵²

This difficulty is exacerbated by the demands of the particular context of the situation.

He continues:

it is easy to get angry – anyone can do that – or to give and spend money; but to feel or act towards the right person to the right extent at the right time for the right reason in the right way – that is not easy, and it is not everyone that can do it. Hence to do these things well is a rare, laudable and fine achievement.³⁵³

Determining virtuous action within specific situations is a challenging task in which a particular agent seeks virtue relative to herself, as a mean condition. Morality, therefore, is not a matter of black and white, upon which we can legislate in abstract without taking context and the particular moral agent into consideration.

³⁴⁹ NE 1107a30-32

³⁵⁰ NE Book II.7-8

³⁵¹ Sidgwick, H., *The Methods of Ethics*, Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis, Cambridge, 1981, p. 376

³⁵² NE 1109a24-26

³⁵³ NE 1109a26-30; see also NE 1106b19-23

The contingency of Aristotle's view of moral conduct, as we know, is intimately connected to the role he assigns to change and permanence in his metaphysics. Accordingly, the identification of theoretical wisdom with 'universals,' on the one hand, and the identification of practical wisdom with 'particulars,' on the other, stem from the prioritising of the divine and immutable over the non-divine and mutable, which so irritated Dewey, and which we've traced to early Greek positing of 'opposites.' Aristotle divides the rational soul into a scientific and a calculative part, telling us that "with one we study beings whose principles do not admit of being otherwise than they are, and with the other we study beings whose principles admit of being otherwise."³⁵⁴ Prudence naturally comes under the calculative part, and although this is paramount in helping us decide how to act in moral situations, there is no doubt as to the superiority of theoretical knowledge:

That is why people call Anaxagoras and Thales and men like them wise but not prudent when they observe them to be ignorant of their own advantage; and say that their knowledge is exceptional and marvellous and profound and supernatural, but useless, because the objects of their search are not human goods. But prudence is concerned with human goods, i.e. things about which deliberation is possible; for we hold that it is the function of the prudent man to deliberate well; and nobody deliberates about things that cannot be otherwise³⁵⁵

Thus, change, and the capacity to change things through action lead us to the further five-fold categorisation in term of polarity and analogy: theoretical wisdom – universals – passivity – the divine – the immutable and practical wisdom – particulars – action – the human – the mutable.

It should be obvious from this that Aristotle never thought of practical wisdom and the moral conduct it is supposed to help us determine, as anything more than an indication, or as Sidgwick calls it, a *whereabouts*. This is why Aristotle describes moral conduct as 'navigation' and 'medicine.'³⁵⁶ Navigation and medicine are imprecise pursuits, which require a fair amount of estimation and experimentation. *Phronesis* and the *orthos logos* are deliberative indications, which were never intended to hold the *content* sought for by proponents of duty ethics. Thus, in Book III.3, Aristotle writes:

Deliberation is not concerned with those branches of knowledge that have precise rules of their own (e.g. writing, for we do not hesitate over the way in which a word should be written). The effects about which we deliberate are those which are produced by our agency but not always in the same way; e.g. the practice of medicine and of finance, and of navigation – which calls for

³⁵⁴ NE 1139a7-9

³⁵⁵ NE 1141b4-12

³⁵⁶ NE 1104a4-10; see also NE 1137a14-17, where Aristotle again uses the analogy of medicine to highlight the difficulty in being truly just, which is context-specific: "because in medicine too, although it is easy to know what honey and wine and hellebore and cautery and surgery are, to know *how* and to *whom* and *when* they should be applied to produce health is no less a task than to be a qualified doctor."

more deliberation than physical training does, inasmuch as it has not been reduced to such a precise system³⁵⁷

While making the point that we would not deliberate about things we cannot affect, Aristotle notes that deliberation is concerned with "practical measures,"³⁵⁸ hence its connection to practical wisdom. By noting that our agency affects things "not always in the same way," he is drawing attention to the contingency of action, which is always situated in a particular context. This context-specificity, and the resultant unpredictability and spontaneity of actions, for Aristotle, is particularly amplified in the fields of medicine and navigation, which, like politics more generally, are not 'exact sciences,' but rather sciences of inexactness and trial-and-error.

This is not to assert the ineptitude of these sciences, but rather to highlight the importance of context and practice in learning how to become a good doctor or navigator. Just as a coach has to consider the variables of a particular training regime for a particular athlete, so a doctor has to consider the variables of prescribing medication for a particular patient. Such variables can include the patient's weight, age, gender, previous record of physical and mental health, living arrangements, and so on. Even when the physician decides upon a suitable treatment in *this* specific situation with *this* specific patient, she may still find the treatment ineffective or counterproductive, and want to change course.

We can see, then, that medicine, like navigation, is a matter of steering the patient in the right direction, rather than clearly setting out the exact path to recovery. This steering involves attempts, which in practice may turn out to be the direction one wants to go in, or may not, in which case alternative courses will have to be decided upon, and this is where deliberation and *phronesis* play their part. Aristotle's explication of virtue via the doctrine of the mean in accordance with the *orthos logos*, adopts this experimental aspect of medicine and navigation and applies it to moral conduct.³⁵⁹ Thus, having come to the conclusion that "in all our conduct it is the mean that is to be commended,"³⁶⁰ Aristotle notes:

but one should incline sometimes toward excess and sometimes towards deficiency, because in this way we shall most easily hit upon the mean, that is, the right course.³⁶¹

³⁵⁷ NE 1112b1-6

³⁵⁸ NE 1112a31

³⁵⁹ Drawing upon D.S. Hutchinson's work, Gerasimos X. Santas also notes that the inexactness of medicine was "standard theory," simply adopted by Aristotle in the context of the character virtues. For more on this see Santas, G. X., "Does Aristotle Have a Virtue Ethics?" in *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, Statman, D. (ed.), Georgetown University Press, Washington, D. C., 1997, pp. 275-276

³⁶⁰ NE 1109b24

³⁶¹ NE 1109b25-27

Responding to Sidgwick's critique of lack of method determining the mean, we can now see that Aristotle does give us a method, an experimental one, which again reminds us of the philosophical affinity between Aristotle and Dewey.

4. The Habituated Self in the Moral Situation

Experimentation, as we know, plays a vital role in Dewey's philosophy, including in his moral thought. Indeed, his theory of inquiry, which advocates experimentation in its positing of a productive view of knowledge, was devised specifically with the aim of undoing the rigid distinction between knowledge and moral knowledge already remarked upon earlier in this chapter. Dewey makes this point in "From Absolutism to Experimentalism,"³⁶² where he traces his intellectual development and its culmination in pragmatism, or "experimentalism" as he calls it:

I became more and more troubled by the intellectual scandal that seemed to me involved in the current (and traditional) dualism in logical standpoint and method between something called "science" on the one hand and something called "morals" on the other. I have long felt that the construction of a logic, that is, a method of effective inquiry, which would apply without abrupt breach of continuity to the fields designated by both of these words, is at once our needed theoretical solvent and the supply of our greatest practical want.³⁶³

The arbitrary dichotomy between science and morals is further undermined by a recognition of the abundant potential of morality in our day-to-day interactions with others, which Dewey so aptly illustrates with the case of the open/shut window. Having thus established the importance of a unified approach to knowledge – moral or otherwise – it remains to be seen what place Dewey assigns to this in the context of moral action.

In typically pragmatist fashion, Dewey begins by looking closely at the concrete situation a moral agent may find herself in. Not all situations, for Dewey, are moral ones, as we have learnt to deal with certain situations in more or less profitable ways. Having found our solution to a situation appropriate and useful, there is obviously no need to substitute this particular solution for another, hence the rather straight-forward application of the same solution to the familiar problem. Matters become somewhat more complicated in a situation wherein we do not know which way to act. These situations, then, are problematic in the truest sense of the word, hence the frequent conflation of "problematic situation" and "moral situation."³⁶⁴

³⁶² Dewey, J., "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol 5: 1929 - 1930, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1984

³⁶³ Ibid., p. 156

³⁶⁴ See also Welchman, *Dewey's Ethical Thought*, p. 170

According to Dewey, moral theory has vastly underestimated the importance of this lack of knowledge in the problematic situation. In fact, ethicists have confused the truly problematic situation with the straight-forward, familiar situation, in which an agent knows perfectly well how to act to achieve a certain end. For Dewey though, the characteristic element marking a moral situation is precisely a lack of knowledge, and the resultant confusion and uncertainty about both the means and the end one is to achieve. Rather than recognising "the element of uncertainty and of conflict in any situation which can properly be called moral,"³⁶⁵

the conventional attitude sees in that situation only a conflict of good and of evil; in such a conflict, it is asserted, there should not be any uncertainty. The moral agent knows good as good and evil as evil and chooses one or the other according to the knowledge he has of it.³⁶⁶

By attributing *a priori* moral knowledge to us as agents, these theories deny the conundrum moral situations pose for us, as we are torn between opposed courses of action and possibly contradictory, undisclosed outcomes.

In order to clearly elaborate upon what, exactly, happens for Dewey in the moral situation, we must introduce an important concept, *habit*. We pointed out in chapter two, that permanence in the Deweyan worldview results from the temporal ordering of vitally interacting events. However, there is another stabilising force in this universe, which allows us to predict and anticipate, and this force is habit. In every-day usage, this term is often associated with an undesirable, yet hard to reject pattern of behaviour, a *bad habit*, such as smoking or overeating. For Dewey, however, habits need not always carry these negative connotations, but may refer to all those other acts we undertake repeatedly in our daily lives, and which therefore have a strong effect on the kind of person we are. Indeed, as he points out, the rather positive habits of "walking, playing a musical instrument, typewriting"³⁶⁷ are usually thought of as skills, as assets which we have acquired over a period of time.

While such 'good' habits are viewed as "passive tools waiting to be called into action from without,"³⁶⁸ it is important to recognise their involuntary nature, which is so readily attributed in the case of their 'bad' counterparts. We certainly never lament the fact that the proverbial bike-riding is a lasting ability, acquired by most of us as children through repeated practice and exercise. In this sense, cycling is no different than the repeated act of inhaling nicotine, which similarly contains a learnt element (smokers can easily identify a smoking novice, as big puffy smoke clouds are a sign of smoke not being inhaled properly into the

³⁶⁵ Dewey, "Three Independent Factors in Morals", p. 279

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 24

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

lungs).³⁶⁹ And yet, we would not dream of chastising somebody (or ourselves) for cycling a bike, asking them to try harder to give up that stubborn habit.

Instead, we think of cycling as a useful capacity, to be called upon as the need arises. Once this need does arise, however, riding a bike is not just a matter of willing to ride it or not, in fact, we have no choice *but* to – ‘one never forgets how to ride a bike.’³⁷⁰ This involuntary nature of habits is therefore extremely important, as

all habits are affections...all have projectile power...a predisposition formed by a number of specific acts is an immensely more intimate and fundamental part of ourselves than are vague, general, conscious choices.³⁷¹

The unconscious patterns set by repeated action thus have the power not only to determine future actions, but to constitute our very selves.³⁷² We acknowledge this readily in our daily identifications: “I’m a smoker”, “I’m vegetarian”, “She’s a runner” – all of these indicate a conflation of the self with the repeated actions carried out by the self. Indeed, the self, when understood in this way, ceases to be a being distinct from its actions, but rather becomes one with them.

When we add the involuntary aspect of habits to this explication of selfhood, we realise that habits are so powerful precisely because they induce us to act in certain ways, while the self comprises interacting habits:

It [habit] overrides our formal resolutions, our conscious decisions. When we are honest with ourselves we acknowledge that a habit has this power because it is so intimately a part of ourselves. It has a hold upon us because we are the habit.³⁷³

For Dewey, then, the self is a fund of habits, acquired over the course of a lifetime. Since we are all differently situated and undergo non-identical experiences, character emerges as a function of the unique existence of dynamic habits.

Again, habits need to be understood with regard to context. As we live in particular situations, the nature of our selves will be influenced by the type of situations we inhabit.

³⁶⁹ There is of course the difference of an addictive substance, nicotine, in the case of smoking, which induces one to repeat the activity over prolonged periods. However, when ‘learning’ to smoke this is presumably not yet a significant factor.

³⁷⁰ This is why Dewey also says the following: “All habits are demands for certain kinds of activity; and they constitute the self. In any intelligible sense of the word will, they *are* will. They form our effective desires and they furnish us with our working capacities.” - Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 25

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² This is not to imply that habits cannot fall into disrepair, however, their involuntary nature and unconscious functioning makes it difficult to ascertain when this has actually happened. We will return to this in chapter four.

³⁷³ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 24

Habit, then, is a product of the interaction of self with its particular circumstances. James Gouinlock aptly describes this as follows:

Hunger and the desire to appease it...do not by themselves determine a way of getting food. The limitless ways that men acquire food are determined by the nature of their environment. Biological impulses interact with environment to create a specific mode of behaviour – a habit. So it is with all habits: They are ways of organism and environment acting together...As interaction goes on and individuals undergo differing histories, each individual is prepared to act with his environment in certain ways more or less unique to himself.³⁷⁴

A farmer, who lives off the produce of his own land, will have very different habits in relation to food, than will a person living in a city. The prolonged process of planting seed, tending to crops, harvesting and so on, which the farmer undertakes to obtain his food (and presumably at the same time make a living), gives our farmer a completely different set of habits than our urban dweller.

The latter may wander into a supermarket once a week to do her grocery shopping, or order take-out food. The point is that the type of habits both of our agents come to amass are a direct result of their interaction with their particular environments – Dewey also calls this *transaction*. Transaction consists in the *mutual* effect self and environment have on each other. For example, the farmer's habits of food acquisition will be influenced by how conducive this season's weather is to growing produce, or by the capacity of his cattle to stave off illness. Similarly, the city dweller's 'food habits' will depend upon the proximity of shops, or the price of take-out food. One's environment, then, clearly impacts upon how one goes about obtaining sustenance.

Conversely, it is also true that the self significantly bears upon the environment it inhabits. Thus, the farmer's decision to give up crop farming and focus only on dairy and cattle, may mean that large parts of his farm are sold to a developer, who subsequently makes a tennis court out of them; or our city dweller may decide she no longer likes the little food market on the corner, but prefers the bigger, more shiny supermarket further away, and thereby contributes to the eventual closure of the food market, incapable as it is, to continue trading. Environments and selves therefore exist in mutually affecting relationships, which uniquely give us our habits – uniquely because although there may be many farmers and many urban dwellers, whose food acquisition habits may resemble each other's, nobody's habits are exactly the same.

We each bring our set of habits, obtained in differing contexts and therefore characterised by specific histories, with us. Thus, in the case of the urban dweller, habits pertaining to her food dislikes and likes, the location of her apartment, her nutritional requirements, food

³⁷⁴ Gouinlock, *John Dewey's Philosophy of Value*, p. 95

allergies, budgetary constraints, responsibility for feeding others with their respective food likes and dislikes, etc. – all of these, while broadly similar to other city dwellers, are still unique to our particular agent in the context of her particular life. Selves are, of course, far more complex than mere food obtaining entities, indeed we are made up of a myriad of habits, reflecting the plethora of actions we undertake as part of our quotidian existences. We have habits of sleeping, reading, writing, loving, working, caring, relaxing, and so on. Recognising the diversity and the uniqueness of these dynamic habits constituting the self, Dewey believes that it is precisely the singularity of our particular set of habits, which allows for the emergence of character.

Let us return to the moral situation as envisaged by Dewey. Since we are particular agents with a unique fund of interacting habits, the situation we find ourselves in, becomes characterised and structured by said habits. Our modes of being, our ways of dealing with the world, are present as delimiters of the problematic situation. This is perceived as disharmonious as our habits are deemed incapable of restoring a sense of equilibrium. Not having access to *a priori* moral knowledge, we are at a loss as to how to act. Dewey now introduces a new concept, *dramatic rehearsal*, or *deliberation*, to help us resolve the morally problematic situation. Deliberation, according to Dewey, is a trial, an imaginative playing-out of the various courses we could potentially take. Hence, “deliberation is a dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various competing possible lines of action...Deliberation is an experiment in finding out what the various lines of possible action are really like.”³⁷⁵

Rather than blindly acting in a problematic situation, deliberation allows us to try out certain actions in our minds in order to ascertain the appropriateness of each action, and the end(s) it may achieve. As Dewey notes:

The experiment is carried on by tentative rehearsals in thought which do not affect physical facts outside the body. Thought runs ahead and foresees outcomes, and thereby avoids having to await the instruction of actual failure and disaster. An act overtly tried out is irrevocable, its consequences cannot be blotted out. An act tried out in imagination is not final or fatal. It is retrievable.³⁷⁶

We can see then, how Dewey's approach to the moral situation relies heavily on experimentation, which is intimately bound up with his theory of inquiry and its recourse to ‘scientific method.’ The latter consists in approaching a specific problem, limiting the field of inquiry to this problem, weighing and specifying all the evidence, creating hypotheses, testing them by experiment, and resolving the problem. The moral situation, in this sense, is no different, except for the imaginative nature of experimentation, which allows us to carry

³⁷⁵ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 190

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

out actions and anticipate their consequences in thought. We can then make a better-informed decision as to which course of action to take in a specific problematic situation.³⁷⁷

While an explication of the moral situation in terms of 'scientific method' aptly illustrates the role experimentation plays in Dewey's rather indeterminate interpretation of moral conduct, there is also an alternative, aesthetic reading. For Dewey, the problematic situation is tainted by incoherence and dissonance.³⁷⁸ Dramatic rehearsal can help us undo this dissonance in order to restore the situation's harmoniousness and balance. Once this is achieved, the situation enters its "consummatory phase," a phase of restored equilibrium, which, Dewey claims, constitutes art. Steven Fesmire advances this aesthetic approach to the moral situation, as he posits dramatic rehearsal's role in moral imagination. On this account, the moral situation

is characterised by disrupted habit, disharmony, imbalance, loss of adaptation to surroundings, and competition and disunity among habits and desires. The troubled situation becomes increasingly organised as a reflective phase of rehearsal is provoked. The conclusion or destination is a consummatory phase of recovered action and stability felt to answer and give closure to the problem. It is characterised by relative equilibrium and reunification of desires.³⁷⁹

Just as a 'scientific' interpretation of the moral situation is reminiscent of the experimental character attributed by Aristotle to moral conduct, so an emphasis on the aesthetic recalls the ancient Greek appreciation of beauty in ethics. In fact, Dewey praises this with particular reference to Aristotle's doctrine of the mean:

The Greek emphasis upon *Kalokagathos*, the Aristotelian identification of virtue with the proportionate mean, are indications of an acute estimate of grace, rhythm, and harmony as dominant traits of good conduct...The modern mind has been much less sensitive to esthetic values in general and to these values in conduct in particular.³⁸⁰

A conflation of aesthetic and ethical terms is not uncommon, as what is 'good' becomes identified with beauty and what is 'bad' with ugliness. This is evinced by every-day

³⁷⁷ Noting that "dramatic rehearsal is *not* the only method of reasoning that has a place in ethics," Welchman points out: "when at the conclusion of a dramatic rehearsal of the opportunities of action open to us we have perceived which possibilities are good, a decision about what goods to pursue still has to be made..." 'dramatic rehearsal,' as Dewey describes it, is not a method of making moral judgments. Dramatic rehearsal is a method of *gaining information necessary for moral judgment.*" - Welchman, *Dewey's Ethical Thought*, p. 173 & p. 171

³⁷⁸ Writes Dewey: "A habit, a routine habit, when interfered with generates uneasiness, sets up a protest in favour of restoration and a sense of need of some expiatory act, or else it goes off in casual reminiscence. It is the essence of routine to insist upon its continuation. Breach of it is violation of right. Deviation from it is transgression." - Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 76

³⁷⁹ Fesmire, *John Dewey and Moral Imagination*, p. 80

³⁸⁰ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 271. Note that *kalos* means 'beauty' and *agathon* 'the good.' For more on this see Garrison, J. W., "The Aesthetics of Ethical Virtues and the Ethical Virtues of Aesthetics", *Interchange*, Vol. 35, No. 2, June 2004, pp. 229 - 241, esp. p. 236

expressions such as 'she is an ugly person,' or 'that was an ugly thing to do,' or 'what a beautiful human being.'

Aristotle's ethical treatises are full of such aesthetic markers, particularly in terms of the beautiful, noble or fine, *kalon*. Accordingly, the virtuous person not only acts toward the right person, at the right time, to the right extent, and so on, but he also acts out of a regard for the fine, for "anyone who does not delight in fine actions is not even a good man."³⁸¹ The good man takes pleasure in the fine, just as he finds pleasure in virtuous action as

lovers of beauty find pleasure in things that are pleasant by nature, and virtuous actions are of this kind, so that they are pleasant not only to this type of person but also in themselves. So their life does not need to have pleasure attached to it as a sort of accessory, but contains its own pleasure in itself.³⁸²

The fine is not just an addendum to virtuous activity, but rather an intrinsic part of it. Finding the mean of virtue relative to us, then, goes beyond the experimentation characteristic of navigation and medicine, and includes an appreciation of the fine and the pleasure this gives to the truly virtuous person in virtuous conduct. Hence, just as Dewey can be read as proffering either a 'scientific' or an 'aesthetic' reading of moral conduct,³⁸³ so Aristotle's experimental method and his positing of the fine can be understood within the same two hermeneutic models.

We would be wise, however, to resist any prioritising of 'scientific' over 'aesthetic,' or vice versa, as surely this constitutes merely another arbitrary dualism, which Dewey would have opposed. Indeed, as Pappas also notes, Dewey employed *both* scientific *and* aesthetic metaphors in his philosophy.³⁸⁴ For example, in *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey explains habit by likening it to "physiological functions, like breathing, digesting"³⁸⁵ on the one hand, and to "arts"³⁸⁶ on the other. As functions, habits "requir[e] the cooperation of organism and environment. Breathing is an affair of the air as truly as of the lungs; digesting an affair of food as truly as of tissues of stomach."³⁸⁷ As arts, habits "convey the same idea," as "they involve skill of sensory and motor organs, cunning or craft, and objective materials."³⁸⁸ Both metaphors are equally adept at explicating habits and the transacting relationships selves sustain with their environments. Any interpretation of moral conduct, then, which severs the aesthetic and the scientific, has to be flawed.

³⁸¹ NE 1099a18

³⁸² NE 1099a13-17

³⁸³ As noted, Fesmire's text is an expression of the latter, while Welchman is in favour of the former – see in particular p. 173, n.18 in *Dewey's Ethical Thought*

³⁸⁴ Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics*, p. 20

³⁸⁵ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 14

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15

5. Paradigmatic Character and Ideals

It should be clear from what has been stated above, that Dewey's and Aristotle's ethics are incompatible with any rule-based or utilitarian approach. Far too much emphasis is placed on the particular, be it in relation to the *orthos logos* or *phronesis*, or the transaction demanded by habits and their environments. Since universalism is prohibited by this context-specificity, mathematical formulae and rules to be applied in any moral situation and by any moral agent are shown to be ineffective. Morality, on this account, is far more fluid and indeterminate than duty ethics will admit. Rather than prescribing moral actions in accordance with universal commands or calculations, Dewey and Aristotle want us to treat moral conduct as a matter of experimentation, of trial-and-error. The exactitude insisted upon by duty ethicists is absent on this view, as is the strong emphasis on moral certainty and truth.

It might be apt at this juncture to discuss another factor contributing to the experimental nature of Aristotle's ethics. In Book II.4, Aristotle distinguishes between acts which are truly virtuous and acts which only appear to be so. Having asserted that it is possible for a person to become virtuous by carrying out virtuous actions, he responds to the objection that such actions may not intrinsically be virtuous.³⁸⁹ For example, a person may write a poem for the first time with great success, while the next poem she produces is disastrous. Lacking in knowledge about poetry, the success of the first poem was mere whim, and not the product of deliberate and informed effort. As Aristotle says:

It is possible to put a few words together correctly by accident, or at the prompting of another person; so the agent will only be literate if he does a literate act in a literate way, that is, in virtue of his own literacy.³⁹⁰

A sole focus on the action, rather than the agent, cannot tell us about the virtuous nature of either.

For this reason Aristotle stipulates that the

agent also acts in a certain state, that is, (1) if he knows what he is doing, (2) if he chooses it, and chooses it for its own sake, and (3) if he does it from a fixed and permanent disposition.³⁹¹

While (1) is designated the least significant of these three conditions of virtue,³⁹² (2) and (3) are "of supreme importance,"³⁹³ and rather controversial from an interpretive point of view. Suffice it to say, that (2) rules out actions done for an end other than virtue. Thus, abstaining

³⁸⁹ NE 1105a17-20

³⁹⁰ NE 1105a22-25

³⁹¹ NE 1105a30-1105b1

³⁹² NE 1105b2-3. In this passage there appears to be some tension around Aristotle's contrasting of virtues and the arts. In the context of the arts, knowledge is important. For more on this see Broadie, *Ethics With Aristotle*, pp. 82 - 90

³⁹³ NE 1105b4

from drink-driving simply because one's car has been freshly lacquered, and one does not want to risk getting it scratched, is choosing the virtuous action (not to drive drunk) not for its own sake, but for the sake of the car. This choice (*prohairesis*) of virtuous action for its own sake can also be understood as acting for the sake of the fine,³⁹⁴ as the fine is an intrinsic part of virtue.³⁹⁵ As a lover of virtue and the fine, the virtuous person will be consistent in her actions, hence the "fixed and permanent disposition" of (3).

Since virtuous actions make us virtuous, we become the type of person who characteristically undertakes such actions – not only sporadically, but on a lasting basis. Aristotle can thus assert that

acts, to be sure, are called just and temperate when they are such as a just or temperate man would do; but what makes the agent just or temperate is not merely the fact that he does such things, but the fact that he does them in the way that just and temperate men do. It is therefore right to say that a man becomes just by the performance of just, and temperate by the performance of temperate acts; nor is there the smallest likelihood of any man's becoming good by not doing them.³⁹⁶

Having thus outlined the three conditions for truly virtuous activity, Aristotle once again notes that the virtuous person becomes virtuous by carrying out virtuous actions, although truly (rather than seemingly) virtuous action depends on a regard for stipulations (1) – (3).

In the absence of any precise procedure for moral judgement and in light of Aristotle's emphasis on the particular in moral situations, this explication of virtuous activity has been interpreted as an exhortation to 'act as the virtuous person would act.' The above passage states that we can recognise virtuous acts as virtuous if we deem them typical of a virtuous person. Moreover, we become 'good' only by carrying out these actions, which are characteristic of the 'good' person. Hence, in order to become virtuous we should emulate the virtuous person, or what Alderman terms the "paradigmatic character."³⁹⁷

According to some virtue theorists, such a paradigmatic character need not belong to a real person, as we can simply rely on the fact that we already know, to a large extent, what the virtues consist of. Indeed, Aristotle assumed his audience to be morally well-trained and the virtues he enumerated rather obvious *as virtues*. Thus, Peter Simpson, writes:

when Aristotle wants to confirm that virtue is a mean between extremes he looks to particular virtues and particular acts to do this. It is, one may say,

³⁹⁴ See Broadie, *Ethics With Aristotle*, p. 89 for a resolution of the problem created by Aristotle's use of *prohairesis* as choice for its own sake, or for the sake of something else (advanced in the *Eudemean Ethics*).

³⁹⁵ The complexities involved in interpreting (2) are explored in Williams, B., "Acting as the Virtuous Person Acts" in *Aristotle and Moral Realism*, Heinaman, R. (ed.), Westview Press, Boulder, 1995 and Hursthouse, R., "The Virtuous Agent's Reasons: A response to Williams" in the same volume.

³⁹⁶ NE 1105b6-12

³⁹⁷ Alderman, "By Virtue of a Virtue", p. 160

because his hearers already recognise particular virtues and vices and their corresponding acts that they are able to see, when Aristotle makes it explicit, that in each case virtue is a mean and vice an extreme.³⁹⁸

Recognising virtues such as courage, truthfulness, modesty, and so on, allows for the imagining of a paradigmatic character in possession of all of these virtues. In turn, this enables us to imitate the virtuous person, modelling our acts upon theirs.³⁹⁹ While this interpretation of paradigmatic character may permit us to think of the virtuous person, it relies upon *a priori* moral knowledge, which Dewey is critical of. For Dewey, we do not know in advance what the best course of action in any given situation is, which logically also precludes us from knowing what the virtuous person would do in our place. With that said, it might be possible to expand upon the paradigmatic character by means of Dewey's use of 'ideals.'

By enlisting the virtues as characteristics of the 'good' person, the virtues become rather akin to ideal character traits. Thus, the 'good' or the 'ideal' person of paradigmatic character is just, honest, modest, and so on. Ideals, however, on Dewey's view, represent a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they are mere abstractions, flights of fancy, which have become utterly divorced from the real world and their capacity to guide us. He warns in *Ethics*:

They [ideals] are thought of sometimes as fixed, remote goals, too far away to be ever realised in conduct and sometimes as vague emotional inspirations which take the place of thought in directing conduct.⁴⁰⁰

On the other hand, however, ideals, in particular what Dewey calls the *democratic ideal*, have the potential to become tools to be utilised for instantiating the possible. The democratic ideal "serves accordingly as basis for criticism of institutions as they exist and of plans of betterment."⁴⁰¹ In this sense, then, ideals are valuable instruments as long as they remain part of our concrete existences. Hence, the democratic ideal "is not 'ideal' in the sense of being visionary and utopian; for it simply projects to their logical and practical limit forces inherent in human nature and already embodied to some extent in human nature."⁴⁰² Ideals, then, when kept within the realm of the here-and-now, can serve to highlight what can realistically be brought about.

This normativity and instrumentality of ideals allows for a reading of paradigmatic, or ideal character, which is consistent with both Dewey's and Aristotle's indeterminate account of ethics. If we treat modesty, honesty, temperance, etc. as ideal characteristics of the virtuous

³⁹⁸ Simpson, P., "Contemporary Virtue Ethics and Aristotle" in *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, Statman, D. (ed.), Georgetown University Press, Washington, D. C. , 1997, p. 249

³⁹⁹ See Hursthouse, R., *On Virtue Ethics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p. 36

⁴⁰⁰ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 273

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 349

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

person, we need to pay particular attention to how they actually come to be realised in the specific situation. On this account, ideal character traits are not abstractions of virtue, never to be obtained, but rather instruments of “criticism” and “plans of betterment” pertaining to the person. In the particular moral situation this means that the virtues or character ideals act, just like Dewey's principles, as rough guides in determining what constitutes virtuous action.⁴⁰³ It does not mean that we know how the virtuous person would act in every conceivable moral situation, indeed this cannot be so as virtue is relative to us and context-specific, that is, dependent upon acting to the right extent, toward the right person, at the right time, and so on. Indeed, the very fact that we must act virtuously in the process of obtaining virtue means not that we have *a priori* moral knowledge, but returns us to Aristotle's view of virtue as a matter of experimentation.

The seeming paradox posed by Aristotle's advice to engage in virtuous action without actually possessing virtue is aptly explained by Alderman:

The ordinary moral agent, not possessing paradigmatic character, must emulate the actions of some moral exemplar in order to acquire that character. But it is only when one possesses some specific character trait exemplified by a paradigmatic individual that one fully sees the point of what one is doing when one acts morally. In this the moral agent is like the new student in a physics course who must perform an experiment whose fundamental principle he does not understand. Much trial and error is required before one gets the thing right, and getting it right involves working on both the experiment and the principle at the same time. So it is also with the moral life.⁴⁰⁴

Once again, the heuristic manner of virtue acquisition is highlighted as the moral agent attempts to determine virtue from situation to situation, just as a doctor would with her different cases by trying this remedy in this instance and that in another, proceeding by trial-and-error rather than by definitive rule or formula. Importantly, the ideal character trait of the virtuous person comes to inform the moral situation during this process, as it is only with the acquisition of virtue that “one fully sees the point of what one is doing when one acts morally.”

Recalling Dewey's emphasis on the concreteness of ideals, we can see then, that Aristotle's account of the relationship between virtuous action and virtuous character similarly incorporates a regard for the gradual, experimental instantiation of virtue, and its effect on the agent and the particular situation(s) as this process continues. As one makes attempts at acting virtuously, and as one comes closer to obtaining virtue, virtue becomes integrated not only into the agent's character, but into her search, her attempts at further capturing virtue.

⁴⁰³ Compare this to Pappas' discussion of “ideal character” in *John Dewey's Ethics*

⁴⁰⁴ Alderman, “By Virtue of a Virtue”, p. 160

Hence, there is a circularity involved in action, character, and what one perceives or understands virtue to be.

For example, the more adept one becomes at being honest, the more one realises that honesty is not telling the truth in every instance, regardless of whether one may hurt somebody's feelings over questions like "do you like my new haircut?" or "do these trousers suit me?" While honesty thus informs the moral agent, as a virtue, or an ideal, it becomes modified as the agent heuristically comes to determine what honesty is. This, then, is rather akin to Dewey's positing of ideals, which are always open to revision, being ends that are attached, rather than separated, from our concrete situations.⁴⁰⁵ Ideals, or virtues, are informed by and in turn inform the moral situation and the agent as she tries to obtain virtue within the particular context of her life.⁴⁰⁶ The paradigmatic character, when understood like this, is not a representation of *a priori* moral knowledge, but rather an aid in the experimental realisation of virtue as it pertains to us in the specific moral situation.

6. Virtue Ethics, Pleasure, and Reciprocity of Character and Action

We have deemed duty ethics to be incompatible with Dewey's and Aristotle's ethics. The question remains, however, whether virtue theory fares any better in this regard. Virtue theorists frequently base their work upon Aristotle's thought (if not on Hume's or Plato's), hence one would assume a natural harmony between their respective accounts of the moral life. And yet, I would argue, that there is a major discrepancy between Aristotle's thought and recent theorising on virtue, which lies, mainly, in virtue theory's exaltation of 'character.' Virtue ethics sets itself up in direct opposition to deontological theories, in which, it is claimed, too much emphasis is placed on action. Instead, ethicists should follow Aristotle's example and regard character as primary.

In her famous article, "Modern Moral Philosophy," Elizabeth Anscombe argues that rule-based ethics are rather outdated and misled in their implicit positing of an entity issuing such rules in the first place. In the absence of a divine lawgiver, it follows that the 'moral ought' commanded by said rules should be abandoned. Writes Anscombe:

It would be most reasonable to drop it [the notion "morally ought"]. It has no reasonable sense outside a law conception of ethics...and you can do ethics

⁴⁰⁵ I believe that this is also something Martha Nussbaum includes as part of her capabilities ethic. Here capabilities (modelled upon Aristotle's virtues) are similarly open to revision and to alteration according to specific contexts. She terms this "plural specification," "multiple realisability," and "local specification." For more on this see Nussbaum, M. C., "Aristotelian Social Democracy" in *Liberalism and the Good*, Douglass, R. B., Mara, G. M. and Richardson, H. S. (eds.), Routledge, New York, 1990, esp. p. 235; and Nussbaum, M. C., *Women and Human Development*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, esp. p. 77

⁴⁰⁶ See Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics*, p. 67

without it, as is shown by the example of Aristotle. It would be a great improvement if, instead of "morally wrong," one always named a genus such as "untruthful," "unchaste," "unjust." We should no longer ask whether doing something was "wrong," passing directly from some description of an action to this notion; we should ask whether, e.g., it was unjust; and the answer would sometimes be clear at once.⁴⁰⁷

The 'moral ought' of deontological theories, then, should be replaced by a move toward the virtues and their attendant vices, such as injustice, untruthfulness, and so on. Focusing on aretaic (i.e. virtue) concepts, thus allows virtue theorists to assert the primacy of character over action, and of the virtues over rules. This favouring of character and virtue is shared by virtue theorists as a starting point in explicating the moral life.

To what extent the 'moral ought,' action, rightness, and other deontic concepts *do* play a role in virtue theories is a matter of great variance. Some theorists, like Anscombe, view deontic notions as totally defunct, while others make room for them by asserting, for example, the more or less complementary nature of virtuous character and action, holding that the latter issues from the former.⁴⁰⁸ Regardless of the more moderate expressions of virtue theory, I maintain that the whole debate about primacy of character/virtue over action/rules is fundamentally misled. The fact that virtue theorists, moderate or extreme, posit one over the other, leads to a reduction of the moral life to a false dilemma reminiscent of the chicken and egg question: which comes first, action or character? Even the short discussion on Aristotle's conditions for moral conduct and virtue acquisition proffered above, should highlight the fact that Aristotle did not prize character to a greater extent than action.

As we know, the moral agent must engage in virtuous activity if she is to become virtuous. Since this process is characterised by experimentation, character and action exist in a continuous, reciprocal relationship. A separation of character and action, or a positing of either as superior, is therefore not something Aristotle would have agreed with. Virtue theorists have painted a distorted picture of Aristotle's thought, particularly in terms of action and character. The alleged stark opposition between virtue and duty ethics is based on a fundamental misreading of Aristotle, for whom character and action are intimately connected, rather than severed and pitted against each other.⁴⁰⁹

The same can be said for Dewey, who also views character and action as fused, particularly in his positing of habit. Habits are both constituents of our selves, and actions emanating from those selves. They provide continuity and coherence to our character, and allow for a

⁴⁰⁷ Anscombe, G. E. M., "Modern Moral Philosophy", *Philosophy*, Vol. 33, No. 124, Jan. 1958, pp. 1 - 19, p. 8

⁴⁰⁸ For more on this see Statman, D., "Introduction" in *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, Statman, D. (ed.), Georgetown University Press, Washington, D. C., 1997

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30

uniqueness of selfhood. Habits are co-dependent, as they interact dynamically to make up selves structured by webs of interpenetrating grooves of being. In other words, habits do not just represent a series of disconnected acts, a random collection of self-issuing events, but rather form a stable self, which is nonetheless characterised by plasticity and flexibility.⁴¹⁰ Habits make up selves which negotiate the world with its plethora of specific situations in transaction. This is how we come to shape the environments we inhabit, while those environments also shape us.

Dewey calls the consistency and relative predictability of our actions conduct. The impact conduct has on the type of selves we become, is paramount in appreciating the circularity involved in action and character as it is expressed by habit. Hence,

if an act were connected with other acts merely in the way in which the flame of a match is connected with an explosion of gunpowder, there would be action, but not conduct. But our actions not only lead up to other actions which follow as their effects but they also leave an enduring impress on the one who performs them, strengthening and weakening permanent tendencies to act. This fact is familiar to us in the existence of *habit*.⁴¹¹

While the self is moulded by our actions, actions become informed by the continuously evolving self.

The organicism of Dewey's metaphysics thus also characterises the Deweyan view of selfhood. Selves are stable, in so far as habits are repeated actions, which are frequently submerged below consciousness. As such, habits are difficult to interrupt or change. Particularly adults, so Dewey thinks, find it hard to etch new grooves of being. Young people are more flexible and less set in their habits, hence Dewey's passion for education. This is not to assert that adults are incapable of transforming habits, but merely that "as we mature our habits become settled to the point of routine."⁴¹² However, "unless and until we get completely fossilised, we can break old habits and form new ones."⁴¹³

So much for the coherence and permanence provided by habits – on the other hand, habits are vitally interacting (as part of one's self) and transacting (with one's environments), although these distinctions are largely arbitrary as particular situations come to define our particular set of habits, which we in turn bring to particular situations to again shape our selves comprised of habits, and so on. Thus, habit comes to explain permanence and change as it functions in the Deweyan worldview with its accommodation of the predictable and stable, as well as the novel and precarious.

⁴¹⁰ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 38

⁴¹¹ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 170

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, p. 305

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

This accommodation is reflected in the Deweyan habituated self, which relies upon a stable-yet-dynamic universe to allow for action to unfold in the first place. Hence, as Fahy notes, the “ontological presuppositions [of the stable and the precarious] are required for any complete account of ethical activity, because ethical action depends upon an unfinished world.”⁴¹⁴ At the same time ethical activity must take place against a backdrop of predictability, and both predictability and spontaneity can be accounted for in a positing of habit. What habit fundamentally proposes is a circularity of action and character,⁴¹⁵ as Aristotle does with virtuous activity and virtuous character. The fact that both Dewey and Aristotle view moral action and character as mutually dependent is hardly surprising when understood in light of their experimental method and the indeterminacy of their ethical accounts.

For Dewey, the self, comprised of habits, is not simply a loose collection of repeated actions, but is interactive. And yet, “interpenetration is never total.”⁴¹⁶ It is not unusual to find selves, which are fragmented, where habits are disconnected strands of web, rather than symmetrical fibres of the same net. Such people Dewey calls “men with “pigeon-hole” minds,”⁴¹⁷ unable as they are to connect the strands of their selves by modifying severed habits. This inertness in the face of the need for changed habits, for Dewey, presents a false economy, as more damage is done to the self in preserving outmoded and unsuitable habits than in an alteration of fibres, which would allow for a re-stitching of the whole. Fragmented selves

testify to isolated compartmental habits of action. Character that is unable to undergo successfully the strain of thought and effort required to bring competing tendencies into a unity, builds up barriers between different systems of likes and dislikes. The emotional stress incident to conflict is avoided not by readjustment but by effort at confinement...Their character is marked by stigmata resulting from this division.⁴¹⁸

The dynamic nature of Dewey's self demands an integration of loose habits into the larger structure of self. Only then can the self be a more-or-less harmonious set of interpenetrating habits as it undergoes continuous adaptation in the face of its environment(s).

This emphasis on habit integration, if you will, also has aesthetic connotations, as terms such as “harmony” and “symmetry” are reminiscent of Dewey's explication of the moral situation,

⁴¹⁴ Fahy, “A Comparison of the Ethical Thought of Aristotle and John Dewey”, p. 60

⁴¹⁵ This is not to assert that *every* act is an indication of character, as we must also allow for accident. As Dewey notes: “If we confine ourselves to the consequences of this one act we shall come out with a poor reckoning. Disposition is habitual, persistent. It shows itself therefore in many acts and in many consequences. Only as we keep a running account, can we judge disposition, disentangling its tendency from accidental accompaniments.” - Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 45. For more on Dewey, Aristotle and accident or luck, see Fahy, “A Comparison of the Ethical Thought of Aristotle and John Dewey”, esp. chapter 2

⁴¹⁶ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 38

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p. 39

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

in which the “consummatory phase” is a restoring of equilibrium constituting art. By determining the best action in such a situation, we bring about a harmonious resolution to its problematic nature, while spinning another thread in the web making up our self (or reattaching or discarding an old one, for that matter). Hence, the circularity of action and character, when placed within the problematic situation, gives an aesthetic quality to both moral acts and moral selves.

Similarly, we noted the aesthetic nature of Aristotle's virtuous acts, which are undertaken for the sake of the fine, and as such are carried out with pleasure. For Aristotle, the virtuous person displays a unity of the virtues, as the possibility of singular virtues is denied by the good person's possession of *phronesis*. Thus, Aristotle counters the “dialectical argument by which it could be contended that the virtues exist independently of each other,”⁴¹⁹ and rejects its claim that “the same man is not equally well endowed by nature in respect of them [the virtues] all, so that he will be already the possessor of one, but not yet the possessor of another.”⁴²⁰ This piecemeal approach to the virtues Aristotle opposes, as

it is not possible when the virtues are those that entitle a person to be called good without qualification; for the possession of the single virtue of prudence will carry with it the possession of them all.⁴²¹

Aristotle thus designates prudence as the virtue which unifies all others. Presumably this is because the ability to determine virtuous action in the particular situation, which *phronesis* bestows upon us, is needed to carry out acts which are courageous, generous, temperate, etc. Hence, *phronesis* is like an enabler of the other virtues as it allows them to be expressed in the context of the specific situation.

What is important from our point of view, is Aristotle's stipulation of the simultaneous presence of all of the virtues in the virtuous person. Thus, we cannot be called ‘good’ if we are only brave, generous, temperate, but not honest, just, and kind, for example. Indeed, it seems counter-intuitive to think otherwise. Imagine a business person who annually displays her generosity in donating gifts to orphans at Christmas. Knowing that this person spends the rest of the year lying to the public to sell substandard baby food, we certainly would not label her character ‘virtuous.’ The virtuous person, just like a beautiful image, must be virtuous in full. Imagine a landscape painting over which somebody accidentally spilt a cup of coffee, leaving huge brown stains over the central image of the sun setting over the ocean. The picture is ruined, as the ugliness of the stain detracts from the remaining beautiful imagery of the painting. Just as the painting needs to be beautiful as a whole, so the virtuous person must

⁴¹⁹ NE 1144b33

⁴²⁰ NE 1144b34-36

⁴²¹ NE 1145a1-3

be virtuous as a unified character. Aristotle's virtuous person thus requires the same integrative nature demanded by Dewey's habituated self.

Noting Aristotle's emphasis on the holistic virtuous character, Fahy writes:

The aesthetic element of unity that virtuous acts express implicates one's entire character, and therefore the other virtues. This aesthetic, as opposed to cognitive, unity of the virtues may be expressed by the phrase that they are a matter of good taste.⁴²²

Aristotle's view of the virtuous person being in possession of all of the virtues, also further cements his claim that virtuous acts are carried out by agents "in a certain state," and from a "fixed and permanent disposition."⁴²³ The business woman poisoning children one day, and showering them with gifts the next, is not consistent in her behaviour. The virtuous person, like Dewey's habituated self, must have a character with tendencies to act in certain ways, as "actions...leave an enduring impress on the one who performs them, strengthening and weakening permanent tendencies to act." Notably, on Aristotle's view, she must enjoy doing the virtuous act, as she takes pleasure in the fine.

Why, though, should Aristotle emphasise the role of pleasure in moral action? This is because Aristotle wants to distinguish between the continent person (*enkrates*) and the virtuous person. The former, while executing the same acts a virtuous person would, differs in a major respect: the continent person undertakes seemingly virtuous acts out of self-control, whereas the truly virtuous person undertakes such acts because she desires to do so. Virtuous action, then, is not a matter of forcing oneself, but rather an activity giving pleasure to the virtuous agent. On this account, the virtuous person finds virtuous action far more enjoyable than the *enkrates*, who only reluctantly carries out the right action. This aspect of virtuous action as pleasurable is attributable to the intimacy and mutuality Aristotle gives to character and action, as the virtuous character instinctively feels desire to act virtuously. We can see here, then, that Aristotle's pleasure is closely bound to both the character and the actions of the virtuous person.

The same can be said for Dewey, who, charges utilitarian understandings of pleasure with a misled severance of character and action resulting from their bid to calculate the incalculable:

Tendency is not good enough for the utilitarians. They want a mathematical equation of act and consequence. Hence they make light of the steady and controllable factor, the factor of disposition, and fasten upon just the things which are most subject to incalculable accident – pleasures and pains – and

⁴²² Fahy, "A Comparison of the Ethical Thought of Aristotle and John Dewey", pp. 119 - 120

⁴²³ NE 1105a30-1105b1; see also 1137a21-23

embark upon the hopeless enterprise of judging an act apart from character on the basis of definite results.⁴²⁴

The tendencies of our selves to act in certain ways, are deemed irrelevant and replaced by attempts to capture the unquantifiable 'pleasures and pains.'⁴²⁵ This, according to Dewey, sets up pleasure as a distant end rather than appreciating pleasure as a present sensation, the by-product of a process of aiming at a future object.

Pleasure, then, is not something we can strive toward, but rather constitutes a quality originating in a concrete situation. Writes Dewey:

Its [hedonism's/utilitarianism's] error lies in supposing that in reflection our ideas go out to future pleasures instead of to future objects. A man in order to cultivate good health does not think of the pleasures it will bring him: in thinking of the various objects and acts which will follow from good health he experiences a *present* enjoyment, and this enjoyment strengthens his effort to attain it.⁴²⁶

Again, we can see the circularity of action and character, as the pleasure felt now comes to inform future actions and the type of person we become. Notably, Dewey praises Plato and Aristotle in this context for highlighting the importance of developing "a character which finds pleasure in right objects and pain in wrong ends."⁴²⁷

The role Aristotle ascribes to pleasure is indicative of a view of selfhood which values 'tendencies to act' over any strong demarcation of character and action. The pleasure we feel in virtuous activity simply helps to further fuse character and action as it steers the virtuous agent toward virtuous action, which we know gives us virtuous character. The person of virtuous character is better capable of feeling pleasure at the right action, which again results in virtuous action, which then reinforces virtuous character, and so on. Pleasure, then, is situated at the centre of the circle of character and action. To sever or prioritise either of these, or to place pleasure outside of the circle as *the* good, risks distortion of the moral life.

This is precisely what Dewey critiques in "Three Independent Factors in Morals," where he states that moral theories, "in their zeal for a unitary view,"⁴²⁸ have reduced the moral life to a single explanatory factor. Character, action and pleasure need to be understood in the

⁴²⁴ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 50

⁴²⁵ Dewey notes: "The significant thing in decisions proper, the course of action, the kind of a self simply, doesn't enter in; it isn't in question [in utilitarianism]. To reduce all cases of judgment of action to this simplified and comparatively unimportant case of calculation of quantities [of pleasures and pains], is to miss the whole point of deliberation." - Ibid., p. 218

⁴²⁶ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 209

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Dewey, J., "Three Independent Factors in Morals" Ibid. Vol 5: 1929 - 1930, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), 1984, p. 288. The three principles in question are: the virtuous, the good and the right (p. 286). Under this classification of reductionist "single commensurable principle[s]" (p. 288), Aristotle's thought seems to fall both under 'the virtuous' and 'the good' (p. 281, 283), which strengthens our point that Aristotle escapes such reductionism, even if Dewey may not have fully appreciated this.

context of the particular moral situation, rather than hypostatized as separated ends to be aimed at, each with their attendant theories. Recognising pleasure as part of the experience of the circularity of character and action, we can counter the separation of the self from its acts, and vice versa. Indeed, such a separation is typical of much moral theorising which severs not only action from character, but also motive from consequence.⁴²⁹

Character and action should be viewed as reciprocal, mutually affecting sides of the same coin. Deontological and virtue theories wish to see only what they've labelled 'their' side, i.e. character or action, while utilitarians extract the pleasure felt in the interchange of self and activity altogether and posit it as a consequence to be achieved at all cost. Neither of these theories, then, truly captures the moral life as Dewey and Aristotle understand it, especially not the importance attributed by both to 'tendencies.' But what are these tendencies?

7. Hexis, Voluntariness, and Responsibility of Selfhood

So far I have treated 'tendencies' in a rather vague manner. We have noted that these tendencies are tendencies to act, which lead to certain acts, which lead to certain characters, which come to possess certain tendencies to act, *ad infinitum*. They capture the dialogical relationship between character and action. In Dewey's philosophy they constitute habits, which simultaneously represent conduct and constituents of self. We encounter them in Aristotle's thought either as 'dispositions' or also as 'habits.' In fact, 'habits' take centre stage in Aristotle's *Ethics*. The Greek word for 'habit' is *hexis*, which also translates as 'disposition' or 'settled state.' Similarly, *ethos* means habit, indeed this is where 'ethics' comes from. While Dewey's habitual actions can be described as etching grooves of character,⁴³⁰ it is worth pointing out that "the Greek term *karacter* refers to "that which is cut in or marked, the impress or stamp on coins, seals, etc.""⁴³¹

Aristotle expected his audience to have received a certain amount of moral training. Such training will have consisted in habituation, or "a process called 'ēthismos,' which is to say, the inculcation of ēthē. Ēthē are habits,"⁴³² hence the importance of moral education and habit in Aristotle's thought. This etymology further draws attention to the symbiotic workings of character and action.⁴³³ Since these are so entwined, *hexis* can be translated as

⁴²⁹ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 346. Emphasis added.

⁴³⁰ Dewey uses this terminology throughout his work e.g. *Ethics*, p. 267

⁴³¹ Sichel, B. A., *Moral Education: Character, Community, and Ideals*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1988, p. 42

⁴³² Broadie, *Ethics With Aristotle*, p. 103

⁴³³ In Book II.1, Aristotle points out: "Moral goodness...is the result of habit, from which it has actually got its name, being a slight modification of the word *ethos*." – NE 1103a16-18

either disposition *or* habit, with the former placing more emphasis on the self, while the latter perhaps holds greater connotations of action. A state of character, a disposition, is a tendency to act from a stable self. We know that for Dewey, habit implies both the repeated acts executed by the person, while constituting the coherent self as a fund of habits. It seems that Aristotle had the same in mind, as *hexis* similarly denotes character *and* action, and perhaps more successfully than the clumsy English 'habit' and 'disposition.' Hence, *hexis* displays the intimacy of character and action we deemed to be typical of both Dewey's and Aristotle's self.

We have already noted the heuristic method of virtue acquisition Aristotle attributes to the self as it 'learns' virtue by carrying out virtuous acts. Thus,

the virtues we do acquire by first exercising them, just as happens in the arts. Anything that we have to learn to do we learn by the actual doing of it: people become builders by building and instrumentalists by playing instruments. Similarly we become just by performing just acts, temperate by performing temperate ones, brave by performing brave ones.⁴³⁴

The comparison here of virtue with craft is meant to highlight that virtue has to be obtained by *doing*. Repeated doing, or habituation, results in virtuous character, hence we must try to undertake appropriate actions.⁴³⁵ Habituation from a young age ensures that we become a certain kind of person. Whether we are virtuous or not depends upon the careful monitoring of repeated, appropriate action. If we habituate our selves with the wrong actions, we will find it very difficult to change, as those habits constitute *us* by forming our "second nature."⁴³⁶ This circularity involved in virtuous action and character therefore raises further questions about the responsibility we hold for the type of person we become.

Habituation ensures that we automatically tend toward that which we have so often imprinted upon our character. For Aristotle this seems quite obvious, and he chides those who would reject this thesis as 'unperceptive.' It should be most apparent that people

make themselves unjust or licentious by behaving dishonestly or spending their time in drinking and other forms of dissipation; for in every sphere of conduct people develop qualities corresponding to the activities that they pursue. This is evident from the example of people training for any competition or undertaking: they spend all their time in exercising. So to be unaware that in every department of conduct moral states are the result of corresponding activities is the mark of a thoroughly unperceptive person.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁴ NE 1103a31-1103b2

⁴³⁵ NE 1103b20-25

⁴³⁶ NE 1152a30-32: "it is easier to alter one's habits than one's nature. In fact even habit is hard to change, because it is a sort of second nature"

⁴³⁷ NE 1114a5-10

Repeated exercise makes one a fit person, who in turn is more likely to undertake exercise, who thereby maintains her fitness or becomes even fitter, and so on. Similarly, we know that laziness breeds further laziness as one becomes more and more lethargic simply by doing very little.

The enervating activity of the habituated couch potato, then, who indulges in fatty food and excessive television watching, results not in restfulness and relaxation, but rather in further laziness. The repeated actions of overeating and disengaged couch loitering, ensure that we become the kind of person who is naturally inclined toward more overeating and couch loitering. Psychologically and physiologically we become the kind of person who instinctively tends toward those actions, for as we can imagine, the lazier and unhealthier we become, the less likely we are to change our actions, simply because it is *harder* to undertake physical exercise and look after ourselves. This also means that our desire to do so will be diminished as we have learnt to experience pleasure in lying on the couch and satiating our greed for unhealthy food, a pleasure we now perceive to be infinitely more attainable than the serotonin high of a good sprint.

This is not to say that the couch potato cannot change. Indeed, she can force herself to exercise more and to change her diet, knowing that these actions will make her a healthier person. This is the *modus operandi* of the *enkrates* who, despite her desire to do otherwise, does what she knows to be right. Only when she begins to take pleasure in her healthier lifestyle, though, when she enjoys exercising and eating well, does she become the virtuous person. We can see then, that the functionings of character, action and pleasure give us a responsibility for selfhood, which Aristotle thought so obvious.

And yet, there is something troubling about this account. If habits are engrained in us since childhood, and if habits dispose us to be the kind of person who automatically acts a given way, then are we fully aware of our habits? In other words, habituation implies involuntariness, so how can we change our habits if we are not absolutely in control of them, nor possibly even conscious of them? In our example of the couch potato we can imagine that she has been raised to be unhealthy and lethargic by couch potato parents. She will therefore find her couch potato lifestyle rather unproblematic, and continue to tend toward overeating and laziness. Aristotle may interject that the couch potato is bound to encounter other people outside of her family who do not lead unhealthy lives, such as the *enkrates* or the virtuous person. Indeed, the latter may inspire the couch potato to realise she has to change. But what if the couch potato grew up in a whole society of couch potatoes, never to meet a healthy person? Does this mean that idleness and self-indulgence become the new characteristics of the paradigmatic character? This is a question of relativism, as it broaches the possibility of virtue changing in accordance with our social milieu.

As we noted earlier, Aristotle presumed his virtues to be largely self-evident, to be recognised by an existing social consensus. The audience he addresses in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is also important in this regard, as it consists mainly of future rulers, men of a certain standing who take courage, magnanimity and magnificence to be the obvious traits of a superior, virtuous leader. As Ruth Anna Putnam also notes:

Virtue ethics as done by Aristotle...assumed the existence of a stable, uniform society. However "bad" a person might be, she would know who were the "good" persons and that one ought to be, and in some sense wanted to be, like them.⁴³⁸

Added to this is the fact that the pronoun 'she' in this case, should be changed to 'he,' as a ruler typically was a male non-slave, hence only male citizens could fully become good by obtaining *phronesis*. Since *phronesis* is a condition of the other virtues, becoming fully virtuous is only possible for a small elite. Indeed, as Amélie Oksenberg Rorty points out,⁴³⁹ virtue as *excellence* is indicative of this restriction to the select few.

Virtue theorists have, however, tended to expand virtue in its accessibility to all, thereby hoping to undo the elitism of Aristotle's account:

Intent on treating every individual as equally bound by morality and equally capable of it, many contemporary virtue theorists tend to detach themselves from some of the distinctive features of classical virtue theory, which was – as the meaning of *arete* makes clear – concerned with stellar *excellence* rather than with basic competence or decency...they have tended to follow a deflationary levelling policy about the virtues, identifying the character virtues with basic decency and the cognitive virtues with minimal good sense.⁴⁴⁰

In light of Aristotle's consensus view of the virtues, it is hard to see how alternative virtues, or even virtues opposed to those of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are possible. Just as Aristotle's audience thought of the virtuous person as brave and 'manly',⁴⁴¹ so our society of couch potatoes may think of the virtuous person as lazy and self-indulgent. If neither group learns about other societies, then neither has any reason to question the virtues they hold dear. In

⁴³⁸ Putnam, R. A., "Reciprocity", *Ethics*, Vol. 98, No. 2, January 1988, pp. 379 - 389, p. 381

⁴³⁹ Rorty, A. O., "From Exasperating Virtues to Civic Virtues", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3, July 1996, pp. 303-314

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 310. Similarly, Simpson writes: "Aristotle's ethical theory is inseparable not only from the opinions of gentlemen [the endoxa], but also from the politics of gentlemen... Since contemporary virtue ethicists have no intention whatsoever of tying their theory to gentlemanly opinions, let alone gentlemanly politics, their theory is not, and could never be, Aristotelian." - Simpson, "Contemporary Virtue Ethics and Aristotle", p. 256

⁴⁴¹ Aristotle's depiction of the virtuous person as the austere patriarch is captured in several passages, e.g. in Book IX.11 he writes: "a man of resolute nature takes care not to involve his friends in his own troubles, and unless he is exceptionally insensitive cannot stand the thought of causing them pain; and in general does not give them a chance to lament with him, because he himself does not indulge in lamentation either. But womenfolk and men who are like them, enjoy having others to share their moanings, and love them as friends and sympathisers. However, it is clearly right in all circumstances to follow the better example." – NE 1171b6-13

other words, they will never recognise the cultural specificity of their particular set of virtues. On the other hand, virtues may come under scrutiny, and perhaps even be altered, if attention is paid to the *internal* disparities of our two groups.

Societies, including Aristotle's *polis*, are never homogenous, but composed of various people with differing ideas about what is good or bad, virtuous or vicious. The uniform society assumed by Aristotle was spurious, as the *polis* *did* include persons who were different and not part of the elite, hence a consideration of their conception of the virtues may have led to a radically divergent picture of paradigmatic character. Aristotle's disregard for our particular positioning within communities and the world, and the effect this may have on our understanding of the moral life, is evinced by the lack of emphasis he places upon the social, and our environments, in acquiring virtue. Certainly he stipulates that we need to be well habituated when we are younger.⁴⁴² However, it is still the agent who has to ensure virtuous action in order to become the virtuous person. To a large extent, Aristotle places the burden of responsibility upon the individual in determining who she is, much to the detriment of any outside influences which may come to shape her.

While Dewey also attributes a certain amount of responsibility to the agent in the formation of her self, he is far more aware of the creation of such a self as it transacts with its particular environment. In Dewey's view, both agent and environment exist in a reciprocal relationship, each impacting upon the other. Since our environments include other people, Dewey recognises our social embeddedness, and the effect this has upon the selves we are. Dewey argues:

if an individual were alone in the world, he would form his habits (assuming the impossible, namely, that he would be able to form them) in a moral vacuum...Responsibility and virtue would be his alone. But since habits involve the support of environing conditions, a society or some specific group of fellow-men, is always accessory before and after the fact.⁴⁴³

We come to amass habits as members of a society – couch-potato, ancient Greek, or otherwise – and even within those societies our particular positioning depends upon further groupings and intersections of those groupings, be it along religious, class, ethnic or gender lines, for example. The people we encounter in this matrix of groupings will affect us as part of our singular life experiences, a phenomenon Dewey relates to the uniqueness of character.

As it seems inconceivable for us to have developed outside of this matrix, Dewey notes that it is only in a hypothetical situation of abstraction, that sole responsibility for our habits (and hence the type of person we are), could possibly lie with us. But how do the people around

⁴⁴² NE 1179b25; NE 1180a15-20

⁴⁴³ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 16

us come to inform the kind of self we constitute? Noting the transacting relationship we share with others, he writes:

Some activity proceeds from a man; then it sets up reactions in the surroundings. Others approve, disapprove, protest, encourage, share and resist.⁴⁴⁴

In turn, we weigh and consider these reactions to modify our future behaviour, and our tendency to act a certain way.⁴⁴⁵ Hence, habits are created as part of a continuous adaptation of self to environment, while our environments similarly come to be shaped by our actions. The self, then, exists in transaction with its environment, with other people, hence the heavy responsibility attributed by Aristotle to the agent in shaping her self, is rejected. This is not to deny the responsibility of agent to selfhood altogether, but rather to resituate Aristotle's autonomous self within its specific social setting. When understood like this, a much more balanced view of responsibility can be given, taking into account the reciprocity of agent and environment.⁴⁴⁶

Let us return, however, to my original question: if habits are involuntary, how can they be changed if we are not in control of them, nor conscious of them? This question can be interpreted in two ways a) how do we change our habits if we are not conscious of them due to our particular positioning in our particular societies? Or b) how do we change our habits if we are not conscious of them as they lie beneath consciousness? We have discussed interpretation a) and shown that Dewey's emphasis on our particular environment in habit formation can undo the universalism of Aristotle's abstract virtuous person, by recognising not only the self's culture, but the unique place it occupies as it interacts with other people. We shall now address interpretation b) by countering the view of habit as totally unreflective, automatic response.

So far we have spoken of habit as repeated activity, creating selves with tendencies to act in certain ways. However, Dewey refines this view of habit, pointing out that actions need not always be performed repeatedly in order to display a tendency of character. In fact, an act may only be carried out once, and nonetheless be indicative of a person's self. Dewey explains:

we must protest against the tendency in psychological literature to limit its meaning to repetition...It assumes from the start the identity of habit with routine. Repetition is in no sense the essence of habit. Tendency to repeat acts is an incident of many habits but not of all. A man with the habit of giving way to

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ In the next chapter we will explore this in greater detail in relation to the radical transformative process of coming to feminist consciousness and the role Dewey ascribes to approval and disapproval.

⁴⁴⁶ In this context, see also Dewey's discussion of the culpability of the criminal - Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 18

anger may show his habit by a murderous attack upon some one who has offended. His act is nonetheless due to habit because it occurs only once in his life.⁴⁴⁷

Even though the act of killing is executed only once, it is still an expression of the agent's character. Thus, habit is not 'just' an activity, re-enacted over and over again, but rather a *tendency* to act a certain way.

The essence of habit is an acquired predisposition to *ways* or modes of response, not to particular acts except as, under special conditions, these express a way of behaving. Habit means special sensitiveness or accessibility to certain classes of stimuli, standing predilections and aversions, rather than bare recurrence of specific acts.⁴⁴⁸

On this account, then, the person with a tendency to violence, or uncontrolled anger, may exercise this tendency by means of a variety of acts: by shouting, beating, hurting, and even killing. All of these are equally plausible expressions of the agent with a brutal temper. The fact that murder only takes place once, does not disqualify this action as an action carried out from a particular disposition of the particular agent with a particular set of interdependent habits. This more refined interpretation of habit is closer to the alternative meaning of *hexis* as 'disposition,' as action becomes indicative of a settled state, that is, a disposition toward unfettered anger. Although killing, in this instance, is a singular act, we must recall, however, the importance both Aristotle and Dewey place upon the circularity of action and character. Accordingly, the disposition toward extreme violence is *acquired*, and such acquisition *does* involve the repetition of acts.

Further similarities between Dewey's use of habits and Aristotle's can be gleamed from the following description:

we need a word to express that kind of human activity which is influenced by prior activity and in that sense acquired; which contains within itself a certain ordering or systematisation of minor elements of action; which is projective, dynamic in quality, ready for overt manifestation; and which is operative in some subdued subordinate form even when not obviously dominating activity. Habit even in its ordinary usage comes nearer to denoting these facts than any other word.⁴⁴⁹

When approaching situations, we bring with us our set of habits, and it is these habits, and their interaction, or lack thereof (recalling what Dewey calls "pigeon-hole minds"), which determine the way we understand the situation, and the action we engage in as a result of it.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 42

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 41.

This is what Dewey is referring to in terms of “ordering,” “systematisation” and habit being “projective.”⁴⁵⁰

In his description of habits as passive or active, latent or “overt,” however, he does permit that “we may also use the words attitude and disposition.”⁴⁵¹ Specifically, “we may employ them instead of the word habit to denote subdued, non-patent forms of the latter.”⁴⁵² Habits as dispositions, then, are habits which are present, “ready for overt manifestation,” yet not currently, actively carried out. All of this goes to show that Dewey’s view of habit mirrors Aristotle’s, as Dewey’s ‘habit’ stands for repeated activity, habituation, grooves of the self, on the one hand, and disposition, tendency to act a certain way, on the other. Hence, Dewey’s habit carries the same meanings as Aristotle’s *hexis*.

Returning to the main question of involuntariness, though, it still remains to be seen how habits can escape the description of automatic response. Earlier, we detailed Aristotle’s three conditions for virtue, the second of which stipulates that acts must be carried out from a certain state, wherein the agent chooses virtue for its own sake. The fact that Aristotle characterises virtue as a *hexis porhairesis*, a habit or state, involving deliberate choice, undermines any mechanised depiction of character and action.⁴⁵³ For example, in Book V, Aristotle writes that “justice is that state in virtue of which a just man is said to be capable of doing just acts from choice”⁴⁵⁴ and conversely, “injustice...is a state that chooses what is unjust.”⁴⁵⁵ Choice, then, means that virtue is not unthinking and mechanistic, but rather results from reflection and careful weighing of an action’s implications. Since we are responsible for the kind of self we are, this includes a regard for the effect a certain act may have upon our selfhood. Thus, Dewey interprets Aristotle’s stipulation as follows:

the act must be voluntary; that is, it must manifest a choice, and for full morality at least, the choice must be an expression of the general tenor and set of personality. It must involve awareness of what one is about⁴⁵⁶

There is a cognisance here which involves reflection on the nexus of character and action, and which results in the choice of one action over another.

Aristotle’s positing of *phronesis* in allowing us to determine virtuous action toward the right person, at the right time, and so on, also reinforces the non-automated account of habit, as *phronesis* involves deliberation in particular circumstances. Hence, being virtuous means

⁴⁵⁰ A more detailed analysis of how habits function and interact, will be provided in the next chapter.

⁴⁵¹ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 41

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Aristotle writes: “our virtues are expressions of our choice, or at any rate imply choice.” – NE 1106a3-4

⁴⁵⁴ NE 1134a1-3

⁴⁵⁵ NE 1134a7

⁴⁵⁶ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 166

making good decisions in specific situations. This requires intellectual, reflective ability, and not mere mimicking of what we are told is virtuous action.⁴⁵⁷ Habituation involves intellectual training, and since virtuous action is bound to pleasure, choice is informed by both desire and deliberation. As Aristotle puts it, "choice is either appetitive intellect or intellectual appetite,"⁴⁵⁸ meaning that feeling pleasure or pain at the right action is not enough to guarantee virtuous activity. Additionally, choice involves cognition, hence the virtuous act, which must result from choice, is conscious and voluntary.⁴⁵⁹

On the other hand, Dewey writes:

Yet all habit involves mechanisation. Habit is impossible without setting up a mechanism of action, physiologically engrained, which operates "spontaneously," automatically, whenever the cue is given. But mechanization is not of necessity all there is to habit.⁴⁶⁰

Noting the curiosity and explorative openness of a toddler, and the delight she finds in every new discovery and accomplishment, Dewey points out that there must be "a middle term between a normal exercise of power which includes some excursion into the unknown, and a mechanical activity hedged within a drab world."⁴⁶¹ Just because we become adept at walking, writing, feeding ourselves, and so on, does not mean that these have to become totally unconscious habits, automatic and dull. Naturally they lose their allure as we grow up, as we take them for granted. However, such habits are significant in so far as we ascribe purpose to them. That is, habits have ends, or what Dewey terms ends-in-view, immediate ends with the power to constitute means to further ends.

Dewey connects this to Aristotle's conditions of virtue, as purpose and choice are intertwined, with virtuous activity issuing from a state in which the agent chooses virtue for its own sake. Writes Dewey:

there must be a purpose, an aim, an end in view, something for the sake of which the particular act is done. The acts of infants, imbeciles, insane persons in some cases, have no moral quality; *they do not know* what they are about.

⁴⁵⁷ Fahy also states that "Aristotle's repeated insistence that virtuous habits require a proper discernment of the right circumstances, the right time, etc. demonstrates that there is an elements of critical perception that complements the ability to discriminate more general standards and rules" - Fahy, "A Comparison of the Ethical Thought of Aristotle and John Dewey", p. 76

⁴⁵⁸ NE 1139b5; Aristotle similarly states in the *Eudemean Ethics*: "virtue and vice have to do with pleasures and pains. They are in fact concerned with things chosen, and choice has to do with the good and bad, and what appears thus, and such, naturally, are pleasure and pain." - EE 1127b1-4

⁴⁵⁹ EE 1223a14-20

⁴⁶⁰ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 70. Similarly, on p. 39 Dewey writes: "It is not necessary nor advisable to be always considering the interaction of habits with one another, that is to say the effect of a particular habit upon character...A man who is learning French, or chess-playing or engineering has his hands full with his particular occupation. He would be confused and hampered by constant inquiry into its effect upon character... At any given time, certain habits must be taken for granted as a matter of course."

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p. 70

Children learn early in life to appeal to accident, that is, *absence of intention and purpose* on their part, as an excuse for deeds that have bad consequences...Again, *there is no choice*, no implication of personal disposition, when one is coerced by superior physical power...It is recognized that fear of extreme harm to life and limb will overpower choice in all but those of heroic make-up.⁴⁶²

While my habit of writing may be underappreciated when compared to the toddler's awe of drawing her first picture with a crayon, the purpose of my writing is important. However, it is precisely because habits *do* involve an element of mechanisation, that I can assign a specific purpose to them in the first place. The end-in-view for my current writing is completion of a thesis. This in turn may become a means for the further end of obtaining a doctoral degree. From this may arise further ends-in-view, becoming means, giving rise to further ends-in-view, and so on. Dewey's means-ends-continuum becomes meaningful only when we are in a position to recognise and assign ends to our habits, otherwise we would be like the infant, merely acting, aware, perceiving, but not really capable of achieving an end through purposeful engagement of our habits. This engagement involves choice, a deliberate decision to carry out acts, or several acts, for a specific end.⁴⁶³

Many of the habits I employ to achieve the end of writing my thesis, for example, involve a certain amount of mechanisation, just as our earlier example of riding a bike is mechanical in the sense of constituting a habit available for use, to be assigned a particular purpose. Indeed, if I were not able to write, my end would not consist in finishing a thesis, but probably in learning how to write. Hence, mechanisation allows me to pursue different ends, a process which need not always be "drab" and unimaginative, but which most definitely involves awareness issuing in choice, as well as creativity. Dewey illustrates this by drawing upon the example of a violinist:

How delicate, prompt, sure and varied are the movements of a violin player or an engraver! How unerringly they phrase every shade of emotion and every turn of idea! Mechanism is indispensable. If each act has to be consciously searched for at the moment and intentionally performed, execution is painful and the product is clumsy and halting.⁴⁶⁴

If I had to figure out how to spell every word, or how to type, or how to navigate my way around a word processor every time I turned on the computer, this thesis would probably never be written. Hence, these rather automatic habits, which enable me to aim toward the end of completing the thesis, *need* to be mechanised.

⁴⁶² Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 167. Emphasis added.

⁴⁶³ Aristotle writes in the *Eudemian Ethics*: "it is by a man's choice that we judge his character – that is, not by what he does *but what he does it for*." – EE 1228a4. Emphasis added.

⁴⁶⁴ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 71

The writing itself, though, does not have to be dull at all: ideas need to be thought of, comparisons drawn, other writers consulted, connections between concepts made, and so on. Hence, the writing process, although incorporating several aspects of automation, can be imaginative and inventive. And so it is with the violinist. The mechanical habits of knowing where to place her fingers on the strings in order to produce a certain note, in which way to do it in order to produce a certain tone, and so on, are all largely automatic. However, the creativity and expressiveness demanded by the performance, by the end of playing a piece of music beautifully, are *enabled* precisely by the mechanisations of technique. On top of this, Dewey notes, as listeners we frown upon the dominance of mechanisation in music, we resent being subjected to a mere hammering of notes, for example, an exercise in technicality.

Mechanisation, then, should never dominate the end, but should be put to use to allow for creativity as habits interact. Writes Dewey:

the difference between the artist and the mere technician is unmistakeable. The artist is a masterful technician. The technique or mechanism is fused with thought and feeling. The “mechanical” performer permits the mechanism to dictate the performance. It is absurd to say that the latter exhibits habit and the former not. We are confronted with two kinds of habit, intelligent and routine. All life has its *élan*, but only the prevalence of dead habits deflects life into mere *élan*.⁴⁶⁵

Importantly, Dewey points out that creativity and sensitivity can be developed, can become habitual, just as a reductionist mechanisation is conversely a display of routine, lifeless habit.

Paying particular attention to the former can help us employ the latter, the mere repetitious, in a manner reminiscent of the artist, allowing for a flowering of imagination and expressiveness. Hence, we can foster what Dewey calls “intelligent” habits while partially relying upon other, rather automated habits. As Dewey explains:

A flexible, sensitive habit grows more varied, more adaptable by practice and use. We do not as yet fully understand the physiological factors concerned in mechanical routine on one hand and artistic skill on the other, but we do know that the latter is just as much habit as is the former.⁴⁶⁶

On this account, then, the question of automation becomes less a question of agency, but rather one concerned with *how* habits interact in the achievement of ends, intelligently or routinely.

While we have seen that mechanisation cannot, and should not be avoided, as it forms part of our selves and enables us to achieve ends-in-view, we should also avoid lapsing into a mere carrying out of repeated, unconscious habit. By nourishing intelligent habits with the ability

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 72

to instil creativity into the achievement of certain ends-in-view, we come to use mechanisation to our advantage. As with Aristotle's *phronesis*, and the virtues more generally, such intelligent habits are context-specific, as they are expressed, for example, in the particular playing of a violin sonata, never to be performed the same way again. While deliberation and choice are important in this context, Dewey's intelligent habits are not to be interpreted as cold, calculating or rational, but rather as sensitive and self-aware. Indeed, Dewey frequently insists that we should develop a habit of open-mindedness and self-reflexivity in order to avoid the ruts of unconscious, routine habit.

There are obvious difficulties with this, particularly when viewed in light of the impact gender norms, for example, have upon the unconscious functioning of habits. This is the topic of the next chapter. Suffice it to say at this stage, that whether we are aware of our habits or not, we should try to foster sensitive habits capable of shedding light upon our selves. While this may seem an impossibility for deep-seated buried habits, we should nonetheless endeavour to do so, lest we submit to stale, routine habits. Noting that it surely is an even greater impossibility for us to stand outside of our selves, to escape our habits, we should not be all that dissatisfied with this account of habit and automation, as greater self-awareness can lead to an interruption of habit, or at least to an understanding of the need for such an interruption.

Having said all this, we can see that Dewey is acutely aware of the workings of our habits below consciousness, far more so than Aristotle is. This means that there is much greater ambiguity in Aristotle's treatment of *hexis* as voluntary or involuntary. This is surely reinforced by Aristotle's view of the virtuous person as largely autonomous, and the scant regard he gives to one's environment as it affects the kind of person we are. Hence, his assertion that choice and virtue/vice emanate from voluntariness as far as "man himself is the cause, a starting-point of actions," is something I imagine Dewey would not simply endorse. Instead, Dewey would emphasise that the agent, by herself, is not the sole cause of her actions, but rather that her environment also critically informs her selfhood, and the actions she carries out as a particular self with her particular positioning in the world. While choice of course plays a role in determining ends and the engagement of habits for the achievement of such ends, Dewey's interpretation of choice is less rationalistic, and again far more aware of the agent's incapacity to escape her unique fund of previously acquired habits.

Aristotle allows for pleasure and pain to influence choice, however, I think Dewey is rather explicit about the non-rational or subconscious aspects leading to a particular choice. On Dewey's account choice is a unification or resolution of previously disharmonious habits by

means of the potential of uninhibited action.⁴⁶⁷ Such a unification need not always include a conscious thought-process, as thinking itself is not always, and not solely, conscious.

Importantly, we cannot stand outside of ourselves to arrive at decisions. Writes Dewey:

We are always biased beings, tending in one direction rather than another...Choice is not the emergence of preference out of indifference. It is the emergence of a unified preference out of competing preferences. Biases that had held one another in check now, temporarily at least, reinforce one another, and constitute a unified attitude. The moment arrives when imagination pictures an objective consequence of action which supplies an adequate stimulus and releases definitive action.⁴⁶⁸

Choice, then, originates in the interaction of our habits which we bring to every situation, whether we are aware of them or not. Again, this places greater emphasis on the unconscious workings of our habits, with Dewey showing a greater awareness of the extent to which mechanisation plays a role in our selves, and the actions issuing from those selves.

8. Dewey and Virtue

Now let us focus our attention on Dewey's treatment of 'virtue.' Dewey has been interpreted as a virtue theorist by several commentators, and certainly virtue does play a role in his moral philosophy.⁴⁶⁹ We will see in this section, though, that a characterisation of Dewey as virtue ethicist is misleading. In "Character, Integrity and Dewey's Virtue Ethics,"⁴⁷⁰ John Teehan lists several aspects of Dewey's work, which I myself have above deemed reminiscent of Aristotle's ethics, such as a special regard for the particular situation and the reciprocity of character and action. Teehan attributes these aspects of commonality to Dewey's formulation of a virtue theory, as Dewey is alleged to have both "a theory of the nature of virtue" and "a list of primary virtues."⁴⁷¹ While there are significant areas of overlap in Dewey's and Aristotle's ethical thought, describing him as a virtue ethicist is nonetheless a misreading of the rather sporadic discussions of virtue in Dewey's work. Also, what have been designated distinctly *aretic* notions by contemporary virtue theorists, have been shown to be themselves exaggerated. Hence, neither Aristotle, nor Dewey in his

⁴⁶⁷ Dewey defines choice as follows: "Choice is made as soon as some habit, or some combination of elements of habits and impulse, finds a way fully open. Then energy is released. The mind is made up, composed, unified...when the various factors in action fit harmoniously together, when imagination finds no annoying hindrance, when there is a picture of open seas, filled sails and favouring winds, the voyage is definitely entered upon. This decisive direction of action constitutes choice." – Ibid., p. 192

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 193

⁴⁶⁹ See for example, Gouinlock, J., "Justice, Virtue, and Collective Deliberation: The Heritage of Aristotle and Dewey" in *On Justice*, Boudouris, K. (ed.), Greek Philosophical Society, Athens, 1989. Here Gouinlock outlines what her terms Dewey's "philosophy of virtue" – p. 197

⁴⁷⁰ Teehan, J., "Character, Integrity and Dewey's Virtue Ethics", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 31, No. 4, Autumn 1995, pp. 841 - 863

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., p. 843

semblance of Aristotle, fit the narrow designations of virtue assigned by contemporary virtue theorists to ethical thought.

For Dewey, virtues are habits, which, like all habits, need to be understood within their transacting relationship with the world. Thus,

Honesty, chastity, malice, peevishness, courage, triviality, industry, irresponsibility are not private possessions of a person. They are working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces. All virtues and vices are habits which incorporate objective forces. They are interactions of elements contributed by the make-up of an individual with elements supplied by the outdoor world...they can be modified by change of either personal or social elements.⁴⁷²

Virtues are constituents of self which depend upon the mutuality of self and environment. They are habits which arise out of our transactions with the world, hence they are not merely "inner," privately owned, but informed by the self's surroundings. Again, we can see Dewey's greater emphasis on environing forces in shaping the self, and its virtues, and the implications this holds for responsibility of selfhood.

Fahy aptly describes both Dewey's and Aristotle's interpretation of the virtues as "a species of habit."⁴⁷³ For Dewey, this means that virtues are dispositions, which are acquired like other habits, and simultaneously constitute means and ends. Accordingly, "virtues are ends because they are such important means. To be honest, courageous, kindly is to be in the way of producing specific natural goods or satisfactory fulfilments."⁴⁷⁴ Virtues, then, are tied to the concrete effects they have in the here-and-now, hence the arbitrariness of traditional distinctions between "moral goods" and "natural goods."⁴⁷⁵ On this account virtues simply become part of Dewey's naturalist reading of morals.

For Aristotle, we have seen that virtues are habits, *hexis porharetikê*, which involve choice, *phronesis*, and love of the fine, thereby forming excellences of character. While Aristotle clearly envisages a certain virtuous person, magnanimous, honest, generous, etc., the paradigmatic character to whom such excellences belong, Dewey is reluctant to provide an outline of the good person. As we noted, he would not characterise a person as 'owning' the virtues in the first place, as these are obtained in conjunction with one's specific environment, and are not one's sole responsibility or achievement. Secondly, Dewey believes that no person can be absolutely virtuous, hence, instead of submitting to "wholesale

⁴⁷² Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 16

⁴⁷³ Fahy, "A Comparison of the Ethical Thought of Aristotle and John Dewey", p. 108

⁴⁷⁴ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 47

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. In *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Dewey similarly notes the importance of "doing away once for all with the traditional distinction between moral goods, like the virtues, and natural goods like health, economic security, art, science and the like." – p. 172

judgments of character, dividing men into goats and sheep,”⁴⁷⁶ we should recognise that “all character is speckled.”⁴⁷⁷ For Dewey, it is part of the human condition to be perplexed in situations wherein we do not know how to act, in fact, the more open-minded we are, the more puzzled and therefore the more willing to step outside of our usual habitual grooves we will be. Hence, even the good person of virtuous character will not instinctively know how to act in any given situation.

Also, since “there is no such thing as a good man – in an absolute sense,”⁴⁷⁸ we have to be alert to the workings of our habits, which we bring to each moral situation. It is precisely our habituation which makes us liable to act more or less virtuously or viciously, as we acquire habits, often unconsciously, from a very young age. Thus,

to be completely good and an infallible judge of right a man would have had to live from infancy in a thoroughly good social medium free from all limiting and distorting influences. As it is, habits of liking and disliking are formed early in life, prior to ability to use discriminating intelligence.⁴⁷⁹

It only remains for us to re-examine and assess our habits, our “spontaneous “intuitions” of value” by “subject[ing them] to correction, to confirmation and revision, by personal observation of consequences and cross-questioning of their quality and scope.”⁴⁸⁰ Dewey thus qualifies the statement he attributes to Aristotle, claiming that “only the good man is a good judge of what is truly good,”⁴⁸¹ by pointing out that the good man is precisely the one who acknowledges when he does not know what to do; and that the good man as such is an impossibility as we are socially embedded, habituated beings. It is for this reason also that Dewey shies away from devising lists of virtues, prescribing paradigmatic character.

According to Dewey, such lists tend to compartmentalise the self, and to depict virtues as static, abstract universals. By focusing upon some clearly definable character traits, which we deem generally desirable or good, we present a distorted picture of self, by taking, as Dewey says, “the skeleton for the living body.”⁴⁸² Rather than viewing the self as a complex web of interacting habits, we cling to and foster such individual virtues, and thereby prohibit a holistic treatment of selfhood. Dewey writes:

The bones [i.e. the virtues] are certainly important, but their importance lies in the fact that they support other organs of the body in such a way as to make them capable of integrated effective activity. And the same is true of the qualities of character which we specifically designate virtues. Morals concern

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 48

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 272

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., p. 271

⁴⁸² Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 357

nothing less than the whole character, and the whole character is identical with the man in all his concrete make-up and manifestations.⁴⁸³

We might recall at this stage, that Aristotle proffers a holistic interpretation of the virtues, as their simultaneous presence is premised upon prudence. Hence, Dewey's fears of segmentation of virtue or dispositions more generally, can be somewhat assuaged.

However, the issue, for Dewey, seems to lie specifically with an enumeration of the virtues, as this in itself suggests that virtues can be separated and encouraged in isolation from each other. Hence Dewey notes: "the mere idea of a catalogue of different virtues commits us to the notion that virtues may be kept apart, pigeon-holed in water-tight compartments."⁴⁸⁴ And again just two pages later he writes: "Another bad consequence of treating virtues as if they were separate from one another and capable of being listed one by one is the attempt to cultivate each one by itself, instead of developing a rounded and positive character."⁴⁸⁵ Due to these explicit warnings against the detrimental effects of lists of virtue, we should proceed with caution when speaking, as Teehan does, of lists of virtue attributable to Dewey.

On the other hand, Dewey makes reference to certain virtues, which he obviously holds dear, and which he mentions throughout his work in various contexts. Some of these, such as sympathy (or what we would call empathy), are recurring, while others are only to be found once in a specific text. For example, in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Dewey speaks of the virtues of "sympathy, keen sensitiveness, persistence in the face of the disagreeable,"⁴⁸⁶ while in *Human Nature and Conduct* he mentions the virtues of honesty and courage.⁴⁸⁷ Hence, although Dewey discusses certain virtues more than others, there is no sustained or clearly articulated theory of virtue to be found in Dewey's writings, and certainly no coherent or comprehensive list of virtues. Thus, while the virtues have a place in Dewey's writings, they are not prominent enough for him to merit the designation 'virtue theorist.'

In his reading of Dewey's treatment of the virtues, Pappas identifies "openness, courage, sensitivity, conscientiousness, and sympathy"⁴⁸⁸ as Deweyan virtues and explores these as they figure in his philosophy. Importantly, he points out:

a pragmatic approach to the virtues has to be experimental in the important sense that ultimately the only possible test of whether or not a disposition is a virtue is in acquiring it and incorporating it in a general way of life.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 257

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 259

⁴⁸⁶ Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 164

⁴⁸⁷ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 16

⁴⁸⁸ Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics*, p. 187. James Gouinlock similarly designates "being scientific," "willingness to communicate," "open-mindedness" and "respect for others" as four dominant virtues to be found in Dewey's philosophy. See Gouinlock, "Justice, Virtue, and Collective Deliberation: The Heritage of Aristotle and Dewey", p. 199

Indeed, as we already mentioned, virtues, when rearticulated as Deweyan ideals, need to be flexible, open to revision, to be assessed by experimentation and actual instantiation.

In absence of such flexibility, virtues become dogmatic, prescribing a particular interpretation of virtue for differing contexts, and for differing people. Virtues must reflect the dynamic nature of the world, rather than denying it. Hence, for Dewey,

chastity, kindness, honesty, patriotism, modesty, toleration, bravery, etc., cannot be given a fixed meaning, because each expresses an interest in objects and institutions which are changing. In form, *as* interests, they may be permanent, since no community could endure in which there were not, say, fair dealing, public spirit, regard for life, faithfulness to others. But no two communities conceive the objects to which these qualities attach in quite identical ways.⁴⁹⁰

While virtues may be generally similar across cultures, their particular expression varies widely. For example, Dewey points out that the assumed universal regard for life is held by a majority of people, however, this regard in many communities does not apply to female infants, the elderly and 'enemies' in wars with others.⁴⁹¹ We can see here, Dewey's awareness of the implications of our hypothetical couch potato scenario.

Cultural specificity highlights the fact that the virtues have to be understood within their particular context, and "not on the basis of permanent and uniform objects in which interest is taken."⁴⁹² Virtues, then, are indicative of particular communities, and must be subject to alteration and experimentation. Additionally, we noted earlier, that virtues vary not only from community to community, but also *within* communities, as these are made up of people existing in complex matrices of social groupings. At the same time, communities are structured by power dynamics, which often dictate what is to count as virtue and vice. Hence, we noted that Aristotle's *polis* included women and slaves, and that a consideration of their views may have led to a different articulation of the virtues and paradigmatic character.

Dewey is alert to this mingling of power and the designation of virtue/vice, pointing out that it plays a vital role in the continuation of the status quo:

virtues and vices in morals as far as dominated by custom are strictly correlative to the ruling institutions and habits of a given social group. Its members are trained to commend and admire whatever conforms to its established ways of life; hence the great divergence of schemes of valuation of conduct in different civilizations. Their common element is formal rather than material – namely,

⁴⁸⁹ Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics*, p. 186

⁴⁹⁰ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 255

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 256

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

adherence to prevailing customs. *Nomos* is indeed “king of all,” and especially of acts and traits of character deemed virtues and vices.⁴⁹³

Without wishing to delve too deeply into questions of socially acquired oppressive norms (a topic reserved for the next chapter), suffice it to say that Dewey highlights the specificity of the virtues in terms of one's community, as well as one's particular position in that community. Hence, virtues are not universal character traits to be imposed by lists, but rather, when understood as ideals, constitute normative, context-specific, revisable aids for the instantiation of possible dispositions, deemed worthy of experimental pursuit.

9. Change of the Self

At this point in our discussion, we should have a clearer picture of Dewey's and Aristotle's self and the main areas of harmony and discord in their respective outlines. It may be apt, then, to return to the main topic of this thesis by looking at how both philosophers allow for *change* in the self. Owing to the habituated nature of character, change is often difficult to achieve. This is why Dewey insists upon an examination of our habits, and upon an appreciation of their often unconscious functioning. Just how stubborn our habits can be, was illustrated to Dewey by F. M. Alexander, originator of the Alexander technique. Alexander, an actor by trade, specialised in the body's movements, posture, and how one carries oneself. Specifically, he highlighted the tendency of our physical habits to remain *in situ*, lest we bring them into the conscious realm. By attending Alexander's lessons, Dewey received a demonstration of how his habits of comportment lay largely outside of his control.⁴⁹⁴ While he could obviously sit when asked to do so, the *way* he sat was seemingly impervious to alteration. Having been acquired and reinforced over the course of a lifetime, this was shown to be so innate and automatic, that its interruption appeared to be impossible. Habits, then, are hard to change, especially the older we get. Since they are strengthened by repetition, inclinations to act a certain way become part of our selves, hence the nexus of character and action that is habit becomes unconscious, or as Aristotle says, ‘second nature.’⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹³ Ibid., p. 254

⁴⁹⁴ See Mixon, D., “The Place of Habit in the Control of Action” in *John Dewey: Critical Assessments*, Vol 1, Tiles, J. E. (ed.), Routledge, London, 1992

⁴⁹⁵ Dewey describes the underestimation of the unconscious nature of habits of comportment in *Human Nature and Conduct*: “Recently a friend remarked to me that there was one superstition current among even cultivated persons. They suppose that if one is told what to do, if the right end is pointed to them, all that is required in order to bring about the right act is will or wish on the part of the one who is to act...the assumption is that if a man is told to stand up straight, all that is further needed is wish and effort on his part, and the deed is done... And he went on to say that the prevalence of this belief...is the greatest bar to intelligent social progress...In short, it leaves out the importance of intelligently controlled habit.” – p. 28

This resoluteness of habits is similarly recognised by Aristotle, who highlights the difficulty in changing the kind of person one has become. For even if we wish to be virtuous, having engaged in, and reinforced vicious habits, we have lost our ability to be and do otherwise. Hence, he writes of the unjust and licentious person:

it does not follow that he can stop being unjust, and be just, if he wants to – no more than a sick man can become healthy, even though (it may be) his sickness is voluntary, being the result of incontinent living and disobeying his doctors. There was a time when it was open to him not to be ill; but when he had once thrown away his chance, it was gone; just as when one has once let go of a stone, it is too late to get it back...So too it was at first open to the unjust and licentious persons not to become such, and therefore they are voluntarily what they are; but now that they have become what they are, it is no longer open to them not to be such.⁴⁹⁶

Like Dewey's habits of sitting, habits of injustice and licentiousness are so engrained in agents that they seem impossible to change.

And yet, there are two differences here between Dewey's and Aristotle's view of the potential for habits to change. First, we already noted that Dewey attributes far more weight to one's environment in shaping character. Thus, while bodily movements such as sitting down or walking comprise habits of the person, they have been created in conjunction with environing forces. As Dewey explains:

Morals is as much a matter of interaction of a person with his social environment as walking is an interaction of legs with a physical environment. The character of walking depends upon the strength and competency of legs. But it also depends upon whether a man is walking in a bog or on a paved street, upon whether there is a safeguarded path set aside or whether he has to walk amid dangerous vehicles.⁴⁹⁷

The fact that selves issue from an agent's transaction with her environment somewhat undermines Aristotle's designation of vicious actions as entirely voluntary, thereby diminishing the sole responsibility of the agent for the kind of person she is.

We already highlighted the role Aristotle's abstraction of the agent plays in this context, as the self is portrayed like a blank slate, akin to Locke's *tabula rasa*. Change of the person, on this account, unfolds as follows: the agent is free to choose the kind of person she wants to be – in this state she is still neutral and has a choice of becoming vicious or virtuous. Then, by choosing vicious acts, and fostering a disposition for vicious acts, she becomes a vicious person, by which stage she has missed her chance for virtue. Hence, the agent begins in a position of freedom where she has control over her character, however, by acquiring and

⁴⁹⁶ NE 1114a14-21

⁴⁹⁷ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 318

reinforcing habits, she loses this control. In other words, she goes from neutral to vicious without any possibility of return.

For Dewey, on the other hand, we are always already embedded in the world, in our social matrices, hence neutrality as such does not exist. We are continuously influenced, and in turn influence our surroundings, a phenomenon Dewey uses to explain the impossibility of absolute 'good,' as habits are acquired and, as the lessons with Alexander show, frequently below consciousness. This unconscious nature of habit should make us conclude that habits simply cannot be changed, and that Aristotle is right in saying that the vicious person, having rejected her opportunity to change, no longer has this option. And yet, Dewey is far more optimistic of people's capacity for change, in fact, it is precisely a lack of change, a continuous resorting to old and established habits, which we should avoid. For Dewey, the self is a lot more fluid and adaptable, and this constitutes the second major difference with Aristotle's account of change in selfhood.

According to Dewey, the self is always in the making, never finished and complete. In the *Ethics*, he therefore adds to Aristotle's third stipulation for virtuous action, that selves are only permanent to a degree:

An act must be the expression of a formed and stable character. But stability of character is an affair of degrees, and is not to be taken absolutely. No human being, however mature, has a completely formed character⁴⁹⁸

This is not to assert that the self is totally fluid, but rather that its stability is complemented by flexibility. Hence, just as Dewey's metaphysics integrates permanence and change, so his view of selfhood incorporates both stability and dynamism. While Aristotle's worldview and cosmology similarly include continuous movement, as the heavenly spheres, along with everything else in the universe, strive toward the divine, such movement is clearly delineated by species, and the particular forms these can achieve. These are classifications and confines of change, which Dewey transgresses. In terms of the self this means that we are capable of effecting change, and while it may be harder to do so in old age, it is not impossible. A habit of openness, especially when instilled in us from a young age, can help us in this regard. Teaching children to use habits intelligently, like the violinist in the above example, similarly encourages awareness of the artistic and imaginative employment of automated habits. Hence, moral education for Dewey, is paramount.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁸ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 167

⁴⁹⁹ A more detailed account of Dewey's educational theory lies outside of the scope of this chapter, see however, Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, and Dewey, J., "Philosophy and Education" in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol 5: 1929 - 1930, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1984; for secondary literature on both Dewey and Aristotle on education, see Chambliss, *Educational Theory as Theory of Conduct*.

The same can be said for Aristotle, as Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics* suggests three ways of becoming virtuous: by nature, by habituation, and by instruction. We already noted the importance of habituation from a young age, and indeed, being inculcated with the right habits is a precondition for openness to instruction. Accordingly, “we must have a character to work on that has some affinity to virtue: one that appreciates what is noble and objects to what is base.”⁵⁰⁰ Although this habituation takes place in the household,⁵⁰¹ it must also be enforced by law. Legislating for right conduct ensures the continuation of the habituation received as a child, while also enforcing morality for those “readier to submit to compulsion and punishment than to argument and fine ideals.”⁵⁰²

Since Aristotle addresses himself to noblemen, likely to be future rulers, it becomes clear that his discussion has been aimed at elucidating for these noblemen what the good, and the good person, are. Now the task at hand is an explication of *how* to instil the good in the subjects they may come to reign over. This, Aristotle argues, requires a closer examination of legislation and constitutions, a task he undertakes in the *Politics*.⁵⁰³ All of this is premised upon the idea that legislation has the capacity to compel the good, hence the necessity of noblemen to be knowledgeable about the law. Thus,

one who wishes to make other people (whether many or few) better by supervision ought first to try to acquire the art of legislation; assuming that we can be made good by laws. For producing a right disposition in any person that is set before you is not a task for everybody; if anyone can do it, it is the man with [scientific] knowledge⁵⁰⁴

But isn't the enforcement of virtue rather opposed to the depiction of virtue Aristotle has argued for in the preceding books of the *Ethics*? We know, for example, that virtue needs to be chosen from a certain state for its own sake. Choosing the right action, though, out of the knowledge that doing otherwise is a criminal offence, is not choosing virtue for its own sake, but rather for the sake of the law, and for the sake of lack of punishment. The virtuous person is supposed to desire virtuous actions, not to fear unlawfulness. In fact, enforcement of the good is indicative of the *enkrates*, who has to force herself to act virtuously, despite her

⁵⁰⁰ NE 1179b30

⁵⁰¹ Aristotle notes: “The instruction of habits prescribed by a father have as much force in the household as laws and customs have in the state, and even more, because of the tie of blood and the children's sense of benefits received; for they are influenced from the outset by natural affection and docility.” – NE 1180b5-7

⁵⁰² NE 1180a5

⁵⁰³ The concluding passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics* explains: “Since...the question of legislation has been left unexamined by previous thinkers, presumably we had better investigate it more closely for ourselves, together with the question of constitutions generally, so that our philosophy of human conduct may be as complete as possible.” – NE 1181b13-15

⁵⁰⁴ NE 1180b23-28

desire to do otherwise.⁵⁰⁵ It follows, then, that the people who need the imposition of virtue by means of legislation, can never be truly virtuous.

When this is understood in conjunction with Aristotle's claim in the *Politics*, that only rulers are capable of obtaining *phronesis*, it is clear that the masses will never achieve complete virtue. As we know, Aristotle posits prudence as the virtue required for all other virtues, and as a prerequisite to truly virtuous action. Since we are naturally open to receiving the virtues, as children or as animals are, we nonetheless only achieve complete virtue through *phronesis*. Aristotle argues:

because the natural dispositions are found in children and brutes, but without intelligence they are obviously apt to be harmful...just as a powerfully built man, if deprived of sight, is apt to fall heavily when he moves about, because he cannot see, so too in the moral sphere; but if the subject acquires intelligence he becomes outstanding in conduct, and his disposition, instead of *resembling* virtue, will now *be* virtue in the full sense...in the moral character there are two qualities, natural virtue and virtue in the full sense; and of these the latter implies prudence.⁵⁰⁶

Prudence, then, is essential for becoming virtuous.

Yet Aristotle denies this to all, reserving *phronesis* only for the ruler. Accordingly,

the only virtue special to a ruler is practical wisdom; all the others must be possessed, so it seems, both by rulers and by ruled. The virtue of a person being ruled is not practical wisdom but correct opinion; he is rather like a person who makes the pipes, while the ruler is the one who can play them.⁵⁰⁷

This restriction in the *Politics* of *phronesis*, and thereby true virtue, is, as we mentioned before, coherent within an interpretation of virtue as excellence, obtainable only by the few. What seems rather puzzling, though, is Aristotle's assertion that all of the other virtues need to be present in the subjects of a ruler. Since *phronesis* is required for these to take hold, how can the ruled have any virtue at all, having been refused the possibility of prudence? The only way this could make sense is if Aristotle were to establish different types of virtue, or a hierarchy of virtue. And indeed, this is how he proceeds.

For Aristotle, the soul is divided into a rational and a non-rational part. The latter comprises desires and passions,⁵⁰⁸ and should, in the virtuous person, be subject to the rational part.⁵⁰⁹ This is not always the case, however, as the continent, and the incontinent (*akratēs*) persons

⁵⁰⁵ See also NE 1144a14-20

⁵⁰⁶ NE 1144b8-17

⁵⁰⁷ Pol. 1227b28-31

⁵⁰⁸ In fact, the non-rational part also contains a separate, 'nutritive' part, concerned with nourishment and growth. Unlike the desiderative and appetitive part, this vegetative part is not "receptive to reason." — see Book I.8

⁵⁰⁹ Earlier we noted Aristotle's distinction of the calculative and the scientific parts of the soul, however, these are parts of the rational soul, dealing respectively with 'universals' and 'particulars' as described by him in Book VI on the intellectual virtues.

show. We know that the continent agent manages to obey reason and overcome her desire to act contrary to virtue. The *akratēs*, on the other hand, succumbs to her desires, giving way to the desiderative part of her soul. Such a succumbing to passion and desire is viewed by Aristotle as particularly dangerous, as it runs the risk of disabling appeals to reason altogether.⁵¹⁰ Giving way to the passions reduces us to mere beasts, as reason makes us truly human.⁵¹¹ Hence, a harmonious relationship between the desiderative and the rational parts of the soul, consists, for Aristotle, in reason dominating, though without resistance from the passions. This then, is the mark of the virtuous person's soul.

Phronesis utilizes this harmony, establishing the virtuous act in its specific context, that is, toward the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, etc. Since *phronesis* deliberates about things we can effect, it brings the harmonious relationship of the stronger reason and the weaker passions to bear upon the particular situation, issuing in particular action. Aristotle's hierarchy of virtues, however, relies upon a distortion of *phronesis*, and the rational part of the soul. Hence,

rule of free over slave, male over female, man over boy, are all different, because, while parts of the soul are present in each case, the distribution is different. Thus the deliberative faculty in the soul is not present at all in a slave; in a female it is present but ineffective, in a child present but undeveloped.⁵¹²

Aristotle continues by arguing that the slave, the woman, and the child, each have a different type of virtue, according to their "proper function," or rather, their rung in the great chain of being:

The ruler then must have moral virtue in its entirety; for his function is in its fullest sense that of a master-craftsman, and reason is a master-craftsman. And the other members must have such amount as is appropriate to each. So it is evident that each of the classes spoken of must have moral virtue, and that restraint is not the same in a man as in a woman, nor justice or courage either, as Socrates thought; the one is the courage of a ruler, the other the courage of a servant, and likewise with the other virtues.⁵¹³

Not only is virtue hierarchical, in that the ruler obtains the fullest, or highest order of virtue, but the individual virtues also vary in accordance with whether the agent is a woman, child or slave. Hence, women, who are naturally 'chatterboxes,' are virtuous when engaging in silence, while this is not so for a man.⁵¹⁴ Similarly, courage will be the courage of a woman,

⁵¹⁰ This is why Aristotle argues that children, who are particularly prone to indulging the desiderative part of the soul, need to be curtailed in their excesses of desire. See NE 1119b6-14

⁵¹¹ As part of his function argument, which equates happiness with function (as a flautist's "goodness and proficiency are considered to lie in the performance of that function"), Aristotle argues that the distinctly human life is neither nutritive (as this is shared by plants), nor sentient (as this is shared by animals), but "a practical life of the rational part." – NE 1097b25-1098a4

⁵¹² Pol. 1260a9-13

⁵¹³ Pol. 1260a17-23

⁵¹⁴ Pol. 1260a28-30

distinguishable from the courage of a man. We can see, then, how a lack of *phronesis*, premised upon the retarded, immature, or entirely absent, rational part of the soul, allows Aristotle to claim that non-rulers can still have some sort of virtue, albeit limited and different in kind.

This is reinforced by Aristotle's appeals to nature. He argues that just as the rational part of the soul naturally rules over the desiderative part, so "most instances of ruling and being ruled are natural."⁵¹⁵ And since reason is said to be somehow lacking or defunct in all others, it follows that the ruler in all his guises – as *politikos* (politician), head of the household, or master – reigns by nature. Hence, his conclusion that "both ruler and ruled must have a share in virtue, but that there are differences in virtue in each case, as there are also among those who by nature rule."⁵¹⁶ Since women, slaves, and children are said to be natural subjects of rule, it is obvious that they can never escape this designation, and achieve virtue in the way or to the degree of the ruler (although this may still be open to the male citizen boy).⁵¹⁷ Hence, Aristotle's first possibility for becoming virtuous is rather narrow for these subjects.

Becoming virtuous by nature must therefore mean becoming virtuous in accordance with one's status as male citizen, woman, or slave. And about this, Aristotle says, nothing can be done, as "nature is clearly beyond our control."⁵¹⁸ Again, then, we have Aristotle setting boundaries to change, by delimiting it in accordance to the type of person we are. Becoming good is constricted and confined to each subject by virtue of her status within the *polis*, only to take such form as is appropriate to her being. The teleological account of change, which so frustrated Dewey in its prescription of defined paths of movement and unfoldings specific to species, is replicated by Aristotle in the context of the self.

However, even beyond the strictures of 'nature' and the truncating of change this entails for the ruled, Aristotle is rather inflexible when it comes to the transformative potential of the (future) *politikos*. We've already mentioned the somewhat restrictive view that vicious persons are incapable of becoming virtuous, as they have missed their chance to do so. Hence, change from bad to good seems an impossibility. But what about the *akratēs* and the *enkratēs*, the incontinent and the continent persons? We've seen that the continent agent becomes virtuous by taking pleasure in virtuous action, and this presumably, is conditioned by the three stipulations of virtue – nature, habituation, and instruction. The *akratēs*, though,

⁵¹⁵ Pol. 1260a9

⁵¹⁶ Pol. 1260a3-6

⁵¹⁷ See also Pol. 1260b1-3 & 1259b1-3; in the *Ethics*, Aristotle explains instances of female rule as follows: "The association of husband and wife is clearly an aristocracy. The man rules by virtue of merit, and in the sphere that is his by right, but he hands over to his wife such matters as are suitable for her. ...In some cases, however, it is the wife that rules, because she is an heiress; such rule, then, is based not on merit but on wealth and power, just as it is in oligarchies." – 1160b33-1161a3

⁵¹⁸ NE 1179b22

must surely be denied the chance of becoming virtuous, as his soul is ruled by the desiderative part, with reason being silenced.

Surprisingly, however, Aristotle argues that the incontinent person is capable of change, unlike the vicious person. He attributes this transformative potential to the fact that the incontinent person does not deliberately listen to his passions, but acts rather in a stupor. Hence, the "incontinent man [does not] *know* what is right in the sense of actively contemplating it; only as a person asleep or drunk can be said to know a thing."⁵¹⁹ In the vicious person, reason has the upper hand, hence, he acts knowingly and intentionally viciously. Writes Aristotle:

the incontinent man, while pursuing bodily pleasures that are excessive and contrary to right principle, is so constituted that he pursues them without the conviction that he is right, whereas the licentious man has this conviction, because he is so constituted as to pursue them; consequently the former can easily be persuaded to change, but the latter cannot.⁵²⁰

This explication of the *akratēs* as changeable seems to imply a diminishing of responsibility for selfhood, a contradiction of Aristotle's designation of the agent as originator of character. For if the incontinent man can be excused for giving into his passions, as he did not know any better, and did not do so out of choice,⁵²¹ then how can he be held accountable for his actions and for the kind of person he is?

This inconsistency is not resolved by Aristotle, but leads to the rather unsatisfactory compromise in Book VII.10:

he (the *akratēs*) acts voluntarily (because in a sense he knows what he is doing and for what end), but he is not wicked, because his *choice* is morally sound, so that he is only half wicked. And he is not a criminal, because he is not deliberately malicious⁵²²

Questions of moral responsibility aside, the important point is that the incontinent person is capable of change, while the vicious person is not. Hence, Aristotle extends some leeway in relation to change to the *akratēs*.

Again, however, even in the context of the *politikos*, change can only take place to a certain extent, if at all, according to the type of agent. Thus, the vicious person cannot change at all; the incontinent has the potential to be persuaded to become otherwise; the *enkratēs* can become virtuous by feeling pleasure toward the right action; and the virtuous person, so

⁵¹⁹ NE 1152a15-16; see also NE 1151a4-5

⁵²⁰ NE 1151a11-15

⁵²¹ Aristotle notes: "incontinence is not vice (except perhaps in qualified sense), because it is contrary to the agent's choice, whereas vice is in accordance with choice. Nevertheless, there is a similarity between the actions that result from them...the incontinent are not wicked, but they do wicked things." – NE 1151a6-10

⁵²² NE 1152a16-19

Aristotle tells us, remains virtuous as “virtuous people are enduringly [virtuous] in their own right.”⁵²³ In all of these instances – the vicious, incontinent, continent, and virtuous on the one hand, and the *politikos*, women, children, slaves on the other – change occurs in accordance with some classification, setting boundaries for change and enabling or disabling it to certain degrees as is deemed appropriate for each class of being. Aristotle's metaphysical essentialism is replicated in the self, hence change occurs within the confines of the hierarchical chain of being.

Even within the class of potential rulers, there are further divisions into virtuous, vicious, continent and incontinent, and all of these change within the limits commanded by their categorisation. For Dewey such categorisation is arbitrary, and he decries Aristotle's positing of species and forms, with their delimiting effects upon change, as an instance of the ‘quest for certainty.’ Besides, Dewey believes that absolute good as such does not exist, as we are all products (and producers) of our environments and of our selves, hence, even if we were able to define what absolute goodness is, we would still be informed by more or less unconscious habits of prejudice and bias. Classifying people along the lines of virtue, vice, continence or incontinence, then, is rather pointless for Dewey, as we are far more fluid, adapting constantly to our environments, and containing elements of all of these Aristotelian moral types, without being limited to, and defined by them.⁵²⁴ Similarly, Aristotle's essentialism with regard to slaves, women, men and children is not only superfluous in Dewey's view, but belies a political conservatism denying change to further its own agenda.⁵²⁵

In sum, we can say that Dewey's anti-essentialism, and the greater flexibility he allows for change in his metaphysics, come to bear upon the kind of self he depicts in his moral philosophy. He rejects classifications of selves, be it by moral or socio-political status, thus freeing up change to exist outside of the narrow prescriptions Aristotle's categorisations entail. While there are many overlapping aspects of both Aristotle's and Dewey's view of selfhood, this certainly is the most important area of discord in their respective philosophies. Coupled to this is Dewey's belief in the incompleteness of the self, which is continuously changing, adapting, readapting, and so on, as it transacts with its surroundings.

⁵²³ NE 1159b4-5; in this passage Aristotle also notes the inconsistency of vicious people, however, rather than reading this as an inconsistency in the type of person they are (vicious, or virtuous), I think this needs to be interpreted as an inconsistency of behaviour, and in the context of Book VIII, of friendship.

⁵²⁴ Dewey argues: “Variety is more than the spice of life; it is largely of its essence, making a difference between the free and the enslaved. Invariant virtue appears to be as mechanical as uninterrupted vice, for true excellence changes with conditions. Unless character rises to overcome some temptation from an unexpected quarter we suspect its grain is only a veneer.” - Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 308

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 109

Dewey is also more aware than Aristotle, of the unconscious workings of our habits, and the need for us to become cognisant of these by fostering open-mindedness and intelligent, artistic engagement of habits. Not only is Dewey's self always remaking itself, but habits *need to be* replaced and altered, as the self exists in a changing world. Clinging to outmoded and inappropriate habits is therefore not conducive to the development of self, as it inhibits what Dewey calls 'growth.' This concept will be looked at in greater detail in what follows, however, it is important to note that change is essential for the harmonious functioning of self with environment.

Aristotle, as we saw, places little importance upon one's surroundings in terms of shaping the kind of self we are. Responsibility for selfhood lies largely with the agent, although the masses may be forced to act virtuously by means of the law. While his resorting to 'nature' is roundly rejected by Dewey, 'habituation' and 'instruction' as guides to moral character, are also to be found in the latter's philosophy. Indeed, on several counts, Dewey and Aristotle seem more akin than divergent: both permit a degree of uncertainty in ethics (although Dewey extends this to all of his thought); both view morality and character as acquired or learnt; both recognise the reciprocity of character and action in the form of 'habit'; both believe that selves are made up of such habits; both treat virtue as "a species of habit," as Fahy describes it; both point toward the importance of the particular in ethics; both give credence to experimentation in determining right action; both appreciate the aesthetic in morality; and both treat ethics as a matter of *doing*.

It should be clear from all of this, that Dewey's moral philosophy and his attendant depiction of the moral self, are heavily indebted to Aristotelian concepts and ideas. In fact, I believe that Dewey can only be fully appreciated when understood within the context of these Aristotelian antecedents, and the opposition he holds toward some of them. This is particularly true in relation to change, as Dewey seems to have adopted crucial elements of Aristotle's philosophy allowing for change (such as habituation, character as acquired, etc.), while broadening the possibility of change beyond the confines set by Aristotle's metaphysics and moral thought. Having thus traced Dewey's explication of the self, identifying all things Aristotelian in his depiction, we can now proceed to a more detailed examination of how change occurs in selves.

Chapter four will set about a presentation of the feminist-pragmatist self, and will analyse change by means of an examination of the radical transformative process of 'coming to feminist consciousness.' The foregoing elaboration of Dewey's metaphysics and self in comparison with Aristotle, has allowed us to gain a clear picture of the kind of being the self is, and the kind of world it inhabits. Much of this has been shown to be indebted to Aristotle, and it should now be apparent that Dewey is best apprehended within the context of the

Stagirite's philosophy. Since the feminist-pragmatist self will draw heavily upon this explication of Deweyan selfhood, it might be asserted that any proposed interpretation of selfhood utilising Dewey's vision, will essentially form a feminist-Aristotelian self, given the strong affinities between both thinkers.

One might also see a contradiction in employing Dewey in this manner, as he may be compromised as a valid candidate for any feminist explication of change, since Aristotle has been theorised as a rather problematic figure in relation to woman and change in chapter one. While these are valid concerns, they are nonetheless unfounded, as Dewey, despite his similarities to Aristotle in many regards, is his 'own philosopher.' In other words, although he incorporates and modulates many of the themes and insights proffered by Aristotle, Dewey differs significantly from the ancient thinker.

Importantly, the areas of Aristotle's philosophy which might pose the greatest problems for our purposes, indeed for the purposes of any feminist theorising, are significantly undermined and rejected by Dewey. Thus, Aristotle's essentialism with its hierarchical ordering of existents in the great chain of being, his exaltation of reason, his delineation of moral 'types' (virtuous, continent, incontinent, vicious), his 'capping' of virtue by socio-political 'type' (man, woman, slave, child) – all of these are taken to task by Dewey, and replaced with a view of the world and of selves as unfinished and in-the-making. It seems, then, that Dewey has learnt from Aristotle, but has gone beyond him in his radical reconstruction of Aristotelian philosophy, critiquing and adapting, tweaking and extending substantial elements of Aristotle's thought in order to make it relevant and useful for the amelioration of the problems of Dewey's time.

In what follows, we shall do the same for Dewey, as chapters four and five discover several shortcomings in his understanding of the self and the communities it is a part of. Addressing these shortcomings with recourse to the now substantial body of work created by feminist philosophers, we can similarly reconstruct Dewey for the difficulties besetting the present age. As women and men are now, almost sixty years after Dewey's death, still unequally situated in our societies, such a reconstruction must be engaged in a redressing of this inequality by explicating the very necessary changes which need to take place. Since we have established the world as mutable, and Dewey's self as an agent capable of effecting change, it remains to be seen how the ethico-political changes sought by feminists can take hold in selves and their environments. This will be the task of the remainder of this thesis.

Chapter 4. The Feminist-Pragmatist Self

to become a feminist is to develop a radically altered consciousness of oneself, of others, and of what, for lack of a better term, I shall call "social reality." Feminists themselves have a name for the struggle to clarify and to hold fast to this way of apprehending things: They call it "consciousness-raising."

- Bartky, "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness"

Having expounded Dewey's metaphysics and his vision of selfhood in terms of a comparative analysis with Aristotle in chapters two and three, we can proceed to outline a feminist-pragmatist self in the present chapter.⁵²⁶ While Dewey has been shown to be akin to Aristotle in many ways, the differences between both thinkers have also been highlighted. Specifically, the misgivings feminists might have in relation to a partial adoption of an explication of self indebted to Aristotle, have been assuaged. Thus, as we saw, Dewey critiques Aristotle's essentialism, which ensconces existents in the "great chain of being"; he rejects his privileging of reason and pure thought over the body and the practical; he denies strict categorisations of moral agents into virtuous, vicious, continent and incontinent; and he opposes a vision of the world and the self as finished and complete.

For Dewey, all of these elements of Aristotle's philosophy act as constraints on change, as change takes place within the narrow confines of teleological unfoldings and in accordance with hierarchical classifications of beings – both metaphysically and ethically. Thus, change as it figures in the philosophies of Dewey and Aristotle is significantly divergent, since Dewey explicitly rebuffs those Aristotelian assumptions, which could pose a threat to a specifically *feminist* exposition of change.

With that said, we can adopt Dewey's ontology and depiction of the self as a starting point from which to construct a feminist-pragmatist self. The need for such a feminist-pragmatist explication will be shown to emanate from Dewey's short-sightedness regarding the manipulative power of habits working below consciousness. I will argue that feminist theories are much better equipped at dealing with such self-sabotaging habits and the norms they sustain, particularly as they are acquired within sexist systems. Dewey's theory of

⁵²⁶ Much of the material of this chapter has been adapted from earlier work now published as: Fischer, C., "Consciousness and Conscience: Feminism, Pragmatism and the Potential for Radical Change", *Studies in Social Justice*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2010, pp. 67 - 85

selfhood is significant, though, since it sets up the self as neither too transient, nor too determined, thereby endowing the self with the capacity to change.

By theorizing selves possessed of agency, we can address how transformative processes function in the context of selfhood. Specifically, I will deal with the radical transformative process of 'coming to feminist consciousness.' This life-altering and seemingly epiphanous change will be central to situating the self within a political context in the next chapter, as selves are theorised with regard to their ability to effect change within democracies. Coming to feminist consciousness is often understood by feminists as a thoroughly transformative rewriting of self, with selves problematising what was previously assumed to be unproblematic and 'normal.' Raised consciousness is thus viewed as a prerequisite to a critical engagement with patriarchy, as selves, for the first time, recognise patriarchy as such. While selves begin to view themselves as feminist selves in light of this transformative process, their comprehension of patriarchy as a system of oppression spurs them to effect further changes, that is, changes of selfhood result in more widespread socio-political changes. Hence, feminists assert that political change is premised upon identity change, or change in selfhood.

While this will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter, I am here concerned with how raised consciousness takes hold in selves. Thus, I will try to answer the following questions with regard to the process of coming to feminist consciousness: what causes this change? Does change in selves happen uniformly? How do selves change? What role does knowledge play in this transformative process? Do we change as part of communities, or solitarily? And what implications does this hold for feminism? In trying to shed light on some of these questions, I will return to some of the issues raised in previous chapters. For instance, we will come back to Dewey's opposition to teleological accounts of change, and problematise this with regard to his concept of growth. Also, a deeper probing of the epistemological assumptions held by pragmatists will be important for our discussion in order to elucidate the relationship of altered understandings to altered selves. To begin, I will elaborate upon the moral and political implications of theories of selfhood, by explicating Ann Ferguson's "determinism-responsibility problem."⁵²⁷

Ferguson proposes that people's agency is paramount in determining their capacity to undo or resist oppressive systems. We thus find ourselves in the following predicament: how can overly determined accounts of agency allow for a subversion of such systems? Both oppressor and oppressed need to be theorised as being capable of effecting change in the first place, if people are to be morally accountable for failing or succeeding in undermining

⁵²⁷ Ferguson, "Moral Responsibility and Social Change: A New Theory of Self", p. 116

oppressive systems, hence the determinism-responsibility problem. This can only be resolved by bearing in mind that

any explanation of how systems of domination are supported by dominators and submitted to by subordinates must avoid being deterministic in a way that implies that both those who benefit and those who are oppressed are not morally responsible for challenging and resisting those systems.⁵²⁸

Any successful theory of selfhood must therefore depict a self which is neither too fluid, as this would rob it of coherency and stability, nor overly determined, as this would deny the possibility of change – hence, both fluid and determined characterisations deprive the self of agency. This would leave us with selves who are incapable of bringing about change, and who therefore cannot be held morally accountable for their actions or inactions. In what follows, I will show that Dewey's exposition of the self strikes the right balance between structure and dynamism, and therefore avoids the pitfalls of theories prohibiting agency. In turn, this means that the determinism-responsibility problem can be overcome, making us ethically culpable for instantiating or inhibiting change.

1. Dewey's Self

We already explored Dewey's self in some detail in the previous chapter, hence I will only briefly recapitulate upon the most relevant elements of Deweyan selfhood here. For Dewey, selves are funds of habits developed over the course of a lifetime. Habits are socially acquired, as selves and environments exist in reciprocal relationships. Our non-uniform life experiences come to inform characters which are unique. Unlike Aristotle, Dewey emphasises the embeddedness of the self in its world, as it is shaped by the particular social milieu it inhabits. Environments are thus detrimental in determining the kind of selves we are, while our capacity to learn allows for habituation in the first place. Habits, being difficult, though not impossible for adults to alter, provide selves with stability and permanence. On the other hand, selves are always in the making, as "there is no such thing as a fixed, ready-made, finished self. Every living self causes and is itself caused in return by what it does."⁵²⁹

Since environment and self mutually affect each other, our actions, and our surroundings' reactions, exist in a constant state of adaptation. Hence,

all voluntary action is a remaking of self, since it creates new desires, instigates to new modes of behaviour, brings to light new conditions which institute new

⁵²⁸ Ibid., p. 117

⁵²⁹ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 306

ends. Our personal identity is found in the thread of continuous development which binds together these changes.⁵³⁰

Dewey's insistence upon a continually transforming self, which is never complete, but always organically adjusting to novel circumstances, equips us with the flexibility and dynamism distinctive of poststructuralist theories. However, rather than descending into complete transience, Dewey's self retains coherency and stability by means of its well-established set of interpenetrating habits. Thus, the Deweyan self constitutes a viable alternative to the selves posited by feminist theories, which are either overly determined or overly fluid.

In fact, Dewey explicitly discusses selfhood in terms of permanence *and* dynamism. Hence, his functional "distinction between an old, an accomplished self, and a new and moving self, between the static and the dynamic self,"⁵³¹ highlights his accommodation of simultaneous stability and continual mutability in a self, which is still nonetheless singular and unified. Our reluctance to fully integrate the transformative aspects of our selves, however, is identified by Dewey as a stumbling block to the harmonious functioning of change and personal development. Writes Dewey:

The former [old, established] aspect is constituted by habits already formed. Habit gives facility, and there is always a tendency to rest on our oars, to fall back on what we have already achieved...Hence the old, the habitual self is likely to be treated like it is *the* self;...We become uneasy at the idea of initiating new courses; we are repelled by the difficulties that attend entering upon them; we dodge assuming a new responsibility. We tend to favour the old self and to make its perpetuation the standard of our valuations and the end of our conduct. In this way, we withdraw from actual conditions and their requirements and opportunities; we contract and harden the self.⁵³²

Our mistrust of the "growing, enlarging, liberated self," which "goes forth to meet new demands and occasions,"⁵³³ acts as an inhibitor to the harmonious unfolding of change in selves, as we tend to cling to well-worn, familiar grooves of being.

While Dewey thus explains selves as composites of stability and flexibility, it would be wrong to think of these aspects of selfhood as separable, or as distinct ontological categories. Instead, we should understand dynamism and permanence as interwoven, simultaneously occurring aspects of a single self, which is both constant and mutable. This stable-yet-dynamic self is not trapped by its environment, nor is it devoid of all structure. Hence, the determinism and transience which posed such difficulty in existing feminist explications of

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Ibid., p. 305

⁵³² Ibid., p. 306

⁵³³ Ibid., p. 307

selfhood, can be undone by adopting Dewey's view of a self, which is continuously moving, yet functioning through the coherency of a stable character.

Habits occupy the nexus of action and character, which means they have a dual role: they constitute transacting conduct, as well as the very building blocks of our selves. This becomes especially clear when we recall Dewey's description of structure in terms of the analogical house.⁵³⁴ Accordingly, we can conjure up a hypothetical house, which may have been neglected over several years (with doors coming off their hinges and a leaking roof), but which nonetheless may show signs of repair (with replacement worktops gracing the kitchen) or evidence of completely new features (such as a new skylight in the formerly dark hallway).

We can think of the structure of my self along similar lines, by asserting that some of my habits may have been allowed to decay, while others have been overhauled, while yet others are entirely new additions. Since the Deweyan self comes to be composed of habits via its transaction with its unique environment, it is possible to see how my being raised in a musical family resulted in several habits which can be traced directly to this musical environment.⁵³⁵ For example, a habit of playing the piano was acquired when I was quite young, a habit which was strengthened through repeated exercise and practice over the years, and which clearly constituted a large part of my self. Lack of access to a piano in later years, however, resulted in the deterioration and neglect of this habit, and like the doors or the leaking roof in our example of the house, my habit of piano playing fell into disrepair. Only when I received the gift of a piano quite recently, did this habit become revitalised and strengthened, as it once again forms a major part of my self as a musical self.

This is a simple illustration to demonstrate the functioning of habit in selves, which are, needless to say, far more complex than this elucidation will allow for. Indeed, the interaction of a multifariousness of habits makes selves all the more interesting, as habitual interpenetration results in a knock-on effect in terms of change. Thus, my recently rekindled habit of piano playing has resulted in the acquisition of a new habit consisting in the purchasing of sheet music. In order to free up resources to enable this habit, I've had to drop other habits, such as buying coffee or going to the cinema. New habits impact upon existing habits through prioritisation, as coffee and movies encounter the same fate piano playing once met during my piano-less days. In this sense, then, habits are overlapping, as their workings in terms of new habit acquisition, neglect, or rehabilitation, affect the interconnecting strands of web, which form the habitual self.

⁵³⁴ See section two in chapter two

⁵³⁵ Following the feminist recognition of personal experience as a valuable source for theorising, I will include insights from my own life in this chapter. This is not to set these personal experiences in the foreground, but rather to situate the somewhat abstract ideas under discussion into context.

However, habits overlap with regard not only to further changes necessitated by the mutuality of habits, but also by the temporal ordering of change. As we saw earlier, Dewey explains that structure, represented by the hypothetical house, forms “an arrangement of changing events such that properties which change slowly, limit and direct a series of quick changes and give them an order which they do not otherwise possess.”⁵³⁶ This means that the permanence of structure provided by habits allows for changes to occur at varying speeds, while constituting a framework in which changes can function meaningfully within the settings of the past, and the potential future. The lively interplay of habits, and the self’s existence in transaction with its environment, therefore come to inform not only *which* changes take place, but also *how* these changes take place. What is important from our point of view, is that all of this results in a self which is both stable and flexible, permanent, yet, dynamic. Hence, Dewey’s theory is neither overly determined, nor too transient to admit of agency, and thereby provides selves with the capacity to effect change, holding us morally responsible for subverting or maintaining oppressive systems.⁵³⁷

In fact, Dewey seems to rather emphasise the very necessity of transformation, and the onus placed on us for bringing about such transformation. He does this by means of a concept I will introduce in the next section, called ‘growth,’ and by his somewhat problematic equation of change with progress. In sum, though, it should be reiterated that Dewey’s explication of selfhood can solve the determinism-responsibility problem by positing selves, which are not confined by determinism, nor are they overly marked by transience. This means that selves have agency and moral responsibility, hence their capability to overcome or at least challenge systems of oppression.

⁵³⁶ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 65

⁵³⁷ Our earlier discussion about Aristotle’s sole emphasis on the self in determining a person’s moral status should be recalled here. Since Aristotle treats selves as entities, who singularly bear responsibility for the type of person they are, there seems to be a tension in the voluntary or involuntary nature of habits. Dewey, however, recognises the importance of environment in shaping selves, hence responsibility for selfhood lies not only with the person, but is also informed by the person’s milieu. Again, we can see how this strikes a balance between the determinism and the apparent complete absence of any determinism, or outside influence, in the feminist theories discussed above.

2. Progress, Growth & Teleology

Dewey's recognition of the human inclination to rely on old and familiar habits in favour of unknown and novel habits, leads him to emphasise the importance of the latter. Since the world is an evolving place, selves must change in accordance with the continued alteration of circumstance they find themselves in, for "in a changing world, old habits must perforce need modification, no matter how good they have been."⁵³⁸ It is thus that selves and environments exist in ongoing mutual adaptation. The stubbornness of habits, however, can serve to inhibit change of selves, if we reject adaptation, and cling to the well-worn grooves of habitual being, instead of carving new ones. People become dogmatic and deny the very need for change, as their old habits clash with the demands for innovative transaction.

Habits provide permanence and stability by their very resistance to change, and yet, such resistance becomes problematic when it precipitates an interruption of the processes of adaptation. Dewey explains:

the trouble lies in the inertness of established habit. No matter how accidental and irrational the circumstances of its origin, no matter how different are the conditions which now exist from those under which the habit was formed, the latter exists until the environment obstinately rejects it.⁵³⁹

The problem posed by habits, then, is this: habits require inertness and resistance to change in order to provide structure. However, if this inertness is complete or domineering, then change will be inhibited, even in the face of environments' demands for transformation. This, in turn, will result in a dysfunctional relationship between self and environment, as hope of a return to previous circumstances vanishes.

Dewey explains:

laxity due to decadence of old habits cannot be corrected by exhortations to restore old habits in their former rigidity. Even though it were abstractly desirable it is impossible. And it is not desirable because the inflexibility of old habits is precisely the chief cause of their decay and disintegration. Plaintive lamentations at the prevalence of change and abstract appeals for restoration of senile authority are signs of personal feebleness, of inability to cope with change. It is a "defense reaction."⁵⁴⁰

Far from being an unnatural desire to preserve the status quo, selves adhere to established habits in an attempt to regain control of changed circumstances. Such control cannot be achieved by relying upon the adequacy of the familiar, though, but can only be gained by enlisting novel transacting habits. Therefore, any attempt to deny change by reverting to old habits must necessarily fail, as it constitutes a misled belief in the halting or reversing of a

⁵³⁸ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 56

⁵³⁹ Ibid., p. 125

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 130

continuously adapting world – evincing a mere “defense reaction.” Habitual conservatism, if I may refer to it as such, functions not as a valid strategy in the ongoing process of adaptation, but rather as a flimsy impediment to the inevitability of change.

It is for this reason that Dewey focuses upon the dynamic, flexible aspect of selfhood. As we’ve noted, his distinction between an old and a new, evolving self, is a descriptive or functional one, rather than a metaphysical division, meant to aid us in our comprehension of aspects simultaneously present in a unified self. However, the dynamic nature of the self deserves special regard from Dewey’s point of view, as he heeds us to avoid the habitual conservatism outlined above. Not only is this warning important ontologically, but it also carries ethical weight. For Dewey, we are constantly faced with a choice between the old and the new, and it is only by embracing the latter that selves can become good, or better, as morality comes to be defined by process, rather than by the attainment of static goals:

For everywhere there is an opportunity and a need to go beyond what one has been, beyond “himself,” if the self is identified with the body of desires, affections and habits which has been potent in the past. Indeed, we may say that the good person is precisely the one who is most conscious of the alternative, and is the most concerned to find openings for the newly forming or growing self; since no matter how “good” he has been, he becomes “bad”...as soon as he fails to respond to the demand for growth.⁵⁴¹

As we saw in the previous chapter, Dewey does not believe in absolute goodness. He therefore has no need to follow Aristotle’s distinction of the virtuous, vicious, continent and incontinent persons.

Since selves are constantly in the making, they are never fully good, or capable of achieving a perfect and complete state. Instead, selves improve morally by recognising the importance of change, and by realising such change continuously. It is only when we resist changing that we become bad, falling prey to the problematic habitual conservatism which so hinders the functioning of selves which *need to* transform. Morality, then, is a matter of becoming, and not of arriving at a desired fixed and permanent position. Thus, “direction of movement, not the plane of attainment and rest, determines moral quality.”⁵⁴²

But what is this “demand for growth” which seems to ground the necessity of change? For Dewey, growth is much like the every-day usage of the word, with its implications of organic development. Selves grow by becoming more self-aware and cognisant of the significance of change, students grow through meaningful learning,⁵⁴³ and civilisations grow by steady

⁵⁴¹ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 307

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ An entire chapter, entitled ‘Education as Growth,’ is dedicated to this topic in Dewey, *Democracy and Education*

advancement. For example, reiterating that “morality is a continuing process not a fixed achievement,”⁵⁴⁴ Dewey notes that

Morals means growth of conduct in meaning; at least it means that kind of expansion in meaning which is consequent upon observations of the conditions and outcome of conduct. *It is all one with growing.*⁵⁴⁵

Morality, then, has a developmental dimension, or rather becomes conflated with this developmental aspect, as it constitutes growth, which is harnessed by a recognition of the meaningfulness of transacting selves in their present environments, or “conditions and outcome of conduct.”

In another context, humankind’s progress over the ages comes to be termed ‘growth.’ Thus, the introduction of the 1932 edition of *Ethics* states:

If...we look at the process of growth as it now goes on in a child, and as to some extent it has gone on in the history of those peoples which have had most to do with the present moral life of Europe and America, we may describe this as a process in which man becomes more *rational*, more *social*, and finally more *moral*.⁵⁴⁶

Without wishing to diminish the advances of humankind over the centuries, I think this rather simplistic definition of growth as a unidirectional movement toward increased rationality, sociality and morality presents a significant difficulty in Dewey’s thinking. In fact, ‘growth’ has led to considerable confusion amongst interpreters of Dewey’s work, as he equates growth with progress, and describes it almost like an inevitable, unfolding path toward improvement. If we adhere closely to the demands of change, then we can remain on this path; if not, we regress. This means that change only happens for the better, while a rejection of change results in retrogression. There is no possibility, on this account, for change for the worse, as change itself is always deemed a contributor to the positive development of selves and societies.

While such a view of progress and decline, improvement and deterioration, is obviously flawed, it raises further questions about the feasibility of Dewey’s self in overcoming the determinism-responsibility problem. If growth really is a singular progressive movement toward betterment, then this surely increases the determinism of selves as they interact with their environments. Indeed, Dewey’s theory becomes rather akin to the teleological ontology of Aristotle. It is thus not surprising that several commentators have read Dewey as a proponent of teleology, a philosopher of self-realisation. Walter Veazie, for example, finds that “Dewey’s emphasis on teleology in his metaphysics – histories, ends, final causes to use

⁵⁴⁴ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 280

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 13. Emphasis added.

bad words – is perhaps the most characteristically Aristotelian element in his writing.”⁵⁴⁷

Similarly, Robert L. Holmes writes of Dewey’s self:

personal moral choice is basically a matter of deciding what sort of person one is going to be...And for the individual it is growth – the continuing progress towards realising oneself – rather than the attainment of a fixed end that should be the goal...in Dewey’s view happiness results from one’s becoming the sort of person he has set himself to be; from the realisation through growth of those capacities and abilities to which he has assigned priority.⁵⁴⁸

While Holmes rightly asserts Dewey’s rejection of static ends to be achieved, references to self-realisation nonetheless imply that there is an unfolding of linear development, which necessarily results in the instantiation of a particular, preconceived end, the self “he has set himself to be.”

It seems somewhat puzzling that we should know what kind of self we desire to be, if the self is continuously in the making – how can we therefore say that we have a clear vision of selfhood, which simply needs to be realised? In *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey explicitly rejects appeals to self-realisation and the teloi they entail. Asserting, yet again, his opposition to the frequent disregard shown to the present in favour of future fixed ends to be obtained, he states:

Many harsh critics of utilitarianism have...agreed that there is some end in which action terminates, a final goal. They have denied that pleasure is such an outside aim, and put *perfection or self-realisation* in its place. The entire popular notion of “ideals” is infected with this conception of some fixed end beyond activity at which we should aim.⁵⁴⁹

As we know, Dewey criticises Aristotle for the limits his teleological account places upon change. Existents are confined within the narrow strictures of the divine and species plans, which contract the very possibility of transformation. It is obvious, then, that any interpretation of Dewey as deliberate or unwitting promoter of teleology are misled, as his metaphysics and his ethics clearly contain a rejection of any such approach.

However, if the self is not ready-made, an end we determine and aim toward actualising, how, then, are we to imagine the self as it grows? Avoiding the terminology of self-realisation, Martin Hollis provides the following rather useful interpretation:

An intelligent human being is consciously searching not only for means but also for goals. He is always in a state of becoming and the conscious search is a

⁵⁴⁷ Veazie, “John Dewey and the Revival of Greek Philosophy”, p. 8

⁵⁴⁸ Holmes, R. L., “John Dewey’s Social Ethics” in *Critical Assessments*, Vol 3, Tiles, J. E. (ed.), Routledge, London, 1992, p. 132

⁵⁴⁹ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 223. Emphasis added.

search for himself. *The search is not a treasure hunt, however, since there is no pre-existent self to find.*⁵⁵⁰

Of course human beings must think about the kind of person they are or want to be, however, such deliberation must be conscious of the present, and must be open to reinterpretation as the self constantly recreates itself. We know that Dewey encourages us to pay particular attention to the dynamic aspect of selfhood, and indeed, the changes we desire to realise in our selves must be the subject of scrutiny and reflection. Importantly, though, we must never establish a view of the self to be attained at all costs, irrespective of the ongoing processes of the self's adaptation in transaction with its environment.

Independent, static ends, including the end of a particular self to be achieved, are always divorced from the present, hence their distortion of the requirements of the here-and-now. As the self adapts, and readapts, and readapts again, it becomes informed by changed futures and changed pasts, and all of these must be taken into consideration in order to make sense of the present. As Pappas also notes:

Any consequentialist or teleological interpretation of Dewey's ethics ignores his attempt to shift the centre of gravity of morality to concrete present situations. Consequences and ends are, of course, important, but they are only part of our present resources for present reconstruction.⁵⁵¹

As the self continuously remakes itself, so it similarly continuously re-imagines itself and the changes it must instantiate in accordance with the demands of the present situation. This is why Dewey says that "memory of the past, observation of the present, foresight of the future are indispensable. But they are indispensable *to* a present liberation, an enriching growth of action."⁵⁵²

On this account, virtue and happiness are not independent goals to be reached, but rather exist under the auspices of the present. Hence, happiness "is not directly an *end* of desire and effort, in the sense of an end-in-view purposely sought for, but is rather an end-product, a necessary accompaniment"⁵⁵³ of the self. Although Dewey's use of the term 'end-product' may connote a final outcome, what he means here, is that far from being a fixed end, happiness is a *by-product* of engagement with current circumstances. Thus, happiness, virtue, selves, are not external, future teloi to be achieved, but rather form part of immediate experience. This repudiation of the self as fixed end thus goes some way toward undermining a teleological reading of Dewey's work. On top of this, we can reject an account of a natural unfolding toward the final telos of selfhood. Such unfolding is of course unlikely, given that

⁵⁵⁰ Hollis, M., "The Self in Action" in *Critical Assessments*, Vol 1, Tiles, J. E. (ed.), Routledge, London, 1992, p. 147. Emphasis added.

⁵⁵¹ Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics*, p. 149

⁵⁵² Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 265

⁵⁵³ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 198

its end-point, the telos, has already been denied. However, our initial interpretation of growth as movement toward some undefined, general end constituting improvement requires further examination.

If all change really were to consist of stages in the successive advance toward betterment, then growth would be nothing more than progressive development. Indeed, in *Democracy and Education*, Dewey writes:

When it is said that education is development, everything depends upon how development is conceived. Our net conclusion is that *life is development, and that developing, growing, is life.*⁵⁵⁴

This is the organic explication of growth referred to earlier. But does Dewey allow for the possibility of the opposite of growth, a kind of stunting, if you will? If selves can improve, surely they can also regress. Unfortunately Dewey does not have a lot to say on this, however, we do know of his opposition to a calcification of habits in the face of the necessity of change. Warning against such complete rigidifying, he explains that “since we live in a moving world, they [rigid habits] plunge us finally against conditions to which they are not adapted and so terminate in disaster.”⁵⁵⁵

Rather than adjusting to changed circumstances, habitual conservatism resists responding to said circumstances, instead reverting to the known and familiar. This not only represents a perversion of the course of transaction between environment and self, but quite dramatically, ends in “disaster.” Such disaster, then, must be an instance of regress, as selves precipitate crises by their inability and unwillingness to change. Dewey does include provision for the retrograde functioning of selves on this account, and yet, it seems that only the absence of change, rather than change itself, issues in regression. Change and growth are progressive, while lack of change or inertia result in disaster.

This difficulty in Dewey’s thought has not gone unnoticed. In “John Dewey and Contemporary Normative Ethics,” Andrew Altman, for example, outlines the standard criticism levelled against Dewey, which claims that his “theory treats all growth as of a piece, as morally good.”⁵⁵⁶ Altman continues:

Dewey had a standard reply to this kind of criticism...He pointed out that certain kinds of individual growth expended one’s opportunities for future growth, and other types diminished those opportunities. When the growth of an individual is viewed from an ethical standpoint, it is the growth over the course of his lifetime that is important, not simply his growth at a given instant. Thus, from the Deweyan point of view, morally good growth is that which enhances future

⁵⁵⁴ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 48

⁵⁵⁵ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 211

⁵⁵⁶ Altman, A., “John Dewey and Contemporary Normative Ethics” in *Critical Assessments*, Vol 3, Tiles, J. E. (ed.), Routledge, London, 1992, p. 126

opportunities for growth, while morally bad growth is that which diminishes those opportunities.⁵⁵⁷

The stipulation of growth being assessable only over the course of a person's lifetime, is reminiscent of Aristotle's definition of happiness, as "one swallow does not make a summer; neither does one day."⁵⁵⁸ However, it does nothing by way of answering our question of the potential for bad growth.

Is it not possible to say that a human being led a bad life, that in terms of individual instances of growth, and/or in terms of the overall picture of growth, she lived a sort of stunted existence? The problem here is rather whether Dewey allows for bad growth, whether negative change occurs at all, or whether it is merely the absence of change. Solving this problem by resorting to even further growth, i.e. growth is good if it leads to more growth, and bad if it inhibits such growth, seems to me, a sort of circular reasoning. On top of this, it actually reinforces our concerns about growth as progressive change, as the inhibition of growth surely means the hindrance of change – but does it mean the realisation of negative change?

It seems, then, that issues surrounding growth, and its explication as change for the better, remain problematic and at this juncture irresolvable. However, this need not deter us from our initial intention of using Dewey's explication of selfhood as a theory capable of countering the difficulties posed by the determinism-responsibility problem. We've already undermined a reading of Dewey as teleological, albeit with an inconclusive analysis of his concept of growth. Be that as it may, we can still take the Deweyan habituated self as a viable theoretical model, and extract growth from it, thereby leaving us free to use Dewey's self in the resolution of the determinism-responsibility problem. In other words, while Dewey may not have followed the implications of growth through to their logical conclusions in terms of change being realised as 'good' or 'bad' (and the attendant axiological shades in between), there is no need for us to concur that selves only change for the better, should we adopt his view of selfhood. Instead, we can meaningfully engage Dewey's self by focusing upon its function as a dynamic-yet-stable self, which accommodates permanence and stability on the one hand, and flexibility and dynamism on the other.

Questions of change expressed in the various gradations away from or toward betterment need not enter into the discussion at this stage. Indeed, I would like to return to this difficulty in the next chapter. Suffice it say, for now, that growth will be bracketed within the context of the determinism-responsibility problem, as the Deweyan self fulfils the criteria for solving

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ NE 1098a20

this problem, particularly as it remains unblemished by the complications of growth. Hence, while growth, at first glance, might seem appealing from a feminist point of view, particularly as it emphasises the need for change, indeed for change for the better – we do not require its inclusion in our argument, as Dewey's functional distinction of old and new self, and his attribution of agency and moral responsibility to the flexible-yet-permanent self, already highlight the importance of selves to change. For feminists, this means that Dewey's exposition of selfhood, understood with the exclusion of growth, constitutes a solution to the determinism-responsibility problem, as it allows us to theorise both oppressors and oppressed as ethically culpable beings, possessed of the capacity to effect change.

3. Feminist Consciousness & the Feminist-Pragmatist Self

Having thus established the usefulness of Dewey's depiction of the self for our purposes, I want to now turn toward the notion of feminist consciousness. This concept is widely used in feminist work of the second half of the 20th century and the present, being rooted in the liberatory discourses of second wave feminism.⁵⁵⁹ While feminists frequently refer to feminist consciousness, and it is assumed that most feminists undergo a process of coming to feminist consciousness, or experience *raised* consciousness, there is surprisingly little philosophical exploration of how this process takes place. What initiates a change from common (un)consciousness to feminist consciousness? Is this change sudden or gradual? Is it a solitary process, or does it involve communal engagement? What does it mean in terms of the kind of selves we are? And how does it affect the environments we inhabit, and our understandings of those environments? Trying to shed some light on these questions, we shall begin by considering the personal testimonies of feminists.

In her memoir *Making Trouble*,⁵⁶⁰ Lynne Segal relates her transformative experience from non-feminist (un)consciousness to feminist consciousness as follows:

That sense of being lost, lonely and bewildered, the condition I thought I had brought upon myself in fleeing respectability, turned out to be far from unusual...Why were so many of us quite so confused?...We were educated to be happy, healthy, thinking people, and more was invested in and expected of us than ever before. But many sensed the cloud behind that silver lining, suspecting that our growth and fulfilment was not compatible with the image of

⁵⁵⁹ Strong similarities between feminist consciousness and Paulo Freire's conscientização have also been documented by various theorists. The existence of such similarities seems rather natural, as both feminism and Freire's work on critical education, focus upon the oppressive internalisations of the relatively powerless. For more on this see Freire, P., *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Penguin, London, 1996; Weiler, K., "Freire and a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference" in *Politics of Liberation: Paths from Freire*, McLaren, P. and Lankshear, C. (eds.), Routledge, London, 1994; and Hughes, K. P., "Liberation? Domestication? Freire and Feminism in the University", *Convergence*, Vol. 31, No. 1/2, 1998, pp. 137 - 146

⁵⁶⁰ Segal, L., *Making Trouble: Life and Politics*, Serpent's Tail, London, 2007

femininity thrust before us...The narratives that would address our needs and confusions...seemed to operate like a spiritual renewal: "Women's liberation suddenly lifted the curtain concealing the big world from us..." I too experienced exactly those moments of sudden awakening.⁵⁶¹

Segal's description of coming to feminist consciousness as an awakening is typical of feminist accounts of this process, which usually relate it in epiphanous terms, as an "aha"-moment, a sudden, all-consuming revelation.

Thus, Sue Jhirad,⁵⁶² once active in the North-American left-wing organisation, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), similarly explains:

*I just had this complete and total revelation that suddenly everything was sort of turning inside out...I began to see all these things that happened to me in my life...I began to see for the first time...these were political questions. I got very engaged in the women's movement at that point.*⁵⁶³

Although both of these women came to feminist consciousness in the early days of the women's liberation movement, little seems to have changed in terms of how women experience this radical transformative process.

Descriptions of this change as a kind of enlightenment, along the lines of 'I was blind, but now can see,' are remarkably similar across the generations, certainly in the Western accounts proffered here. For example, at a recent conference marking International Women's Day, a women's theatre group performed a piece entitled "Acting in Solidarity," which depicted sleeping women, who needed to be roused in order to combat gender injustice.⁵⁶⁴ This was meant to symbolise the possibility of non-feminist women joining feminists by having their consciousnesses raised. Each of the performers, and later the audience, were called upon to answer the question: "what woke you?" While women variously answered "education", "women's voices", "someone believed in me", the idea of awakening became the focal point of the potential for women to achieve gender equality. The piece finished with the united proclamation: "when sleeping women wake, mountains will move."

Once again, feminist consciousness is depicted as an awakening, as women who are formerly asleep, become conscious. This characterisation of feminist consciousness as an enlightenment, is also something I am personally familiar with. The reason this experience

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 64 - 67

⁵⁶² Quoted in Klatch, R., "The Formation of Feminist Consciousness Among Left- and Right-Wing Activists of the 1960s", *Gender & Society*, Vol. 15, No. 6, December 2001, pp. 791-815

⁵⁶³ Ibid., p. 808. Emphasis added.

⁵⁶⁴ A recording of this piece, performed at the 2009 International Women's Day Conference organised by the National Women's Council of Ireland and Banúlacht, can be viewed at: Waterford Women's Centre, "Acting in Solidarity", *International Women's Day Conference 2009 - Inspiring Women: Challenging Voices, Changing Times*, available from www.banulacht.ie/conferences/conferences_International_Womens_Day_Conference_Mar_09.htm, accessed 16/01/2010

appears so radical, an abrupt transformation from asleep to awake, from unconscious to conscious, seems to be that feminist consciousness suddenly encompasses every aspect of one's life. Thus, one feels like one's very self has been replaced by another self, like a feminist self has taken the seat of a pre-feminist self, changing one's perception of everything formerly taken for granted as 'normal.' Although my feminist awakening took place several decades after Segal's and Jhirad's, I recognise this experience of raised consciousness as a complete revelatory overhaul of self and one's subsequent altered reading of the world.

But is this realistic? Is it possible for selves to be split into pre- and post-consciousness selves? Is the process of coming to feminist consciousness truly sudden, unexpected, and therefore deserving of this borderline miraculous characterisation? And why should feminist consciousness be so ubiquitous, apparently enveloping our entire existences? Adopting (as I have earlier argued we should) Dewey's explication of the self, we know that a separation of self into feminist and non-feminist is rather unlikely, as the self constitutes a web of interpenetrating habits, which are dependent on each other, and which exist in transaction with their environment(s). Although Dewey does allow for a kind of dysfunctional non-integration of habits in what he refers to as "'pigeon-hole" minds,"⁵⁶⁵ the totality of change attested to in feminist accounts of coming to feminist consciousness, is without precedent in Dewey's conception of selfhood, as such radical transformation falls outside of the remit of a mere sectioning off of habits. Instead, feminists report what is more akin to a complete substitution of old habits with new, feminist ones.

If selves are funds of inter-functioning habits, however, accommodating changes non-uniformly and with varying tempos within the context of enduring structure, as Dewey's house analogy clearly illustrates, then a total annihilation of former habits and a replacement with novel habits is implausible. For, as Shannon Sullivan,⁵⁶⁶ writes:

Release from all structures of identity – if such a thing were possible – would not free us...to be whatever we want. Rather, it would dissolve us into beings with no capacity for or agency to effect transformation and change, effectively eliminating – not increasing – our freedom.⁵⁶⁷

An utter destruction of pre-consciousness self denies any possible capacity for the rebuilding of a feminist-consciousness self, as the existent responsible for such rebuilding, the self, is erased. Hence, the non-feminist-self cannot be completely eradicated, for who is to construct the feminist self in the absence of selfhood? Clearly, then, feminist consciousness allows

⁵⁶⁵ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 39

⁵⁶⁶ Sullivan, S., "Reconfiguring Gender with John Dewey: Habit, Bodies, and Cultural Change", *Hypatia*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2000, pp. 23-42

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29

selves to discard some habits, which have been identified as patriarchally informed, while retaining others, and recycling yet others again. The interwoven character of habits thus comes to explain the all-encompassing nature of raised consciousness.

As the acquisition of new habits, and the alteration and partial abandonment of old habits, impact upon the lively interaction of habits, non-uniformly and at varying speeds, the effects of this interaction seem so radical, that feminists feel like they are encountering not only a completely new self, but also a completely different reality. Feminist understandings permeate almost every aspect of one's existence now, as previously unproblematic norms become problematised and reassessed in feminist terms. Issues surrounding the body, sexuality, work, family life, and so on, all come to be seen in a different light, or through what feminists call 'gendered lenses.' It is precisely the interpenetration and mutual dependency of habits, which makes feminist analyses so ubiquitous, covering large swathes of our lives, hence the perception of a new feminist reality, precipitated by our rise from slumber.

Let me further elucidate by illustrating what has been said. Upon coming to feminist consciousness, and upon learning that clothes from a particular shop are manufactured by women in deplorable sweatshop conditions, we might stop purchasing items in this store. Our need for clothing, however, will require us to seek out other sources from which to obtain said clothing. Not wishing to repeat the mistake of financially supporting the exploitation of women, we will now have to investigate the gender justice credentials of any future manufacturer. Having established these, we can purchase goods, safe in the knowledge that one's actions will not contribute to a victimisation of women workers. Thus, our former, non-feminist habit of buying clothes in a particular shop comes to be replaced by the habits of checking where products come from, and buying only from approved retailers. Since habits are connected to each other in mutually effecting ways, these new feminist habits of clothing acquisition, impact upon other habits constituting our selves.

For example, since we are now alert to the structural workings of inequality in relation to clothing, we might transfer this insight onto the food we consume, or the music we listen to. This means that we only buy certain food products in certain shops or markets, and only listen to artists who do not denigrate women (and others) in their lyrics. Habits of buying clothes may, however, have even further-reaching consequences. Our new feminist awareness of manufacturers' roles in sustaining gender inequality may inspire us to do more than simply refuse to buy from certain outlets. We may motivate family members and friends to boycott the store, and we may even start a fully-fledged campaign to bring greater pressure to bear upon the retailer in question. It should be obvious from this, that a change in habits ripples right through the fabric of the habituated self, as our fibres of being are

excised, re-stitched or replaced with new thread. The web of selfhood never completely unravels though, even with the seeming all-consuming refashioning of self into feminist self.

In our example, it means that we become selves who are mindful of their economic power to impact upon gender inequality, who act according to this power, and who possibly even become activists, struggling against the exploitation of women. Changes in habits lead to further changes, albeit within the context of a reweaving of self, rather than an extinction, and subsequent substitution, of self. This reweaving, understood by feminists as the process of coming to feminist consciousness, takes place within the larger context of the overlapping webs making up our environments. Hence, the habits of those around us being enlisted in the ban on a particular shop are affected, as are our own. The self thus continues to readapt with its environment, as we reshape selves via our transacting habits.

Such a feminist reshaping of the stable-yet-dynamic habituated self of course requires self-reflexivity. A re-examination of our previous assumptions about the world is necessitated by the growing certainty that norms unproblematically adopted before raised consciousness, are often far from straight-forward. Indeed, this is complicated by the unconscious nature of the often sexist norms acquired by us through socialisation. This, in fact, is the lesson social constructivism teaches us: our very desires and aspirations are informed by the negative internalisations of the oppressive systems we inhabit. Rather than lapsing into the over-determinism imposed by social constructivist theories, though, we should assess whether the Deweyan self can account for and perhaps somehow mitigate the most damaging effects of such sexist internalisations. If habits partially exist below consciousness, how can we bring about change in these habits, which may be informed by patriarchal values and beliefs?

We noted earlier the difficulty habits pose in terms of habitual conservatism, which entails the rigidity of habits in providing structure on the one hand, while risking the fossilisation of habits in the face of the need for change, on the other. This is what Dewey refers to as the “vicious circle”⁵⁶⁸ of habits, wherein habits *have to be* resistant to change to allow for stability, although such resistance jeopardises the dynamic in favour of the familiar. We saw that Dewey places particular emphasis on the self’s mutable and newly developing aspect, and indeed, he tells us to be continuously alert to the requirements of change.

The self-reflexivity demanded by the process of coming to feminist consciousness can thus be satisfied within the Deweyan conception of selfhood, as Dewey stipulates that we should cultivate a habit of such self-reflexivity. Although adult habits are far more set than they are in children, a habit of open-mindedness can go some way toward undermining habitual

⁵⁶⁸ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 126

conservatism, thus freeing habits to be open to revision and alterability.⁵⁶⁹ As Sullivan also notes, “Dewey’s somewhat paradoxical-sounding advice that we need to form the habit of not forming fixed habits”⁵⁷⁰ constitutes a strategy for interrupting the vicious circle posed by habitual conservatism. However, there is more to escaping the vicious circle than a habit of awareness of the demands of change.

For Dewey, our interconnected habits need not exist in harmony, in fact, they often find themselves in tension with each other. When this tension is heightened, when contradictory and opposing habitual forces escalate, change asserts itself as old habits cease to function, and we have to discard those well-worn threads of being in favour of new ones. Dewey explains:

No adult environment is all of one piece. The more complex a culture is, the more certain it is to include habits formed on differing, even conflicting patterns. Each custom may be rigid, unintelligent in itself, and yet this rigidity may cause it to wear upon others. The resulting attrition may release impulse for new adventures.⁵⁷¹

Noting the tensions caused on an institutional level, he continues:

Political and legal institutions are now inconsistent with the habits that dominate friendly intercourse, science and art. Different institutions foster antagonistic impulses and form contrary dispositions. If we had to wait upon exhortations and unembodied “ideals” to effect social alterations, we should indeed wait long. But the conflict of patterns involved in institutions which are inharmonious with one another is already producing great changes.⁵⁷²

If we still persist in clinging to habitual conservatism, despite the heightened tension of habitual contradictoriness, then this surely must end in disaster, as our chances of escaping the vicious circle are dashed.

This, then, is the stubbornness of habit, and the active distortion of adaptation, which may nonetheless result from a fear of change, constituting what Dewey calls a “defense reaction.”⁵⁷³ But isn’t this precisely the crux of the matter? Habits can function against our selves, while we remain unaware of such events. For women this means that sexist internalisations remain below consciousness, dictating actions, feelings and thoughts, which are predicated upon oppressive norms. Is it really enough to hope that a habit of self-reflexivity will undo these unconscious workings, which are the products of a lifetime of

⁵⁶⁹ For Dewey, it is important to foster the right habits, including a habit of open-mindedness, in children through education. Hence, although “educative development of the young is not the only way in which the life of impulse may be employed to effect social ameliorations...it is the least expensive and most orderly.” - *Ibid.*, p. 123

⁵⁷⁰ Sullivan, “Reconfiguring Gender with John Dewey”, p. 39

⁵⁷¹ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 128

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 129

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 130

socialisation? Even with raised feminist consciousness, can mindfulness of the rigidity of habits counter these heavily entrenched assumptions about our selves and the environments we inhabit?

Dewey's description of habitual conservatism being rooted in a "defense reaction" shows that he is aware of the uncontrolled and unperceived aspect of habitual functioning.⁵⁷⁴ It can be difficult for us to face this head-on, particularly if it involves an honest appraisal of complex, perhaps even thorny, elements of our selves we would rather not have to deal with. Sullivan explores this in terms of white privilege and racial discrimination.⁵⁷⁵ She points out, that habits "can often be *defense mechanisms* by which one protects oneself from perceived dangers and conflicts, the protection often including avoidance of conscious self-examination."⁵⁷⁶ While the terminology here is almost identical to Dewey's, I think that Dewey, nonetheless, underestimates the harmful effects of such self-sabotaging habits. Rather than merely constituting a sluggish resorting to the tried-and-tested, such habits are the result of, and the active life-giver of, oppressive norms.

The absorption and perpetuation of sexist interpretations of self and environment reside in the very unconscious workings of the habituated self, which will not be tackled solely by appeals to self-awareness and the need for flexible selves. Instead, feminist theories, which take oppressive standards and norms as a starting point, have to be consulted, and their insights integrated in an analysis of selfhood, which otherwise remains superficial and unable to interrupt the self-defeating functioning of unconscious habits. Since oppression operates in rather intangible and seemingly impenetrable ways, the work of feminists, which is paramount to our understanding of selves inhabiting patriarchal systems, consists in an unearthing of what appears to be opaque, fleeting or simply indescribable. That this should be so is not surprising, as the 'naming' of one's reality requires different tools, a different language, to conceptualise that which hitherto was hidden, unnamed.⁵⁷⁷ The "half-submerged weapons of a sexist system,"⁵⁷⁸ as Sandra Bartky calls them, can therefore be illuminated and from this position of visibility rebuffed.

⁵⁷⁴ Indeed, in chapter three we saw that Dewey is far more aware than Aristotle, of habits' functioning below consciousness and the implications this holds in terms of mechanisation and a diminishing of choice – see section nine.

⁵⁷⁵ Sullivan, "From the Foreign to the Familiar",

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 200. Emphasis added.

⁵⁷⁷ For more on feminist 'naming' see Daly, M., *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1985

⁵⁷⁸ Bartky, S. L., "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness" in *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*, Bartky, S. L. (ed.), Routledge, London, 1990, p. 17. Bartky here similarly notes the elusiveness of oppression: "It is difficult to characterise the tone of an article, the patronising implications of a remark, the ramifications of some accepted practice, and it is even more difficult to describe what it is like to be bombarded ten or a hundred times daily with these only half-submerged weapons of a sexist system."

Feminist theory is capable not only of placing the rather explicit sexist outgrowths of patriarchy into context, but also of bringing to light the implicit, as it manifests oppressive internalisations in the habits that make up our selves. This feminist excavation work in consciousness and unconsciousness allows us to identify and make connections between specific habits, and the way they interact to reinforce the norms of sexist societies. Dewey's explication of selfhood thus needs to become a feminist-Deweyan, or a feminist-pragmatist exposition of self, which acts as a rejoinder to the surreptitious workings of habits below consciousness, as they maintain and feed off the oppressive norms we assume. Only by adopting such a feminist-pragmatist stance, can we hope to disrupt the vicious cycle of habitual conservatism, which harbours habits informed by sexist internalisations, to make the drastic change from non-feminist to feminist, and to do this in a liberatory way, unafraid of facing the obstructive functioning of our habits head-on.

4. Habit Acquisition & the Socially Embedded Self

Adopting a feminist-pragmatist analysis of change, it remains to be seen how, exactly, habits are acquired and what this means in terms of raised consciousness. Dewey's self is a socially embedded being, as it exists in continuous transacting relationship with its environment(s). Since we are sustained by, and in turn sustain those around us, we shape our habits in accordance with our social milieu. Our capacity to learn, when coupled with our agency to effect change, enables us to modify behaviour in accordance with the reactions we perceive from those in our sphere of existence. A misbehaving child, for example, will be corrected by an adult, so the child can behave differently in future. As Dewey explains:

The child is at first held liable for what he has done, not because he deliberately and knowingly intended such action, but in order that *in the future* he may take into account bearings and consequences which he *has* failed to consider in what he has done.⁵⁷⁹

The importance of correcting the child, then, lies not in the present, but rather in the future-directed capacity of selves to change habits as they come to be socially acquired.

Since selves are continuously in the making, though, and never finished and complete, the role of the social in determining habits similarly continues in adult life. Just as the child's mistake was highlighted not as punishment, but rather to make her think about actions for future behaviour, so an adult can learn not to repeat an error from here on in. Hence, the

fact that one did not deliberate before the performance of an act which brought injury to others, that he did not mean or intend the act, is of no significance,

⁵⁷⁹ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 303

save as it might throw light upon the kind of response by others which will render him likely to deliberate next time he acts under similar circumstances.⁵⁸⁰

Our social environment thus determines the habits we come to amass, as people's responses inform the future actions we carry out. The social embeddedness of selves is instrumental in habit acquisition as we are marked by interdependency and the desire to belong.

The relative homogeneity resulting from our mutual regard for particular habits can also be termed 'custom,' as similar habits are instilled and fostered by communities. As Dewey notes:

customs persist because individuals form their habits under conditions set by prior customs. An individual usually acquires the morality as he inherits the speech of his social group. The activities of the group are already there, and some assimilation of his own acts to their pattern is a prerequisite of a share therein, and hence of having any part in what is going on.⁵⁸¹

Not only do we acquire certain habits, rather than others, but the process involved in determining which habits to adopt, involves the infusion of habits with axiological import. Through the reactions of others we learn what is good, bad, acceptable, and so on. Morality itself, then, is a social phenomenon, inseparable from our ability to learn and our capacity to effect change. Selves come to be shaped, and in turn shape other selves, through transaction of the future-orientation of habits.

The conforming of habits to the traditions of a group, though, seems rather problematic, particularly within the context of freedom and over-determinism. While we must of course allow for an organic development of habits within the social connectedness of selves, not all selves have exactly the same values and priorities, nor do they simply adopt these from their parents, friends, work colleagues, etc. Indeed, the diversity of norms of all of these potential influences prohibits a reading of selves which are mere sponges, with identical influencers forming identical influencées, who in turn create further identical influencées – until societies resemble mere robot colonies. Indeed, this cannot be so as the influencing is always a mutual affair, as one's self impacts upon other selves, who in turn impact upon one's self, and so on.

But why, on Dewey's account, should we be any different? How does difference, and hence variation in selves, come into the axiological habituation of selves? In the previous chapter, I already spoke of the fact that one's unique life experiences shape particular and unique characters. Our specific place in the social matrices made up of the intersections of groupings along lines of gender, ethnicity, religion, class, etc., results in a plethora of influences informing unique character, as we inhabit circumstances over place and time, which are

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 304

⁵⁸¹ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 58

singularly our experiences. Different social groups, and different individuals, thus contain variability, as selves impact upon other selves non-uniformly.

And yet, there is a larger homogeneity, identified by Dewey as custom, which should not be understood as complete or all-encompassing. Indeed, for Dewey, total homogeneity has to be broken or chipped away at, lest we fall prey to a mindless, uncritical conformity. According to Dewey, theories of virtue and vice most explicitly proffer this kind of conformity, as praise and blame act to cement any identification of what is virtuous and what is vicious.

Thus, “acts and dispositions generally approved form the original virtues; those condemned the original vices.”⁵⁸² Power of course plays a large role in the creation and maintenance of custom and morality, as Aristotle’s virtues clearly show. They require no justification, but are presented as the obvious characteristics of the virtuous person. Acknowledgement and consideration of other views is completely absent, as the power to identify and enforce virtues results in a universalism of paradigmatic character.

Alert to this elitism, Dewey writes that praise and blame “operate as reflex imputations of virtue and vice – with accompanying rewards and penalties – as *sanctions* of right.”⁵⁸³ As selves come to be rewarded or punished, as they are praised and blamed, virtues and vices are asserted, without any regard for their particular usefulness or appropriateness. Thus, they inhibit critical engagement with the real moral demands of situations, and instead impose conformity to the status quo. Writes Dewey:

the traits regarded as virtuous and vicious...are derived at the outset from the conceptions of merit and demerit, of deserts; and meritoriousness, deservingness, is measured by the reactions of others. It is others who, approving and disapproving, award honour, esteem, merit. For this reason, as has also been noted, virtues and vices in morals as far as dominated by custom are strictly correlative to the ruling institutions and habits of a given social group.⁵⁸⁴

Customs, and the morality inherent in such customs, thus constitute a perpetuation of the antecedently acceptable. We learn what is virtuous and vicious from others, who praise and blame, approve and disapprove.

Wishing to be members of society, or even smaller groupings, we assimilate habits, we integrate by conformity. Hence,

“conventional morality” is precisely a morality of praise and blame based on the code of valuations which happens to be current at a particular time in a particular social group. Whatever conforms, at least outwardly, to current

⁵⁸² Dewey, “Three Independent Factors in Morals”, p. 286

⁵⁸³ Ibid. In this passage, Dewey clarifies that praise and blame are reflexive, since they “are so spontaneous, so natural, and as we say “instinctive” that they do not depend either upon considerations of objects that will when attained satisfy desire nor upon making certain demands upon others.”

⁵⁸⁴ Dewey, J. and Tufts, J., *Ethics* Ibid., Vol. 7: 1932, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), 1985, p. 254

practices, especially those of an institutional sort, receives commendation or at least passes without censure; whatever deviates exposes one to censure. The practical effect is a negative morality; virtue is identified with “respectability,” and respectability means such conduct as is exempt from overt reproach and censure rather than what is inherently worthy of respect.⁵⁸⁵

What I shall term the approval/disapproval mechanism of habit acquisition, functions not only as an educative tool in transaction, and as an anchoring of selves in communities, but also serves to impose – if unchecked – habits which are subservient to the values and norms of the dominant power of a group or groups. This, of course, is extremely difficult from a feminist point of view, as such power has traditionally been held by men, and has resulted in the perpetuation of axiological norms informed by the experiences of men, which have not only excluded, but often also explicitly denigrated women’s experiences. Morality, which is learnt via the approval/disapproval mechanism, thus replicates the sexist assumptions of patriarchal systems by rewarding and punishing accordingly.

This need not always be obvious or apparent, as the “half-submerged weapons of a sexist system” play upon the existing collective unconscious of patriarchy. Through socialisation children learn very quickly that femaleness is somehow other, different, and lesser, and since habits constitute not only ways of acting, but also building blocks of our selves, sexism becomes integrated into our very being, hence the unconscious internalisations of self-defeating habits. Bartky’s half-submerged weapons can thus afford to be only half-submerged, as they take advantage of the established, if unconscious, truth of the inferiority of women, which has been imbued in selves by means of the approval/disapproval mechanism. The axiological norms of patriarchy thus need not be continuously explicitly expressed, but can be reinforced sporadically and subtly. This of course means that the half-submerged weapons of patriarchy benefit from being more difficult to pin-point, working insidiously upon selves, which are already comprised of habits shaped by sexism. All of this has necessitated the feminist excavation work discussed earlier. Let us see, though, how Dewey proposes to disrupt the conformity entailed by the approval/disapproval mechanism. For Dewey, the answer to the problem posed by moral conventionalism lies in “reflective morality.”⁵⁸⁶ He explains that this

instead of leaving praise and blame where they were except for putting under them a rational basis tends to shift the emphasis to scrutiny of conduct in an objective way, that is with reference to its causes and results. What is desirable is that a person shall see for himself what he is doing and why he is doing it; shall be sensitive to results in fact and in anticipation, and shall be able to analyse the forces which make him act as he does act. Accordingly, approval

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 252

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 254

and disapproval themselves are subjected to judgment by a standard instead of being taken as ultimate.⁵⁸⁷

An examination as to the causes and perpetuation of particular norms and their suffusion through approval and disapproval, is indeed required, if we are to undermine conformity to oppressive values. However, Dewey's advice to pay more attention to the instigations and effects of such values seems rather limited. I suspect Dewey is here imagining selves in the context of problematic situations, which need to be approached experimentally, as deliberation of carefully delineated evidence allows us to reach conclusions about the best way to proceed, by following a process reminiscent of 'scientific method'.⁵⁸⁸ Indeed, Dewey states that the "possession of a reflective standard...makes men realise that reward and punishment, commendation and condemnation are good or bad according to their consequences."⁵⁸⁹

This emphasis on consequences is indicative of Dewey's experimental approach to moral situations, which involves dramatic rehearsal, the imaginative playing out of possible courses of action in anticipation of the potential effects they may have. While it is of course necessary to deliberate as to the consequences of conduct in favour of a mere adherence to dominant norms, the difficulty, from our point of view, lies in our very capacity to evaluate such consequences. Sexist internalisations blind us to the sexist nature of consequences, which are merely perceived as 'normal.' "The forces which make him act as he does act," are thus extremely hard to identify, as our habits work against us, having been formed through the approval/disapproval mechanism, which imbues selves with dominant morality. Appeals to reason, or as Dewey calls it, 'reflection,' will prove to be fruitless in the face of unconscious preconceptions about women, as male-bias exists as part of our very selves.

We thus return to my earlier assertion that Dewey does not fully appreciate the severe implications of manipulative habits operating below consciousness.⁵⁹⁰ In my view, only feminist analyses can counter sexist axiological norms, and their conscious and unconscious reinforcement in selves. The psychology of sexism can thus be approached with the aid of a conception of the feminist-pragmatist self, as habits are assessed in terms of their patriarchal origination in the approval/disapproval mechanism, and their counterproductive functionings are revealed through feminist analyses.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ See chapter three, section four.

⁵⁸⁹ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 254

⁵⁹⁰ Sullivan also makes this point, and argues that "a pragmatist understanding of habit...needs development in connection with a psychoanalytic appreciation of fantasy, desire, and pleasure and a psychoanalytic picture of the unconscious as often actively scheming against one's best efforts at change." - Sullivan, "From the Foreign to the Familiar", p. 200

Earlier, I alluded to feminists 'naming' reality, and indeed, feminists today benefit from the substantial work undertaken by previous generations of feminists, who have created a language with which to capture sexism.⁵⁹¹ This should make us wonder: how could these women first identify sexism, if habits are axiologically acquired through conformity with our communities? Is it really necessary to rely upon the insights and support of other feminists, or is it possible to achieve raised consciousness alone? Certainly, the former appears to be easier, and perhaps one's understanding of the systemic nature of sexism is more quickly evident, as the extensive unearthing work of feminists allows one to connect individual instances of male-bias to a more comprehensive picture of oppression.

Also, if habits are amassed through the praise and blame we receive from others, there is no reason to assume that this changes as we become feminists. During the process of coming to feminist consciousness, habits simply become informed by feminist norms, rather than by dominant, sexist ones. As a person experiences raised consciousness, she turns increasingly to other feminists for endorsement, and her habits, which make up her self, come to be shaped by *their* beliefs, ideals, and values. While these now inform a radically transforming self, they also take hold retrospectively, with one's life being placed within the context of a feminist world-view. It is only natural that selves in this critical and life-altering phase should require the advice and insights of other feminists, as well as a sense of community,⁵⁹² particularly as raised consciousness entails, to a certain extent, the loss of one's old community.

This does not mean that we practice a complete separatism, severing all of our existing relationships, however, there is a clear demarcation between the dominant assumptions and norms previously taken for granted, and the novel, feminist ones entailed by transformation.⁵⁹³ Since the latter are often opposed to the former, it follows that feminists now replace the norms of (unwittingly) sexist approvers/disapprovers with those of feminist approvers/disapprovers, thereby becoming members of a feminist community.⁵⁹⁴ The double

⁵⁹¹ See section four.

⁵⁹² Erika Summers-Effler also finds belonging to a new group, and the attendant experience of solidarity, to be an integral part of coming to feminist consciousness. For more on this see Summers-Effler, E., "The Micro Potential for Social Change: Emotion, Consciousness, and Social Movement Formation", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 20, No. 1, March 2002, pp. 41-60

⁵⁹³ Marilyn Frye holds that "most feminists, probably all, practice some separation from males and male-dominated institutions." This can simply include "avoidance of communications and influence from certain quarters (not listening to music with sexist lyrics, not watching TV)," with the most fundamental separation being that of "the instinctive and self-preserving recoil from the systematic misogyny that surrounds us." - Frye, M., "Some Reflections on Separatism and Power" in *Feminist Philosophies: Problems, Theories & Applications*, Kourany, J. A., Sterba, J. P. and Tong, R. (eds.), Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1992, p. 289

⁵⁹⁴ This is not to assert that there is only one feminist community, or that feminism isn't composed of a multiplicity of often opposing ideologies and strategies. However, feminism is often treated as a uniform discourse by those outside of it, hence for many women coming to feminist consciousness,

function of the approval/disapproval mechanism in coming to feminist consciousness thus consists in the guaranteeing of a continued connection to a social group, albeit a different one, and the acquisition of novel habits from this group, which allows for the emergence of new character.

It seems, then, that raised consciousness is predicated upon the existence of feminist communities. And yet, it must be possible to gain awareness of sexism, no matter how difficult, on one's own. Attributing raised consciousness to the existence of others with raised consciousness leaves us in a chicken-and-egg situation – but surely there have been women throughout history, who have struggled against patriarchy on their own. If we absolutely required other feminists for raised consciousness, then we would remain trapped, unaware of the sexist workings of our habits, in the absence of their insights. I propose that this must surely not be the case, and that the stable-yet-dynamic self has the power to dislodge self-sabotaging habits, thereby enabling us to experience feminist consciousness, even in the absence of a community of feminists. As we noted earlier, patriarchy's customs of morality, although perpetuated through the approval/disapproval mechanism and thereby instilled in us as selves, are not all-encompassing or totalising. Although they may form the dominant morality of a patriarchal society, it is not the only one. There are, of course, the axiological norms of feminists, but also of a host of other groups, whom we've already ascribed difference to. We exist as part of a matrix of such groupings, indeed, as feminists, we are not just feminists, but, in my case, lower-middle-class, white, European and female.

Of course my existence at the intersection of such groupings becomes even more complex, when we consider the plethora of habits making up our selves, and their origins. I grew up in a musical family, was encouraged to embrace intellectual pursuits, was raised bilingually, but sports was never a large part of family life. Not surprisingly, my self comprises habits of singing and playing the piano; studying and teaching; appreciating different cultures and languages; and some rather feeble, but persistent, attempts at running. Hence, the intersection of groupings inhabited by me goes beyond class, race, and gender, to include the groupings of musician, student, teacher, linguaphile, and runner. Each of these groupings places different demands upon me and emphasises different habits.

For example, as a musician, it is important to have dexterous fingers, and to be able to play a piece of music without stopping and starting, to play it fluidly, hence piano practice and finger exercises are a must; as a (pseudo)runner, I must pay attention to proper eating habits, and resist succumbing to the counterproductive habit of smoking; as a student, habits of

the complexity of feminism remains to be discovered. Importantly, feminism, in all of its different guises, poses an alternative to the norms proffered by patriarchy. The difference in feminisms, and the myriad of feminist opinions and agendas, transpire the more one learns about feminism as such.

reading and analysing texts speedily and coherently, need to be strengthened. These examples are rather straight-forward, and indeed, other members of the group musician, runner or student will largely concur with the identification of finger dexterity, healthy eating and developed reading skills as habits which are paramount for our existence in each of these respective groups. When placed into the context of my life, this means that these habits are unproblematically reinforced by those in my living vicinity.⁵⁹⁵ For example, my mother, also a member of the musician group, fostered in me the habit of practicing the piano via the approval/disapproval mechanism. Since habits carry axiological weight, I learnt that piano practice and the finger dexterity resulting therefrom are 'good.'

This simple illustration gets somewhat more complicated when we turn to groupings along gender, class or ethnic lines. Which habits can be easily identified as those typical and necessary for womanhood? Far from letting women decide this for themselves, men have frequently imposed their own vision of ideal womanhood, and have tried to enforce habits accordingly, often in the name of 'custom' or 'tradition.' In such cases, the approval/disapproval mechanism takes on the oppressive function of instilling sexist habits in selves, which we know, manipulate us, often below consciousness. Importantly though, we are not just a homogenous group, women, but, for example, women who are white, middle-class, European, musicians, students and runners. This means that even if we were to identify the most appropriate habits to reinforce in members of each grouping, it is in our intersectionality that true complexity of selfhood arises. We are particular selves, and this particularity precludes us from commending a certain view of womanhood to be instilled via the approval/disapproval mechanism in all of womankind, even if it were possible.

Nonetheless, we all have assumptions about what it is means to be a woman, a musician, a runner. We share and reinforce these via the approval/disapproval mechanism, often without our explicit awareness of such. Praise and blame are extolled spontaneously, as we approve and disapprove on the spur of the moment. While we *do* consciously deliberate about the values and principles we hold dear, these need not always be consistently expressed by us in our day-to-day interactions with others. The process of habit acquisition when situated within the complex matrices of sociality therefore runs thusly: we adopt habits (and in turn instil habits in others) from here and there, from group to group, to form stable-yet-dynamic selves.

Groups are never homogenous, though, despite my simplified depiction of the musician, runner and student groups above. Intersectionality means that we bring habits, which are

⁵⁹⁵ I use the term 'living vicinity' here to indicate that those informing our habits via the approval/disapproval mechanism need not exist in our immediate environment, that is, habits can also be shaped by distant others.

unique to us, to each group, hence the diversity within groups. As we inform the habits of those around us, we approve and disapprove non-uniformly, which gives rise to variation in groupings and selves not just through our individual uniqueness, but also through our human inconsistency. It is precisely this variation which equips selves with the potential to step outside of the clasp of dominant axiological norms, as variation precludes the complete power of such norms.

This is particularly true, if we acknowledge that many of our habits are not informed by said norms, indeed, they simply have nothing to do with them. Returning to our habit of finger dexterity, for example, we can see that piano playing can remain completely immune from oppressive norms. If this habit had been entangled in some kind of stipulation that piano playing is only for women, or that I had to practice especially hard as a woman would never be able to play as well as a man, then certainly it would have become part of the oppressive conscious or unconscious functioning of habits. This is not how piano playing was fostered in me, though. Via the approval/disapproval mechanism I came to acquire this habit and experience it as ‘good’ with connotations of enjoyment and relaxation.

The incompleteness of the power of oppressive norms in the habituation of selves is also captured in Segal’s account of coming to feminist consciousness. She asks, “Why were so many of us quite so confused?...We were educated to be happy, healthy, thinking people, and more was invested in and expected of us than ever before.” Thus, through education, habits of thought, open-mindedness and independence were fostered in her, which managed to escape being entirely marred by the ill effects of a sexist system. The existence of these alongside habits originating in a confusing and alien paradigm of femininity, contributed to her ability to begin the radical transformative process of coming to feminist consciousness. Indeed, it is the very juxtaposition of habits free from oppressive norms with habits contrariwise, which allows for change to occur. If we recall, Dewey identifies extreme tension between opposing habits as a driving force for change. In Segal’s case, this meant that the clash in conflicting habits making up her self, resulted in the life-altering change toward raised consciousness.

Patriarchy, then, is not all-defining – we are complex selves containing a multitude of different habits, some of which are tainted by their origination in patriarchal norms, others are free from such corrupt influences; the variation within groups we are a member of, and our unique location at the intersection of these groups is strengthened by our human inconsistency in transmitting habits by means of the approval/disapproval mechanism. Total power of dominant morality is thus undermined by the existence of habits *not* informed by oppressive norms, and by variation and difference in groups and selves. While feminist community, and the strength derived therefrom, contribute even further to such undermining,

it is possible for individuals to challenge patriarchy and the counter-productive habits it instils in us on their own, although this must be an extremely difficult and lonely undertaking.

5. Knowledge, Doubt & Change

Having said all this, I now want to examine the causes of changes in selfhood in greater detail. We already mentioned contradictoriness as a factor in the initiation of change. Opposing habits create such disharmony and friction, that change is impelled. There is, however, more to the instigation of change than that. Since coming to feminist consciousness is often experienced as a sudden epiphany, it is assumed that a particular article, course, or membership in a women's group, caused raised consciousness. On this account, radical change is attributable to a very specific occurrence within a rather limited time-frame. But is this depiction accurate? Can such a monumental life-change really take place from one day to the next? Can we really pin-point the exact event which gave rise to this change?

In order to elaborate upon these questions, I must introduce the concept of 'doubt.' As we know, Dewey advocates the cultivation of a habit of open-mindedness to protect us from a calcification of habits. The role of this habit of flexibility lies in questioning the usefulness of existing habits, in doubting them. In fact, doubt is viewed by pragmatists as a precondition for the initiation of inquiry, which in turn can result in change. Accordingly, doubt is understood as an "irritation,"⁵⁹⁶ a nagging uncertainty which must be resolved. For Dewey, doubt forms the very foundation of thought:

the origin of thinking is some perplexity, confusion or doubt. Thinking is not a case of spontaneous combustion...There is something specific which occasions and evokes it. Given a difficulty, the next step is suggestion of some way out.⁵⁹⁷

Trying to determine the best "way out" of perplexity, we will naturally resort to previous experiences and our existing fund of accumulated knowledge. If this proves fruitless, however, we have to engage in inquiry and further probing.

Relying upon old insights out of a laziness of habit is misleading, and does nothing by way of accurately solving the issue at hand. Habitual conservatism thus also applies to mental habits, which are gladly relied upon, as a quick solution to perplexity terminates the unpleasant sensation of uneasiness. Dewey explains:

⁵⁹⁶ This description is taken from Charles Sanders Peirce. Phyllis Rooney explains: "The irritation of doubt is for Peirce the basis of inquiry: it involves a struggle to a state of "relief" in beliefs that are themselves dynamic as guides and shapers of action." – see Rooney, P., "Feminist-Pragmatist Revisionings of Reason, Knowledge, and Philosophy", *Hypatia*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Spring 1993, pp. 15-37, p. 21

⁵⁹⁷ Dewey, *How We Think*, p. 12

the easiest way [out of perplexity] is to accept any suggestion that seems plausible and thereby bring to an end the condition of mental uneasiness. Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance. Reflective thinking, in short, means judgment suspended during further inquiry; and suspense is likely to be somewhat painful...the most important fact in the training of good mental habits consists in acquiring the attitude of suspended conclusion...To maintain the state of doubt and to carry on systematic and protracted inquiry – these are the essentials of thinking.⁵⁹⁸

I believe that doubt, and the suspension of conclusion with its prolonging of unease, is also relevant in the context of coming to feminist consciousness.

Reflective thought plays its role in this radical transformative process as we resituate our selves and the world we inhabit in light of feminist analyses. As the self changes, its understanding of a whole plethora of previously taken for granted assumptions gives way to new knowledge. This knowledge is value-laden, as transformation involves the acquisition of novel habits via the approval/disapproval mechanism. Also, as feminism entails the rejection of oppressive norms not only on logical or metaphysical grounds, but also on moral grounds, our reconceptualisation of self and world encapsulates the synergy of knowledge *and* morality. Thus, Dewey asserts that “consciousness and conscience have more than a verbal connection.”⁵⁹⁹

This ethico-epistemological dimension of transformation is vital in determining whether raised consciousness truly occurs out of the blue, and whether it can be attributed to a movie, article, or whatever the case may be. I maintain that while the latter may act as triggers, initiating the conscious engagement of self with feminism and/or patriarchy, the transforming experience of coming to feminist consciousness is protracted and extended. This is due to the fact that doubt, which acts as a catalyst for inquiry and reflective thought, can exist in selves over large periods of time, often without our awareness of such. Indeed, Segal’s question, “Why were so many of us quite so confused?” attests to this. The confusion resulting from an ideal of femininity, infinitely unobtainable, yet repeatedly imposed by patriarchal societies, necessarily leaves women in a state of bewilderment and uncertainty.

Indeed, the sense that something just somehow does not fit right, that something is amiss, can often accompany selves living in oppressive systems, as doubt is consciously, but more often than not, unconsciously incorporated into one’s daily existence. This feeling of unease, which may be with us from a very young age, becomes dangerous, if it remains precisely that

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 13

⁵⁹⁹ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 134

– a suspicious doubting, manifesting itself as a *self*-doubt.⁶⁰⁰ When we come to realise what it is we should be doubting, however, when we direct doubt toward the causes of our existential contradictions, consciousness begins to be raised. As this happens, we start to comprehend the doubting unease Segal, and others, relate, and to understand the forces creating such unease in the first place. Thus, feminist analyses and raised consciousness can somewhat relieve the suspension of conclusion spanning lifetimes, as protracted doubt is countered by selves equipped with feminist knowledge.

In this regard, Sandra Bartky's description of feminist consciousness as "anguished consciousness"⁶⁰¹ is also pertinent. Just as Dewey identifies contradictions as instigators of change, so Bartky posits the presence of "contradictions in the social order"⁶⁰² as a condition "for the emergence of feminist consciousness."⁶⁰³ Following Marx, rather than Dewey, Bartky expands upon the conflict induced by "social relations which are generated by changes in the mode of production,"⁶⁰⁴ to include contradictoriness rooted in "modes of (biological) reproduction," women's domestic and work roles, and the treatment of women in the social movements of the 1960s.⁶⁰⁵ While wishing to go beyond the narrow Marxist focus upon materialism, she argues that these contradictions allow for change to take place, as they enable a denial of sexist norms, and a vision of life without such norms. Hence, the "genuine possibility for the partial or total liberation of women...is more than a mere accidental accompaniment of feminist consciousness; rather, feminist consciousness is the apprehension of that possibility."⁶⁰⁶

Underpinning this reading of feminist consciousness as the anticipation of liberation, is a recognition of the centrality of doubt and its attendant uncomfortable sense of unease. Writes Bartky:

There is an anguished consciousness, an *inner uncertainty and confusion* which characterises human subjectivity in periods of social change.

Indeed,

⁶⁰⁰ As feminists have documented, such self-doubt can have severe implications for women's physical and mental health. For a classic exposition of this, see Betty Friedan, who notes the increase in alcoholism in middle class suburban North-American women, as they struggle with the contradictions imposed by society and their lived experiences. Similarly, we need only think of the huge numbers of women with eating-disorders, to see the ill effects of self-doubt, while the contradictions in female physicality result in negative body-image for most women – see Friedan, B., *The Feminine Mystique*, Penguin, London, 1965

⁶⁰¹ Bartky, "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness", p. 14

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., p. 12

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 13

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 14

feminist consciousness, in large measure, is an anguished consciousness.⁶⁰⁷

Notably, Bartky situates doubt in the conscious conversion of self to feminist self, and in the subsequent accommodation of this self with the sexist world it inhabits. Instead of identifying confusion and uncertainty in selves *prior to* raised consciousness, she locates them in the perceived awakening itself, and in its aftermath, as feminists learn to contend with a hostile environment. Hence, doubt is not a *prerequisite* of raised consciousness, but rather a *product* of the transformative experience.

While feminists will naturally encounter feelings of doubt and uncertainty after their coming to feminist consciousness, particularly as they undergo the massive identity shift toward feminism, I think that Bartky underestimates the importance doubt plays as a driving force for change. Also, the certainty to be gained from feminist insights and the newly acquired knowledge to question the very contradictions making up women's lives, are not fully appreciated in Bartky's account of feminist consciousness. Alert to this, Bartky notes:

it might be objected that the feature of feminist experience I have been describing is characteristic not of a fully emergent feminist consciousness but of periods of transition to such consciousness, that the feminist is a person who has chosen her moral paradigm and who no longer suffers the inner conflicts of those in ambiguous moral predicaments. I would deny this. Even the woman who has decided to be this new person and not that old one, can be tormented by recurring doubts. Moreover, the pain inflicted in the course of finding one's way out of an existential impasse, one continues to inflict.⁶⁰⁸

I agree that feminists will continue to experience doubt, including doubt originating in patriarchal contradictions, however, doubt is a direct *result* of said contradictions, not of feminist consciousness. It stands to reason, then, that doubt is inherent in selves over a protracted period of time, as contradictions are present in women's lives long before the process of coming to feminist consciousness is consciously embarked upon. With this in mind, we can reassess the experience of feminist conversion, positing doubt as more or less dormant in selves over the course of a lifetime.

In my personal experience, this means that my introduction to feminism fed into an already existing irritation of doubt, which had to be followed and placed into context. This involved a questioning of what previously was assumed to be straight-forwardly given, and a search for alternative readings of world and self. Thus, the extended presence of doubt in my self, generated by contradictory gender norms, when coupled with feminist insights and community, and the consequent re-evaluation of identity and environment, all amounted to a colossal process, referred to by Dewey as 'reflective thinking.' Importantly, the doubt

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 14. Emphasis added.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 20

underlying such critical thought was already attendant in my self, and more than likely growing, before the feminist awakening as such took place.

Hence, we can see that coming to feminist consciousness is not an abrupt, sudden event, but rather a protracted experience, being rooted in the contradictions of oppressive systems, manifested in feelings of uncertainty and unease. Feminist explications of this process as an epiphany or aha-moment can therefore be substituted by a more undulating, gradual depiction of coming to feminist consciousness. As selves come to reconceptualise their existence as feminist selves, the persistent, nagging doubt of contradictoriness eases off, and confusion yields to increased clarity and certitude. Perplexity will naturally continue to visit the self, however, the friction caused by clashing habits is resolved, as habits are rearranged into a coherent, and now feminist, self.

Having said all this, it should be obvious that the feminist-pragmatist self forms a useful framework for elucidating the steady process resulting in raised consciousness. On this account, selves undergo change by dropping, re-appropriating or acquiring entirely novel habits. The latter are developed via the approval/disapproval mechanism, as feminist norms come to replace patriarchal norms, thus interrupting the subversive, counter-productive functioning of habits below consciousness. Foundational to all of this is doubt, which originates in the contradictions marking our lives, and which is inherent in women over extended periods of time, indeed, over lifetimes. The protractedness of doubt can also explain the intensity of raised consciousness, as a multitude of habits infected by the contradictions of oppressive systems, have been developed over the course of one's life. Finally, the process of coming to feminist consciousness is also epistemically significant, as old, previously unproblematic norms give way to new knowledge and a resituating of self in a sexist world.

This brings our discussion of the feminist-pragmatist self and change to a close, however, I shall briefly reiterate the most important points made in this chapter. Adopting Ferguson's stipulation of the necessity of oppressors and oppressed to be capable of effecting change, I have argued for an explication of selfhood, which combines the liberatory potential of Dewey's dynamic-yet-stable self with feminist analyses of sexism and feminist consciousness. A feminist-pragmatist self overcomes the difficulties posed by the determinism-responsibility problem, as it holds the power to bring about change, and therefore can be held liable for doing so, or indeed, for failing to do so. Placing this self within the context of coming to feminist consciousness, we found that the aha-moment attributed to this process is rather spurious, as consciousness raising occurs over extended periods of time. Central to this is doubt (and its accompanying sense of unease), which,

significantly, can be protracted over the course of a person's lifetime, as it originates in the contradictions of lived experience and patriarchal norms.

While coming to feminist consciousness is facilitated by feminist analyses and insights, achieving this consciousness need not be exclusive to women who are part of, or who become members of, feminist community. Rarely is the power of oppressive systems so complete that habits which are not informed by oppressive norms do not exist side by side with their counterparts. Also, variation in morality from social group to social group; variation within each group; our singular positioning on the intersection of these groups; our unique life-experiences shaping unique character; and the inconsistency of habit transmission – all of these result in habits being obtained and transmitted non-uniformly through the approval/disapproval mechanism. Thus, the social embeddedness of selves allows for a sense of community, a rooting of self with its environment, while allowing for agency and self-determination. As Erin McKenna points out, this means that selves are “formed, though not determined by their society.”⁶⁰⁹ This is also axiologically and epistemologically significant, as habits are value-laden, imparted through praise and blame. The reorganisation of habits, experienced when consciousness is raised, requires a new understanding of self and world, indeed coming to feminist consciousness itself constitutes reflective thinking.

In what follows, I will take a closer look at the connection between systemic, socio-political change and the changes in selfhood detailed in the forgoing discussion. This will be done within the context of an elucidation of Iris Marion Young's model of inclusive democracy, and Dewey's explication of democracy as cooperative inquiry. While I build upon the feminist insight that raised consciousness precipitates further political change beyond oneself, I theorise the relationship between changed selves and changed political systems as one of transaction. Having outlined the feminist-pragmatist self, and having shown how the radical transformative process of feminist consciousness takes hold in selves, we are now in a position to situate this self within the political structures feminists seek to ameliorate.

⁶⁰⁹ McKenna, E., "The Need for a Pragmatist Feminist Self" in *Feminist Interpretations of John Dewey*, Seigfried, C. H. (ed.), The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park PA, 2002, p. 147

Chapter 5. Democracy and Change as Transaction

Inclusion ought not to mean simply the formal and abstract equality of all members of the polity as citizens. It means explicitly acknowledging social differentiations and divisions and encouraging differently situated groups to give voice to their needs, interests, and perspectives on the society in ways that meet conditions of reasonableness and publicity.

- Young, Inclusion and Democracy

In light of the exposition of the feminist-pragmatist self in the previous chapter, we shall now examine this self's capacity to effect structural, socio-political change.⁶¹⁰ That indeed it holds the potential for the realisation of such change, has been shown in the preceding discussion. A detailed account of how this might actually be instantiated, forms the task of the present chapter. We know that a feminist-pragmatist conception of selfhood posits selves as agents, who are able to realise change, and who are therefore responsible for doing or for not doing so in oppressive systems. While extreme victimisation of course diminishes one's capacity to effect change,⁶¹¹ we saw that living in oppressive systems does not render one totally consumed by patriarchal norms, that is, we are still endowed with habits relatively unaffected by said norms. When these habits clash with their oppressive counterparts, the possibility for change arises, and the dynamic-yet-stable self may be spurred to explore the protracted doubt of one's life, thereby resulting in raised consciousness.

But what happens after we've undergone the radical transformative process of coming to feminist consciousness? How should we understand the changes we want to effect as a result of raised consciousness on a larger, structural level? Is Dewey's equation of change with progress totally arbitrary in this context? Or can 'progress' itself be gainfully utilised by feminists in the realisation of systemic change? What role do institutions play in bringing about systemic change? And are democracies, which largely exclude women from political structures, capable of accommodating the kind of changes feminist selves seek to instantiate? In this chapter I want to explore these questions and revisit some of the issues raised in

⁶¹⁰ Material from this chapter was adapted for a conference paper – see Fischer, Progressive Cannibalism, accessed 22/02/2010

⁶¹¹ I do not wish to argue that those facing extreme violence in oppressive systems bear the same responsibility for changing said systems, as do those who encounter other, perhaps milder forms of violence. Violence of course underlies all oppressive systems, be that psychological or physical, hence all of its inhabitants will experience something of its ill-effects. Rather than denying agency to those victimised by extreme forms of violence, though, and feeding into the usual attendant objectification of victim by oppressor, I want to merely point out that such experiences, and the threat of further violence, can result in seeming inertia and incapacity to effect change in the face of fear.

previous sections of the thesis, particularly as they relate to the self as a moral, political agent inhabiting complex matrices of social groupings.

I shall start by clarifying what I mean by personal change of the self and more systemic, structural change. Adopting the feminist critique of the public/private distinction, and Dewey's identification of an inner/outer dualism of selfhood, I will show that a sectioning off of "inner," private change from "outer," public change is by no means straightforward, nor, in fact, desirable. Such delimiters are further complicated by what feminists have termed the 'ethics/politics' split. The significance of 'public,' 'private,' 'ethics' and 'politics' in relation to transformation will become clear during the course of my analysis. I draw upon these categories in order to argue for an explication of *change as transaction*, which is then linked to the model of inclusive democracy advocated by feminist philosopher Iris Marion Young. Following a comparative evaluation of Young's and Dewey's respective accounts of democracy, the chapter ultimately argues for the centrality of the feminist-pragmatist self for the realisation of systemic change within democracies.

1. Ethics/Politics and Public/Private

Feminists have frequently drawn attention to an arbitrary public/private distinction, which has served to disadvantage women by positing strict, demarcating lines between each realm. More recently, such analyses have been extended by the problematisation of a further distinction between ethics and politics.⁶¹² In what follows, I will outline the difficulties posed by such bifurcations, and will deepen the debate by connecting it to Dewey's articulation of the ethics/politics split and the dualism identified by him as an "outer" and "inner" moral selfhood. Such misleading categorisations and segregations need to be addressed lest we misapprehend the nature of the systemic change sought by feminists. Indeed, my model of the feminist-pragmatist self makes it apparent from the outset, that the above recounted dualisms, or distinctions, are misplaced in a vision of selfhood which is marked by social embeddedness and a dependency upon environment(s) through transaction.

Thus, even a cursory glance at the self as it undergoes the radical transformative process of coming to feminist consciousness, shows us that public/private and ethics/politics are coterminous and intermingled, rather than separated and isolated. The feminist-pragmatist self comes to feminist consciousness as a result of heightened tension of clashing habits. Such pressing, contradictory habits are acquired via the approval/disapproval mechanism, as various others from our matrices of social groupings praise and blame, and our selves

⁶¹² Bar On, B.-A. and Ferguson, A., *Daring to Be Good: Essays in Feminist Ethico-Politics*, Routledge, London, 1998

respond accordingly. These others, who impact upon us (and are in turn impacted upon), may be encountered by us in public fora and social settings (such as workplaces, associations, churches, and so on), or in private situations (in family homes). We may even encounter them in both public and private spaces, at different times, depending upon the particular person and social situation. In other words, our conflicting habits, when coupled with protracted doubt, issue in raised consciousness *having originated in both public and private realms*.

This is hardly surprising, as we *live* in both public *and* private spheres. It becomes significant, however, when the ethico-political process of coming to feminist consciousness is embarked upon. Indeed, raised consciousness is a political venture in so far as it constitutes an embracing and coming to terms with questions of power.⁶¹³ Power asymmetries are recognised and connected to one's own existence, and the morality of patriarchy's upholding of said power asymmetries is problematised and contested. Moral outrage often accompanies this assessment of the functioning of patriarchal power, and the role one has played and will hitherto play in relation to it. The process of coming to feminist consciousness is thus simultaneously moral and political. While its roots lie in both public and private, it similarly issues in public and private, as our very selves are made up of habits from both realms, as are those of the people we come in contact with. This means that as we carry our particular set of habits from situation to situation, be it a private or a public one, we always already carry habits from public and private encounters with us, since we continuously adapt to our environments. Public and private therefore become meshed in the habits of our self, and cease to be clearly distinguishable in terms of separated realms of habit origination.

This is also true for the changes we effect as a result of the transformative process of raised consciousness. Whether we subsequently start a campaign against a certain retailer, as in the example proffered in the previous chapter, or whether we simply talk to family members and friends about what it means to us to be a feminist, we impact upon the existing store of others' habits, which are already the result of public and private. Hence, the feminist-pragmatist self transgresses the boundaries of public and private, moral and political, in the process of coming to feminist consciousness. Before continuing though, I should outline the problems identified by feminists and by Dewey respectively, with these distinctions.

The public/private distinction has been theorised by feminists as a deeply problematic dichotomy, which has legitimised women's secondary status by ensconcing women in the private sphere, and men in the public sphere. By designating different spheres for women

⁶¹³ I follow Kate Millett, amongst others, in linking power and politics – see Millett, K., *Sexual Politics*, Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1971, p. 23

and men, this public/private separation serves to reinforce women's invisibility in the public realm, and hides women's legitimate grievances by labelling them 'private,' and therefore unworthy of public concern. In terms of domestic violence, for example, women have tirelessly agitated for abuse in the home to be recognised as a public matter, in need of state intervention. Feminists have argued that such recognition is often afforded to other so-called 'private' issues, such as marriage, where officials routinely regulate the union between couples through marriage certificates, for example. Hence, feminists assert that the lines between public and private are fluid, rather than fixed and impenetrable.

We also saw in the previous chapter, that the process of coming to feminist consciousness often results in an altered comprehension of a host of personal problems for women, which come to be viewed as symptomatic of a wider malaise of patriarchy, thereby being reconceptualised as political problems. 'The personal is political' thus encapsulates the feminist insight that patriarchy selectively labels women and men, and their respective concerns as 'public' or as 'private,' in the face of a mistaken belief in the clear and unambiguous demarcation of each realm. Such labelling masks and depoliticise the gendered and genuine obstacles encountered by women (such as domestic violence), as matters for the private sphere, not warranting interruption by public bodies and institutions.

Raised consciousness, however, grants a re-reading of these obstacles not just on political, but also on moral grounds. As already mentioned, this process is an ethico-political one, particularly as the moral outrage felt by the transforming (soon-to-be feminist) self is framed within a larger understanding of patriarchy as a political system of oppression. The feminist motto of 'the personal is political' could therefore be easily supplemented by the assertion that 'the personal is political and ethical' and vice versa, 'the public is political and ethical.'

The complex functioning of public/private and ethics/politics along gender lines has been theorised by feminists within the context of liberal theory and the concomitant rise of capitalism. The false separation of ethics and politics is attributed to the theories, inter alia, of Locke, Hume and Adam Smith. Importantly, feminists point out that this dichotomy is not attendant in ancient thought, although antecedents are visible in medieval philosophy, as loyalties invoked by church and state are theorised.⁶¹⁴ Thus, Ann Ferguson and Bat-Ami Bar On note:

Ancient Greek philosophy distinguishes between ethics and politics yet posits them as implicated in each other so much that the ideas of the just or good individual and the just or good polis are either investigated together, as in the

⁶¹⁴ Bar On and Ferguson, *Daring to Be Good*, p. x

Republic, or when separated, as in the case of Aristotle, it is still with the understanding of their interdependence.⁶¹⁵

As we saw earlier, ethics and politics, for Aristotle, are naturally intertwined.⁶¹⁶ Thus, recognising the importance the state plays in fostering *eudaimonia*, he famously proclaims that man is by nature a political animal.⁶¹⁷ Not only has “the state come about as a means of securing life itself, [but] it continues in being to secure the *good* life.”⁶¹⁸ Realising the good life for the city-state, rather than merely for the individual, is accordingly “finer and more divine.”⁶¹⁹ Thus, the state acts as a guarantor of *eudaimonia*, as the end of politics “must be the good for man.”⁶²⁰ Aristotle points out the conterminality of politics and ethics by stipulating that the investigation of the virtues and the good life in the *Nicomachean Ethics* falls under the remit of political science. Strictly speaking then, ethics and politics are not only coextensive, but ethics becomes subsumed in political science. Hence, for Aristotle “there is just one sphere – politics – conceived in ethical terms.”⁶²¹ This should not be surprising, as Aristotle believes the good life to be contingent upon the state.

The intimate connection between ethics and politics of the ancients, however, became severed with the advance of capitalism and liberal theory. Liberal thinkers sought to accommodate the economic and social changes created by the development of nation-states and free market expansion, which brought with them a growing awareness of distant others. For instance,

Adam Smiths’ ideology of an “invisible hand” of the market...was supposed to coordinate individual selfish acts in the interest of the whole community. This ideology supported both ethical egoism, the idea that people ought to act to promote their own self-interests, as well as utilitarianism, according to which the production of the majority’s happiness is the measure of morality.⁶²²

Accordingly, this allowed “individuals, assumed to be autonomous moral agents, to justify any government they felt to represent a social contract.”⁶²³

For Ferguson and Bar On, then, the theories of the moderns “developed an individualist cast that legitimated maximal state neutrality toward individual goals and actions.”⁶²⁴ Notably, Joan Tronto links this development of the separation between ethics and politics to an

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ See chapter three, section one.

⁶¹⁷ Pol. 1253a2

⁶¹⁸ Pol. 1252b30

⁶¹⁹ NE 1094b10

⁶²⁰ NE 1094b6

⁶²¹ Schofield, “Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*”, p. 305

⁶²² Bar On and Ferguson, *Daring to Be Good*, p. x

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

increased focus upon the dichotomy between the public sphere and the private sphere, and woman's relegation to the latter. Thus,

as capitalist production separated production for use in the family (increasingly defined as exclusively women's work, and devalued) from production for exchange (the entrepreneurial province of men even though women were many of the initial wage earners) it also exaggerated the public/private split between formal justice (a male domain) and family and personal values (a female, hence less important, even less human, domain).⁶²⁵

The gendered demarcation between ethics/politics and public/private was consolidated by a move from moral theorising concerned with feeling, virtue and context to theories premised upon universal reason.

Tracing this development in the Scottish Enlightenment thought of Hutcheson, Hume and Smith, Tronto concludes:

by the end of the eighteenth century, moral theories that drew upon the local for its logic, its creation, and its expression, were no longer viable. Politics and morality became increasingly separated. In the phrase of Richard Teichgraber, the Scottish philosophers held "a depoliticised view of individual morality and a demoralised view of politics."⁶²⁶

Since liberal thinkers sought to free themselves of the "earlier notion that ethics was structured into the natural, divine order of things,"⁶²⁷ they had to find a new authority upon which moral claims could be based, and this was supplied by reason, which, conceived as a capacity possessed by all, overcame the problem posed by distant others.⁶²⁸

Earlier notions of feeling, context and virtue, however, became subsumed with women in the private sphere, while reason was designated part of the public, political sphere of men.

Hence,

by the end of the development of liberal ethics, individual rationality has come to be associated with the public world of men rather than the private world of the family (and women), thus problematising women as subjects of ethics at all.⁶²⁹

A distinction between public ethics rooted in reason on the one hand, and a private, lesser morality of the private sphere is thus set up. Liberalism's claims to impartiality and reason in

⁶²⁵ Ibid., xi

⁶²⁶ Tronto, J., *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethics of Care*, Routledge, London, 1993, p. 38

⁶²⁷ Bar On and Ferguson, *Daring to Be Good*, x

⁶²⁸ Tronto explains that rules issuing from such an approach rooted in reason enable all who know the rules to adhere to them. Indeed, "universalistic morality need not assume much intimacy among members of the same moral community. Such members may even be located at great distances from one another, but since they share a commitment to the same rules to govern moral conduct, they need not fear the immoral conduct of others." - Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, p. 29

⁶²⁹ Bar On and Ferguson, *Daring to Be Good*, xi

the public sphere enable political and economic agreement with ‘others’ as morality is portrayed as a matter of personal, private preference. This, however, masks the splitting of ethics into public, rational, male ethics (the right), and inferior, private female ethics (the good), with the latter’s subjugation resulting in a denial of ethics to women altogether.⁶³⁰

Preceding this sophisticated feminist analysis of gendered selves, and of the development of the ethics/politics split as it came to reinforce the public/private distinction, Dewey points out how “inner” changes are informed by and in turn inform “outer” changes, thereby problematising the implications this holds for the bifurcation of ethics and politics. While Dewey does not appreciate the gendered nature of the ethics/politics split, as it interacts with the separation of public and private realms, with women purportedly inhabiting the latter, and men the former spheres, his designation of “inner” and “outer” shares some feminist insights relating to the depoliticisation of morality, and the value neutralisation of politics, owing to an arbitrary disconnect between (private) selfhood and (public) politics. In fact, he writes in a manner typical of the feminist understanding of raised consciousness, wherein personal matters are reconceptualised as political matters:

Political apathy such as has marked our thought for many years past is due fundamentally to mental confusion arising from lack of consciousness of any vital connection between politics and daily affairs.⁶³¹

Hence, although Dewey is not aware of the deeper implications of the public and private distinctions for women, he highlights the fluidity of private and public, and connects this through “inner” and “outer” to his vision of selfhood as an ongoing process.

The following passage from *Reconstruction in Philosophy* captures this aptly, and it is therefore worth quoting here in full:

When the self is regarded as something complete within itself, then it is readily argued that only internal moralistic changes are of importance in general reform. Institutional changes are said to be merely external. They may add conveniences and comforts to life, but they cannot effect moral improvements. The result is to throw the burden for social improvement upon free will in its most impossible form. Moreover, social and economic passivity are encouraged. Individuals are led to concentrate in moral introspection upon their own vices and virtues, and to neglect the character of the environment. Morals withdraw from active concern with detailed economic and political conditions. Let us

⁶³⁰ Accordingly, the “division between [public] right (justice, reason) and the [private] good (values, feelings) allowed those who disagreed strongly about religion, forms of government, family ethics, and structure and national cultural values to be able to work together, to accept principles of free trade and the economic interdependence brought about by national and international markets.” - Ibid., xi

⁶³¹ Dewey, J., *Individualism, Old and New in John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol. 5: 1929 - 1930, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1984, p. 96.

perfect ourselves within, and in due season changes in society will come of themselves is the teaching.⁶³²

Dewey is here anticipating the feminist critique of liberalism, which dissects individualism's 'internalisation' or 'privatisation' of morality with the severing of the good from the right.⁶³³

Liberalism's ethical individualism acts as a substitution for any thorough-going ethico-political approach, as private, inner, depoliticised morality of the private sphere, becomes juxtaposed with a public sphere assumed to be value-less in order to allow for maximum state neutrality in the face of pluralism. Of course such neutrality is artificial, harbouring instead, an ethics of rationality, which alienates women from public ethico-political discourses. Moral agents are urged to pursue morality as a personal matter, and since the self is viewed as capable of achieving completeness, a sole focus upon 'inner' goodness leads to a rigidifying of the ethics/politics and the public/private distinctions.

However, Dewey argues that the positing of a self, which is continuously in the making, has the potential to undermine such strict demarcations. Writes Dewey:

But when self-hood is perceived to be an active process it is also seen that social modifications are the only means of the creation of changed personalities. Institutions are viewed in their educative effect: - with reference to the types of individuals they foster. The interest in individual moral improvement and the social interest in objective reform of economic and political conditions are identified. And inquiry into the meaning of social arrangements get definite point and direction. We are led to ask what the specific stimulating, fostering and nurturing power of each specific social arrangement may be. The old-time separation between politics and morals is abolished at its root.⁶³⁴

Liberalism's misleading categorisation of *public politics* and *private morality*, which actually contains *public (rationalistic) ethics* and covers up the genuine grievances of women as personal, and hence *private politics*, can be dismantled by adopting the feminist-pragmatist self detailed in the previous chapter, which contains a permanent structure, but which nonetheless consists in constant transacting relationship with its environment.

This relationship necessitates the ongoing transformation of self as it exists in its particular setting. Of course this setting includes various institutions, which may have considerable influence over us. As educational institutions, universities and schools, for example, can play a prominent role in effecting changes in us by encouraging us to look outside of the confines

⁶³² Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 196

⁶³³ Sandra Lee Bartky notes: "the split between public and private spheres is, as we know, quite recent, one of the many consequences of industrialisation, urbanisation and the rise of capitalism. Kant, as an early theorist of this period, appears to have believed that a purely private morality was possible, though perhaps more difficult to achieve, regardless of the character of the public sphere from which the moral subject is to emerge." - Bartky, S. L., "Skin Deep: Femininity as a Disciplinary Regime" in *Daring to Be Good: Essays in Feminist Ethico-Politics*, Bar On, B.-A. and Ferguson, A. (eds.), Routledge, London, 1998, p. 15

⁶³⁴ Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 196

of personal morality prescribed by narrow liberal theories, and to question socio-political arrangements as they exist now. This means not only that the boundaries between public, private, ethics and politics become permeable, but also that distinct delineations of inner, outer, self, environment, individual and society are shown to be far more blurred and overlapping than previously assumed.

Such blurring is evident in the example I gave about habitual changes relating to the purchase of clothes. As the self undergoes the process of coming to feminist consciousness, it transacts differently with its environment. The ethico-political transformation to raised consciousness spurs us to act in certain ways, be it to shun a certain retailer, or to start a fully-fledged campaign against them. Hence, changes in selfhood precipitate changes in the public realm affecting the retailer. In fact, the transformative process specifically connects public and private injustices with each other in an analysis of patriarchy as an oppressive system. In terms of clothing acquisition this means that 'inner' and 'outer' are linked, as our habits reflect the conterminality of ethics and politics across the private and public realms, thereby resulting in action against the store in question.

Since our socially embedded selves exist in constant transaction, and since habits are acquired via the approval/disapproval mechanism, our conduct will impact upon those around us, which can lead to a change in other selves, whose actions in turn lead to further changes in us, and so on. In our example, this means that the retailer, and friends and family enlisted in the campaign against the retailer, will react to our changes in selfhood, which will necessitate further adaptation from our self, as selves and environment continue to transact. Therefore, the perimeters of self, environment, public, private, ethics and politics are transgressed, as change functions across all of these categorisations through constantly unfinished, adapting selves.

2. Changed Selves and Changed Systems

All of this raises important questions in terms of the capacity of selves to effect more systemic, structural change. I have argued that feminist-pragmatist selves are possessed of the agency to effect change, and are therefore capable of subverting oppressive systems. Systems such as patriarchy, however, not only operate through formal political institutions or work practices, where discrimination is quite obviously apparent in terms of women's exclusion or lesser remuneration, but also through social and cultural norms. These are far harder to identify, as they insidiously form Bartky's "half-submerged weapons"⁶³⁵ of sexism.

⁶³⁵ Bartky, "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness", p. 17; see also chapter four, section four.

Dewey is unaware of the gendered impact of such norms, and the negative internalisations they entail for women's selves. Feminists, on the other hand, have written extensively about female embodiment and sexuality, for example, and the disastrous consequences resulting from (mis)representations of women's bodies, whether these are manifested as eating disorders, depression, or ever-increasing demands for cosmetic surgery. A mere focus on formal political structures as a means to overcoming such outgrowths of socio-cultural norms (which, of course, are also fuelled by industries making substantial profits from their perpetuation), constitutes a rather feeble strategy for feminists.

Indeed, the limits of such an approach are apparent when we consider the history of the first wave of feminism in Europe and North America. Funnelling all of their energies into the attainment of women's suffrage, feminists sought a complete transformation of the political, broadly conceived, but did not manage to make a significant dent into the exclusively male institutions of government. Thus, the transformative potential of the vote for women quickly became diminished and a disappointment to feminists, as women did not enter parliaments en masse but remained largely absent, a circumstance, which to this day has continued fairly consistently in Western democracies (except in the Nordic countries).⁶³⁶

Women did not flock to run for office, nor did they predominantly vote for other women. This is not to dismiss the importance of suffrage, but rather to highlight the arbitrariness of hedging all of one's bets on the capacity for systems to change through formal institutional measures, when selves stand in need of change.⁶³⁷ While there are of course improvements which need to be made structurally, particularly regarding the accommodation of family life with a political career, to allow for an increase in female candidacies, women's exclusion from the formal political sphere is significantly fostered by the inhibitions of change caused by a lack of habitual transformation of selfhood.

It is precisely because selves are formed through the approval/disapproval mechanism, that negative cultural and social norms surrounding femininity and masculinity continue to pose problems for selves, which require a sense of community and belonging, and which therefore are unwilling to risk a separation from or confrontation with their habitual approvers and

⁶³⁶ For both upper and lower houses combined, the number of women in parliament are as follows: 19.8% in Europe (not including the Nordic countries), 42% in the Nordic countries (upper house does not apply), and 22% in the Americas – for more on this see Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Regional Averages of Women in National Parliaments", <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>, accessed 16/02/2010

⁶³⁷ This is not to assert that first wave feminism under-achieved, quite the contrary is the case. For example, on top of realising suffrage for women, first wave feminists succeeded in less obvious political ways by, amongst others, providing a forum for women to organise, some of whom had never been engaged in the public sphere, and certainly not in political activism. However, the limited institutional change under discussion here was deflationary for many feminists. For more on this see Daley, C. and Nolan, M. (eds.), *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives*, New York University Press, New York, 1994

reprimanders. This is where the equation of feminism with man-hating becomes a potent deterrent for women and girls, who inhabit intimate relationships with male companions and relatives, and do not wish to jeopardise those relationships.

Regardless of the fact that there are of course feminist men, and simply decent, loving men, and regardless of the possibility of the gaining of new, feminist communities, turning toward feminism and undergoing the dramatic life changes entailed by raised consciousness, can be a daunting proposition, and one we might reject, on an unconscious or even a conscious basis. This means that contradictory habits of selfhood (which are the driving force behind change) and protracted doubt, are suppressed, creating a dysfunctional irresolvability of clashing habits, intensifying the risk of negative *self*-doubt as it works hand-in-hand with oppressive social and cultural norms to identify selves as the true progenitors of contradictoriness. Not only does this serve to mask the systemic nature of patriarchy with its multifarious, often subtle, reinforcement of sexist norms, but it obfuscates the primary role patriarchy plays as *actual* creator of contradictions in selfhood.

Nonetheless, we have already established that selves have the capacity to escape this counterproductive mode of being, as selves are possessed of the agency to change, irrespective of how difficult this might seem. Such change cannot be enforced from outside, however, as the example of women's suffrage clearly shows. 'Institutions,' whether these are conceived more narrowly in terms of governments, judicial systems, and universities, or more broadly in terms of the family, for example – all of these can only function effectively as instruments for feminist change if they are sensitively engaged in the reciprocal relationships of selves transacting with their environments. Only when this happens, can institutions take on the educative and liberatory characteristics Dewey envisages, as we come to question "the specific stimulating, fostering and nurturing power of each specific social arrangement."

This is precisely why Dewey postulates the recognition of ongoing and transforming selves as a condition for institutions capable of subverting the ethics/politics split. In the continuous adaptation of agents with their milieus, change takes place ethico-politically in selves and in environments. However, if environments, including the institutions they contain, are unresponsive with regard to the demands for change made by adapting selves, or vice versa, then harmonious change is disrupted and transaction falters. In sum, feminist change must take place dialogically between selves and environments, in order to be successful, and to pose as a truly integrated approach to our situated lives, in which public, private, moral and

political cannot be sectioned off.⁶³⁸ The charge levelled against pragmatism as a philosophy advocating social engineering can thus also be rebuffed, as transaction does not allow for institutions to impose certain changes, but rather requires sensitivity to agents, and a willingness to adapt.⁶³⁹

The system of patriarchy, then, which operates not only through formal political and economic structures, but also through insidious social and cultural norms, can only be truly challenged by an acknowledgement of the mutual functioning of selves and environments. In our example of women's right to vote, this means that changes in the political institutions of government spur changes in selves, which in turn should effect changes in institutions, and so on. This back and forth between the female electorate and the structures now allegedly including them, has not, however, taken place. Instead, parliaments have remained largely unaltered, thereby prohibiting a greater integration of change for women both in the formal political sphere, but also more generally.

I will return to this difficulty in the next section, but let me summarise what has been said so far: following my reasoning that the feminist-pragmatist self is possessed of agency, and therefore capable of undermining and changing oppressive systems, I propose that such change needs to take place dialogically between environments and selves in order to be maximally successful. This insight stems directly from the pragmatist vision of selfhood as an ongoing process, as selves adapt with their particular surroundings. While the futility of a sole focus upon environment, particularly on formal political institutions, has been shown by drawing upon the experience of first wave feminism, the same applies with regard to selves. We saw how the "half-submerged weapons of a sexist system" become integrated in our very selves, as habits are informed by oppressive norms. This can be interrupted with the aid of feminist analyses and community, and the release of tension created by conflicting habits, through the critically deliberative process of coming to feminist consciousness.

Raised consciousness therefore allows for changes in selfhood to take place, although those changes are connected to environments through the recognition of patriarchy as a system, and the evaluation of oppressive norms as morally and politically problematic. Public and

⁶³⁸ As Dewey also notes: "The educational task [of appropriate habits] cannot be accomplished merely by working upon men's minds, without action that effects actual change in institutions. The idea that dispositions and attitudes can be altered by merely "moral" means conceived of as something that goes on wholly inside of persons is itself one of the old patterns that has to be changed. Thought, desire and purpose exist in a constant give and take of interaction with environing conditions." - Dewey, J., *Liberalism and Social Action* in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol. 11: 1935 - 1937, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1987, p. 44

⁶³⁹ An interesting discussion of the charge of social engineering can be found in Kaufman-Osborn, T. V., "Pragmatism, Policy Science and the State" in *John Dewey: Critical Assessments*, Vol 2, Tiles, J. E. (ed.), Routledge, London, 1992

private, ethical and political, are therefore already intimately connected in raised consciousness, and it is virtually inconceivable for feminists not to precipitate further changes in their environments premised upon this radical transformative process (as was evinced by the aforementioned example of clothing acquisition). If, however, for whatever reason, we were to refuse to change outwardly, if raised consciousness were a mere internal affair, if it really were possible to be that contained and to resist translating the conclusions of this life-altering experience of reflective thinking into our transactions with others, then feminist change in selfhood would remain largely ineffective. Patriarchy will not be destabilised by the world's best-kept feminist secrets. Changes in self must thus go hand-in-hand with changes in environments, if we are to truly tackle oppressive systems.

Given that raised consciousness usually acts as a catalyst for changes in one's environment, we could argue that feminists need to focus upon raised consciousness as a method for overcoming oppressive systems. While this of course forms a valid and useful strategy, I do not believe, however, that a sole emphasis upon raised consciousness will be enough to undermine patriarchy, simply because it cannot, and should not, be enforced. The obstacles and deterrents to pursuing protracted doubt and releasing clashing habits through embarking upon this transformative process, are too great for many women, so although they may possess the capacity to change, they may not do so. If, on the other hand, women are given the opportunity to fully participate in the political institutions defining large parts of their lives, they will be engaged in a process of ongoing renegotiation and adaptation. By focusing upon changed environments *in conjunction with* selves, women might gradually come to feel secure enough to permit for raised consciousness. This, however, will only happen if environments are changed in constant sensitivity to selves. Thus, change is best understood and realised in the pragmatist sense, *as transaction*.

3. Resisting Change as Transaction

For feminists, the main difficulty with all of this lies of course in the deliberate resistance to change exhibited by institutions, which form part of our environments. These institutions are usually male-biased and those wishing to prolong the benefits accruing to them through the continuation of the status quo, are unlikely to engage in the kind of change as transaction Dewey envisaged. Political governance is a prime example in this regard, for although women are officially gender-neutral citizens in Western democratic states, our predominant exclusion from the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government evinces a gendered citizenship in which women are precluded from partaking in the design, implementation and upholding of laws and policies, which regulate almost every aspect of

our lives.⁶⁴⁰ Women's environments are therefore structured, in large measure, by the formal political institutions they are alienated from.

Without having to delve into the murkier, elusive workings of patriarchy, then, a tackling of these institutions alone could have a tremendous effect upon selves as they transact with their environments. Such an approach, however, needs to remain cognisant of the risks involved in severing changes in institutions from changes in selfhood, lest we fall into the trap of trying to impose change by ignoring transaction. Since institutions of government have traditionally shown themselves to be reluctant to change, to resist demands for change placed upon them by women (beyond the granting of suffrage),⁶⁴¹ it follows that we need a different type of institution – one that is responsive and sympathetic to changing selves, and exists in continuous adaptation to transforming agents. This will enable the dialogical change across selves and environments we have deemed to be instrumental in an undermining of oppressive systems, which thus far has largely remained lacking since the realisation of women's right to vote.

While the admission of women to parliament constituted a change for the institutions of government, it also constituted a change for women, who theoretically could now, and actually did (albeit in small numbers), become public representatives. This latter change, however, did not spur further significant changes in institutions, and adaptations, for example, in the way parliamentary business takes place, were not encouraged to allow for a greater integration of women in politics. Instead, institutions have remained static, largely impervious to the demands for change made by women, continuing to exclude and amass power for (elite) men. Institutions unwilling to engage in transacting relationships with selves need to be reformed or replaced with institutions responsive to the importance of change as continuous adaptation.

I believe that Iris Marion Young's model of inclusive democracy acts as a good starting-point for a re-visioning of state structures based upon this insight, particularly as her work centres around the reciprocity of selves and institutions of governance via the medium of speech and listening in the inclusive transformative process of deliberation. Young's theory of mutual democratic discourse appears promising for an accommodation of the dialogical

⁶⁴⁰ For more on gendered citizenship as it exists across demarcations of public and private, see Pateman, C., *The Sexual Contract*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988; and Okin, S. M., *Justice, Gender and the Family*, Basic Books, New York, 1989

⁶⁴¹ I do not want to detract here from the significant changes women have achieved in the workings of political structures, and the policies issuing therefrom. Indeed, women in many countries have managed to gain formal legal equality through civil agitation, and the work of parliamentarians, with the result that we now benefit from equality legislation pertaining to remuneration and harassment in the workplace, healthcare, maternity leave, and so forth. I do think, however, that it is fair to say, that the political machinery as such has remained resistant to change, a circumstance which is so obviously evinced by the extensive exclusion of women from state structures.

nature of change required for a true transformation of patriarchy. Having looked at changes in selfhood in the last chapter, and having established the necessity of selves *and* environments to change if patriarchy is to be successfully countered, I shall focus in what follows, upon changes in environments, particularly changes in formal political institutions.

It is important to note in this context, that these distinctions between selves and environments are of course rather fluid, indeed, we saw that raised consciousness is informed by ethico-political analyses across public and private spheres, and that the transformative process of coming to feminist consciousness almost automatically precipitates changes in environments, as feminists make connections between their lived experiences and the systemic nature of patriarchy. Importantly, we need to remain cognisant of the necessity of treating change as transaction, if we are to go beyond changes in selfhood to systemic change. Below, I shall outline Young's discursive democracy of inclusion, and shall assess its conduciveness to the kind of reciprocal change under discussion. I will begin by describing the model of aggregative democracy, which deliberativists, like Young, oppose.

4. Aggregative and Deliberative Democracy

In *Inclusion and Democracy*,⁶⁴² Young argues against aggregative democracy,⁶⁴³ as the latter functions by compiling the political preferences of citizens. Through voting, citizens elect their representatives as a matter of competitive choice, while representatives aim policies and platforms at the most widely-held preferences of the electorate. Since people hold differing positions on political issues, they can individually or collectively bargain for their particular priorities by lobbying parties and politicians through, *inter alia*, pressure groups. As Young explains,

assuming the process of competition, strategising, coalition-building, and responding to pressure is open and fair, the outcome of both elections and legislative decisions reflects the aggregation of the strongest or most widely held preferences in the population.⁶⁴⁴

In this approach, democracy becomes rather akin to the free market of economic theory, hence some of the criticisms levelled against the aggregative model reflect common misgivings about standard assumptions in economics. For example, Young identifies the acceptance of 'preferences' at face value as problematic. Rather than questioning how we arrive at said preferences, aggregative democracy treats all of these as equally legitimate and worthy, despite a complete lack of knowledge as to their inceptions. This means that "there

⁶⁴² Young, I. M., *Inclusion and Democracy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000

⁶⁴³ I am here adopting Young's terminology. As she points out, other theorists variously refer to this model also as 'pluralist' or 'interest group pluralist' – see p. 19, n. 5

⁶⁴⁴ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, p. 19

are no criteria for distinguishing the quality of preferences by either content, origin or motive.”⁶⁴⁵

Amartya Sen similarly argues against the notion of revealed preference in economic theory, which adopts preferences as straight-forward indicators of people’s “personal interests and well-beings.”⁶⁴⁶ While we of course know that this is not always the case, Sen further points toward the randomness with which we sometimes make choices, hence preferences arise from sometimes arbitrary, or even negative, motives, and may result from spontaneous, unreflective inspirations, rather than from thorough processes of reasoning.⁶⁴⁷ Young similarly cautions that “aggregate outcome has not necessary rationality and itself has not been arrived at by a process of reasoning. Indeed, the aggregate outcome can just as easily be irrational as rational...”⁶⁴⁸

Aggregative democracy obfuscates these complicating aspects in a ranking of preferences according to maximisation. As such, the greatest number of preferences is the most important. Valuation of preferences thus takes place not with regard to the underlying “content, origin or motive” of preferences, but rather through an ordering from most-held to least-held. Also, for Young, preference aggregation cannot tell us about transformations in preference adoption, as preferences are abstracted, and their rooting in people’s lives is deemed to be irrelevant. In fact, the very idea of changed preferences comes to be undermined, as “citizens never need to leave the private realm of their own interests and preferences to interact with others whose preferences differ...Thus there is no account of the possibility of political co-ordination and co-operation.”⁶⁴⁹

Finally, Young argues that the aggregative model precludes appeals to moral objectivity, as moral claims lose legitimacy, being expressions of mere personal preferences. In such a system, where all moral claims are equally subjective, evaluation of said claims is rendered impotent. This means that

the model...offers only a weak motivational basis for accepting the outcomes of a democratic process as legitimate. If even at its best democracy is simply a mechanism for aggregating preferences which are subjective and non-rational, and if the fair outcome reflects which preferences are more widely or strongly held, then there is no reason why those who do not share those preferences

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 20

⁶⁴⁶ Sen, A., “Opportunities and Freedom” in *Rationality and Freedom*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2002, p. 589

⁶⁴⁷ For more on this see Sen, A., “Is the Idea of Purely Internal Consistency of Choice Bizarre?” in *World, Mind and Ethics*, Altham, J. E. J. and Harrison, R. (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995

⁶⁴⁸ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, p. 21

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 20

ought to abide by the results. They may simply feel that they have no choice but to submit, given that they are in the minority.⁶⁵⁰

For Young, then, aggregative models are unable to integrate those who feel their preferences are superfluous, lest they reflect the preferences held by most other people. This results in an alienation of part of the population, who do not see their priorities reflected in the political machinery, and who therefore fail to recognise the legitimacy thereof.

Like other deliberativists, Young holds that these shortcomings of aggregative democracy can be undone in a model of deliberative democracy, which pivots around the necessity of citizens' participation. On this account, democracy becomes an arena for discussion, as participants deliberate together as to the best solutions to given problems. This involves reciprocity and the possibility of a transformation of people's views, allowing for resolutions to emerge discursively and collectively. Thus, "participants arrive at a decision not by determining what preferences have greatest numerical support, but by determining which proposals the collective agrees are supported by the best reasons."⁶⁵¹ As arguments are proffered, examined, and refined, participants engage in a to-and-fro of persuasion and reasoning, which results in a joint analysis of the issue at hand.

Unlike the aggregative model, deliberative democracy allows for participants to come up with conclusions, which are objectively valued to be the best, having been informed by the interaction of deliberators, who are no longer isolated individuals, intent merely on their own preferences. In fact, preferences are now far more likely to be the subject of change, as we engage in discussion with others. Importantly, the deliberative model gives substance to the abstract preferences of aggregative democracy by making the reasoning behind people's professed stances the central point of departure for democratic decision-making. Such reasoning, however, is fundamentally open to alteration as it becomes a collective venture issuing in objectively valued determinations.

Young associates various ideals with the deliberative process, including *equality*, *reasonableness*, *inclusion* and *publicity*. Since communicative deliberation requires input from its participants, it is important to note who those participants are. An exclusion of people significantly impacted by the issue at hand, merely serves to replicate the alienation of citizens attendant in the aggregative model. Thus the ideal of *inclusion* entails that "a democratic decision is normatively legitimate only if all those affected by it are included in the process of discussion and decision-making."⁶⁵² Of course this raises questions as to the feasibility of the physical inclusion of all those with a vested interest in a particular topic.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 21

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., p. 23

⁶⁵² Ibid.

Logistically, a face-to-face discussion by the citizens of a large polity will simply not be possible. This means, that although the deliberative model of democracy emphasises participation in discursive decision-making, it accommodates political representation.⁶⁵³

Also, as Young points out, inclusion applies to those who are *significantly* affected, rather than superficially.

Such inclusion must, however, apply to everybody equally. In other words, *political equality* stipulates that “all ought to have an equal right and effective opportunity to express their interests and concerns.”⁶⁵⁴ This extends to a recognition of external force, or domination, as a hindrance to the freedom of expression enshrined in the ideal of equality. Political equality thus leads to a richer, and more meaningful interpretation of inclusion, as inclusion without the ability to engage as an equal participant in discursive decision-making results in exclusion. It is with this richer understanding of inclusion that Young eventually surpasses other deliberative theories, but more on this later.

Having established that deliberators must be equally free to participate in the communicative resolution of problems, Young argues that such a resolution can only be legitimately achieved if the discussion is marked by *reasonableness*. This ideal treats not of the reasonableness of particular claims, but rather poses an attitude of open-mindedness. Thus, “to be reasonable is to be willing to change our opinions or preferences because others persuade us that our initial opinions or preferences, as they are relevant to the collective problems under discussion, are incorrect or inappropriate.”⁶⁵⁵ This receptivity to others’ views necessarily entails a preparedness to listen and to surrender one’s more dogmatic beliefs to the superior insights emerging during the course of deliberation. While discussions are usually characterised by disagreement, this can be enriching rather than debilitating, although “participants in discussion must be *aiming* to reach agreement to enter the discussion at all.”⁶⁵⁶ To allow for a real engagement of participants in deliberation, reasonableness further requires that discussants “listen to others, treat them with respect, make an effort to understand them by asking questions, and not judge them too quickly.”⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵³ Ibid., see particularly chapter 4 entitled “Representation and Social Perspective.” Here, Young argues that “representation and participation are not alternatives in an inclusive communicative democracy, but require each. Institutions of representation help organize political discussion and decision-making, introducing procedures and a reasonable division of labour. Thereby citizens have objectives around which they can organize with one another and participate in anticipatory and retrospective discussion, criticism, and evaluation. Without such citizen participation, the connection between the representative and constituents is most liable to be broken, turning the representative into an élite ruler. For their part, representatives should respond to such participatory process.” – p. 132

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 23

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 25

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 24

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 25

Finally, Young identifies *publicity* as a condition for discursive decision-making, as accountability across difference is enabled by the gathering of deliberators in the public democratic space, who are aware of the necessity to translate their respective backgrounds, values and priorities into understandable expressions for the greater polity. Thus, “they must try to explain their particular background experiences, interests, or proposals in ways that others can understand, and they must express reasons for their claims in ways that others recognise could be accepted, even if in fact they disagree with the claims and reasons.”⁶⁵⁸ Whether these attempts at translation actually succeed or not, is not the point. Important is only, that deliberators are possessed of the cognisance to make their particularity comprehensible to others. Hence, “even when they [participants] address a particular group with a particular history, as is usually the case, they speak with the reflective idea that third parties might be listening.”⁶⁵⁹

Equipped with these ideals of discursive democratic practice, Young concludes that deliberative democracy overcomes many of the pitfalls contained in the aggregative model. Rather than focusing upon preferences as static, ungrounded givens, deliberativists begin with stances of citizens, which are altered in the processes of public communication. This means that inward looking preferences are replaced by outwardly directed, evolving views. Writes Young:

Because this interaction [of deliberation] requires participants to be open and attentive to one another, to justify their claims and proposals in terms acceptable to all, the orientation of participants moves from self-regard to an orientation towards what is publicly assertable.⁶⁶⁰

As the particularity of participants informs other deliberators, they come into contact with the ideas and opinions of those they may not normally encounter. If the ideals of reasonableness, inclusion, equality and publicity are respected, this entails an enrichment through new information, allowing for the attainment of the best, thoroughly reasoned and inclusive decisions of citizens.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 26

5. Inclusive Democracy and Change as Transaction

What distinguishes Young's model of deliberative democracy from other deliberativists,⁶⁶¹ is her insistence on the strong sense of inclusion detailed above, as political equality feeds into the more narrow conception of inclusion as mere participation. Deliberators, so Young argues, need to be able to engage in discussions on equal terms with others. Some people, however, find their participation in discursive democracy hampered by their nonconformity to dominant modes of communication. Thus, while there are external obstacles to people's inclusion in democratic discourse, such as unfair advantages in terms of social standing and wealth, there are also internal exclusions pertaining to the way participants express themselves.⁶⁶² Deliberative theorists neglect to take account of such internal exclusions and therefore run the risk of perpetuating a discursive elitism, in which participants with 'other' styles of speech are excluded and silenced.

Specifically, Young asserts that an emphasis on rational argumentation, delivered as logical, impartial and unemotional, undermines the acceptance of expressions, which are more emotive and figurative, incorporating narrative and symbolism, for instance. Such undermining serves to belittle the claims of those typically deemed to be 'different,' be it in terms of gender, race, class, disability or ethnic origin. Young describes how upon accessing public fora for voicing their concerns and interests, 'others' are insidiously delegitimized by insinuations of inferior discursive ability. Thus,

having obtained a presence in the public, citizens sometimes find that those still more powerful in the process exercise, often unconsciously, a new form of exclusion: others ignore or dismiss or patronise their statements and expressions.⁶⁶³

Hence, Young identifies internal exclusion as a means by which "people lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making."⁶⁶⁴

The ability to transform the views of fellow discussants through reasonable engagement is therefore compromised, despite people's seeming participation in democratic processes. Thus, real inclusion, in the rich sense Young proposes, is rendered meaningless, being replaced by a shallow principle of participation, which masks the discriminatory treatment of non-rationalistic styles of discourse. Young's inclusive democracy model thus moves beyond

⁶⁶¹ See, amongst others, Habermas, J., *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1, Reason and the Rationalization of Society, Heinemann, London, 1984; Habermas, J., *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 2, Life World and Systems: A Critique of Functionalist Reason, Polity, Cambridge, 1987; and Habermas, J., *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Polity, Cambridge, 1990

⁶⁶² Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, pp. 53-57

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 55

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

deliberative theories by questioning the implicit assumptions behind methods of communication, which are inevitably structured by power differentials. While deliberativists posit democratic deliberation as a participatory process of collective problem-solving, Young examines the underlying exclusions attendant in deliberation itself. This leads to a far more promising articulation of discursive practice, which holds the potential to truly integrate citizens in the decision-making processes affecting their lives.

Having said all this, it should be clear that Young's model of inclusive democracy has the potential to allow for change as transaction, stipulated earlier as a requirement for countering oppressive institutions. A dialogical decision-making, in which participants are equally heard, taken seriously, and valued, points toward the kind of reciprocity between selves and environments needed for mutual, interdependent transformation. Since everybody significantly affected by a particular issue has a chance to express their position (either directly or indirectly through representation), they have the capacity to impact upon the views of others. In turn, others can respond to arguments and statements made, as ideas are proffered, questioned, and collectively examined.

Through communication, selves transform the stances of other selves, who in turn transform one's own stance, and so forth, until a resolution is arrived at, forming the result of a conversation between equal decision-makers. Indeed, Young emphasises inclusive democracy's ability to bring those together who normally would not meet, leading to an exchange of perspectives which may inform each other in unanticipated and fruitful ways. This exposure to unfamiliar others thus further feeds into the transformative potential of inclusive democratic deliberation. The process unfolds thusly: selves impact upon their environments, in this case upon other selves; these other selves impact upon our self, who in turn impacts upon other selves, and so on, until the best course of action is communally arrived at. Democracy, then, becomes an arena for the dialogical transformation of views, as decisions are made jointly after a prolonged process of communicative deliberation, incorporating not only rationalistic styles of reasoning and argumentation, but alternative modes of expression, such as narrative and rhetoric.

There are two aspects of Young's theory which particularly lend it to our purposes of transacting change: a) this dialogical back-and-forth between discussants, in which each discussant precipitates changes in her environment, while this environment, made up of other selves, is sensitive to these changes, and further precipitates changes in selfhood, and so on; and b) the radical inclusiveness of democratic institutions. This means that institutions cease to be inflexible, separated concentrations of power, as power is diffused through the inclusion of all selves significantly affected by a given problem. Change as transaction thus becomes not a matter of (female) self impacting upon (male) institution, and vice versa, but

rather a matter of selves (male and female) *constituting* institutions.⁶⁶⁵ A strict separation between self and environment, and public and private, is thus thoroughly undermined, as transaction can take place freely, functioning harmoniously through the recognition of the reciprocity required for the acceptance of democratic decisions as legitimate decisions. Indeed, it is the collective, mutually affecting nature of inclusive deliberation, which blurs the boundaries between self and environment.

While we are of course individual, physically separate selves, and while transaction still takes place by instantiating changes in selves, which cause changes in environments, and vice versa, this process now involves such intimate and meaningful engagement with each other, that discussants eventually issue in a collective, reasoned understanding of what is to be done. Transaction thus results in a sharing, rather than a splintering, as deliberators experience themselves as having made a contribution. Through the principles of publicity, inclusion, equality and reasonableness, Young ensures that such contributions are given a fair hearing, and are built upon and developed, just as others' contributions are treated with equal open-mindedness. All of this leads to a shared appreciation for the collective resolution achieved, despite the differences of opinion this process often entails.

Importantly, everybody with a stake in a specific problem is effectively, not just superficially, involved in the process of deliberation, leading to the perception that the outcome of such deliberation is valid for all concerned. This, then, stands in direct contrast to the alienation experienced by those whose preferences are not reflected in the formal political sphere, and who therefore reject the legitimacy of democratic processes in the aggregative model. In Young's inclusive democracy, transaction consists of a reciprocal process of deliberation, in which equal participants arrive at the best solutions to problems through public debate, and through a capacity to both change and be changed by others. The end product is a commonly held resolution to the issue at hand, a shared understanding. The unification experienced as a result of this process thus arises from a joint accumulation, or formation, of knowledge.

This is not dissimilar to Dewey's theory of inquiry, in which a community of inquirers investigates and defines what 'truth' is. Dewey also links this epistemic participation to his unorthodox view of democracy, as he emphasises the importance of meaningful interaction between citizens. In fact, the parallels between Young's theory and Dewey's are so striking,

⁶⁶⁵ I agree with Young that this can also be strengthened by an increased focus upon the delicate balancing of power between civil and formal political institutions. While additional fora, alongside the usual representative state structures, can allow for greater inclusivity due to citizens' direct participation, Young warns:

"on the other hand, when deliberation and decision-making authority are dispersed among diverse locales, associational interests, and perspectives, they are liable to lose a generalised vision of the co-ordinated action of the whole society." – *Ibid.*, p. 195

that they merit further elucidation. In sum, though, we should note that Iris Young's theory of deliberative democracy appears to epitomise change as transaction, and therefore promises to re-articulate political institutions which are conducive to the feminist project of bringing about systemic change. In what follows, I will outline similarities between Dewey's vision of democracy, and Young's inclusive democracy model, and will assess these areas of overlap, and possible areas of distinction, with regard to their implications for change as transaction.

6. Democracy as Cooperative Inquiry

In chapter two we saw that Dewey's theory of inquiry posits truths as collectively derived working hypotheses, which must always be open to revision.⁶⁶⁶ A community of inquirers is likened on this account to scientists employing the 'scientific method,' as knowledge is experimentally established and evaluated with regard to resultant consequences. 'Truth' is socially authenticated, since inquirers agree to accept as 'true' those hypotheses which for the time being satisfy epistemological assessment. Dewey connects this explication of joint truth production to democracy, by outlining its liberatory potential, that is, its potential to rescue democracy from corrupting influences. Instrumental in this 'salvaging' of democracy, is Dewey's conception of the self, as it is formed and in turn forms its environment. Hence, transaction appears to be a vital part of Dewey's reconstruction of democracy as "cooperative inquiry." I shall elaborate upon this below.

Liberalism, according to Dewey, has lost its way by adhering too closely to abstracted, universalist principles, which may once have served original proponents of democracy well, but which are now out of context, and no longer fulfil a radical, but rather an oppressive, function.⁶⁶⁷ The laissez-faire leanings typical of today's liberalism, the espousal of isolated individualism, mass manipulation through propaganda, and the hoarding of knowledge in 'specialist' hands, all serve to make citizens feel dissociated, and run counter to the initial intentions of democratic reformers. Indeed, democracy itself is increasingly undermined, as "the lost individual"⁶⁶⁸ grapples with her situation, which is marked by insecurity and disconnectedness. For Dewey,

⁶⁶⁶ See chapter two, section two.

⁶⁶⁷ Dewey writes: "the earlier liberals lacked historic sense and interest. For a while this lack had an immediate pragmatic value. It gave liberals a powerful weapon in their fight with reactionaries. For it enabled them to undercut the appeal to origin, precedent and past history by which the opponents of social change gave sacrosanct quality to existing inequities and abuses. But disregard of history...blinded the eyes of liberals to the fact that their own special interpretations of liberty, individuality and intelligence were themselves historically conditioned, and were relevant only to their own time." - Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 25

⁶⁶⁸ Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New*, p. 66

the crisis in liberalism was a product of particular historical events. Soon after liberal tenets were formulated as eternal truths, it became an instrument of vested interests in opposition to further social change, a ritual of lip-service, or else was shattered by new forces that came in. Nevertheless, the ideas of liberty, of individuality and of freed intelligence have an enduring value, a value never more needed than now.⁶⁶⁹

Dewey calls for a dramatic re-contextualisation of liberal principles, which have become distorted by an ahistoricism and a fracturing of society through rampant, aggressive capitalism. The tenets of freedom, individuality and intelligence (or what early liberals call ‘reason’) need to be understood as they “are relevant to present needs and forces.”⁶⁷⁰ Such a reconstruction of liberal principles can move away from negative identifications of liberty with negative freedom, of individuality with isolated individualism, and of intelligence with individually possessed deliberative faculty.

In fact, Dewey’s entire re-articulation of “democracy as a way of life,” the achievement of the “democratic idea” as an all-encompassing way of interdependent existence, relies upon his vision of the self as a socially embedded being. Not only does this mean that the self cannot be extracted from its environment, but individuality, freedom and intelligence *depend upon* the social, as these principles are shaped and given meaning.

Reminding us that human beings develop through their connections with others, as the approval/disapproval mechanism socialises us in our unique history and position in group matrices, Dewey notes:

If we generalise this fact, it is evident that while there are native organic or biological structures that remain fairly constant, the actual “laws” of human nature are laws of individuals in association, not of beings in a mythical condition apart from association. In other words, liberalism that takes its profession of the importance of individuality with sincerity must be deeply concerned about the structure of human association. For the latter operates to affect negatively and positively, the development of individuals.⁶⁷¹

Individuality exists only by virtue of sociality, as selves create and are created by their environments, by their interaction with others. Conceptualisations of freedom as an unfettering from others to do as one pleases are, on this account, fundamentally misled. They misconstrue liberty as freedom from constraint, while freedom properly understood permits for critically reflective participation in collective activity, or “social action” as Dewey calls it, to allow for the most fruitful existence of selves in community with others. Thus, “liberty is that secure release and fulfilment of personal potentialities which take place only in rich

⁶⁶⁹ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 35

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., p. 31

and manifold association with others: the power to be an individualised self making a distinctive contribution and enjoying in its own way the fruits of association.”⁶⁷²

This intimate connection, or codependence between self and the social, also bears upon intelligence as the pursuit of the most appropriate solutions to presently experienced problems. Since selves exist as part of their social environments, a neat containing of intelligence in strictly separated individuals is shown to be false. As Dewey explains:

it is said that the average citizen is not endowed with the degree of intelligence that the use of it as a method demands. This objection, supported by alleged scientific findings about heredity and by impressive statistics concerning the intelligence quotient of the average citizen, rests wholly upon the old notion that intelligence is a ready-made possession of individuals. The last stand of oligarchical and anti-social seclusion is perpetuation of this purely individualistic notion of intelligence.⁶⁷³

Recognising the threat of increasing ‘specialisation’ with its segregation of knowledge from “the common man,”⁶⁷⁴ Dewey highlights the social nature of intelligence.

He argues that we need only look at something as complex as the development of ships with huge naval capacity to comprehend that intelligence is, and should be, a collective effort. Only as “social cooperation”⁶⁷⁵ is intelligence able to deliver concrete results for us, as it maximises knowledge production through an interactive and ongoing development of thought. Writes Dewey:

Consider merely two of the factors that enter in and their social consequences. Consider what is involved in the production of steel, from the first use of fire and then the crude smelting of ore, to the processes that now effect the mass of production of steel. Consider also the development of the power of guiding ships across trackless wastes from the day when they hugged the shore, steering by visible sun and stars, to the appliances that now enable a sure course to be taken. It would require a heavy tome to describe the advances in science, in mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, that have made these two things possible.⁶⁷⁶

The tremendously complicated production and navigation of ships requires huge arsenals of knowledge and experience, allowing for a coordination of the multitude of processes needed for successful completion and eventual use of the vessel.

To enumerate all the necessary elements involved in this “would be an account of a vast multitude of cooperative efforts, in which one individual uses the results provided for him by

⁶⁷² Dewey, J., *The Public and Its Problems* in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol. 2: 1925 - 1927, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1984, p. 329

⁶⁷³ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 38

⁶⁷⁴ See Ratner, S. (ed.), *The Philosopher of the Common Man: Essays in Honour of John Dewey to Celebrate His Eightieth Birthday*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1940

⁶⁷⁵ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 48

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49

a countless number of other individuals, and uses them so as to add to the common and public store.”⁶⁷⁷ Allowing everybody to take part in this “cooperative inquiry” thus holds the potential to enrich our understandings and to lead to new and unexpected additions to communally held knowledge. The link between democracy and inquiry therefore becomes clear, as Dewey envisages “a time when all individuals may share in the discoveries and thoughts of others, to the liberation and enrichment of their own experience.”⁶⁷⁸ By “freeing intelligence,” by enabling all to take part in the production of truth and knowledge, Dewey hopes to integrate citizens, allowing them to become part of the processes they inhabit, thereby leading to a more truly democratic existence, as they reap the benefits of deepened knowledge.

Since democracy is a way of life, this means that freed intelligence cannot just be restricted to state structures, but must take hold in our lives more generally. Dewey heeds us to be mindful of the authoritarian methods attendant in education in particular, as children are taught to bow to seniority rather than to develop critical thinking skills required for the amelioration of present problem. Thus,

in homes and in schools, the places where the essentials of character are supposed to be formed, the usual procedure is settlement of issues, intellectual and moral, by appeal to the “authority” of parent, teacher, or textbook. Dispositions formed under such conditions are so inconsistent with the democratic method that in a crisis they may be aroused to act in positively anti-democratic ways for anti-democratic ends...⁶⁷⁹

Democracy and intelligence are thus intimately linked, not only in the formal political institutions of democracies, but also in our lives more generally, as we become citizens who are informed and engaged with the problems we face.

Importantly, for Dewey, open, public discussion is the life-blood of democracy, as it *is* freed intelligence. Instead of treating “liberty of thought and expression as something inhering in individuals apart from and even in oppositions to social claims,”⁶⁸⁰ we should realise that “intelligence is a social asset and is clothed with a function as public as is its origin, in the concrete, in social cooperation.”⁶⁸¹ Freed intelligence, then, again muddies the waters of public and private, as knowledge and truth production become the subject of cooperative inquiry. It is for this reason also that Dewey rejects the notion of clearly separable

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New*, p. 115. This is not the same as denying expertise, but rather to point out that ‘experts’ should be open and accountable, sharing their knowledge with non-experts, rather than hoarding it.

⁶⁷⁹ Dewey, J., *Freedom and Culture* in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925 - 1953*, Vol. 13: 1938 - 1939, Boydston, J. A. (ed.), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1988, p. 254

⁶⁸⁰ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 48

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

consciousnesses, a notion feminist theorists similarly undermine with their descriptions of consciousness-raising as a collective achievement, enabled by feminist communities.⁶⁸²

Consciousness, inquiry, knowledge, intelligence – all of these are fundamentally social rather than the possessions or pursuits of individuals. For Dewey, they critically inform democracy as a way of life and underpin democratic political institutions. As such, discussion forms the lynchpin of democracy:

discussion, as the manifestation of intelligence in political life, stimulates publicity; by its means sore spots are brought to light that would otherwise remain hidden.⁶⁸³

Discussion, or in deliberativist terms, deliberation, is vitally important as it constitutes the freed intelligence Dewey stipulates as a condition for enriched existence. As cooperative inquirers we establish truths, gain knowledge and collectively establish the most appropriate paths out of quandaries, enlarging possibilities for action as barriers to intelligence are dismantled. Importantly for Dewey, cooperative inquiry is not only experimental, but it is fundamentally “communicative.”⁶⁸⁴ Far from imposing consensus, and burying differences between inquirers, however, democratic discussion challenges us to investigate opposing and conflicting views, and to face problems head-on.

That this should be so is most obvious to Dewey, as cooperative inquiry, employing scientific method, faces the same challenges science does. It is only when we perceive these as opportunities to further understanding and knowledge, rather than as stumbling-blocks though, that intelligence can be most gainfully employed. As Dewey explains:

It is a property of science to find its opportunities in problems, in questions. Since knowing is inquiring, perplexities and difficulties are the meat on which it thrives. The disparities and conflicts that give rise to problems are not something to be dreaded, something to be endured with whatever hardihood one can command; they are things to be grappled with.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸² I concur with both Dewey’s and feminists’ positing of the communal as a central aspect of consciousness. Although I argued in the previous chapter for the possibility of women coming to feminist consciousness themselves, my conclusion was not that in fact this will occur for women in the absence of other feminists, but rather that it could. Such a venture would of course be extremely difficult and lonely, and for that reason seems rather unlikely. On the other hand, I think that raised consciousness need not always require the raised consciousness of others, but may come about through a reinforcement of positive habits, which, though not strictly derived from feminism, may have liberatory potential (these are the habits of independent thought that Segal recounts, for instance – see chapter four, section five). For more on consciousness see Dewey, J., ““Consciousness” and Experience” in *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1910; and Summers-Effler, “The Micro Potential for Social Change: Emotion, Consciousness, and Social Movement Formation”,

⁶⁸³ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 50

⁶⁸⁴ Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New*, p. 114

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118

Democratic discussion is no different in this regard, as it allows for problems to surface publicly, which can then be addressed with the wealth of knowledge and experience of other citizens. This, for Dewey, is freed intelligence in action, and it forms the basis of any healthy democracy. Opposing and conflicting views thus cease to be insurmountable difficulties, best to be avoided, but instead become rallying points for critical, communicative intelligence with the potential to provide deeper insights for collective knowledge. Hence,

the method of democracy – inasfar as it is that of organised intelligence – is to bring these conflicts out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised, where they can be discussed and judged in the light of more inclusive interests than are represented by either of them separately.⁶⁸⁶

Democracy's role is precisely to allow citizens to raise problems, to provide a forum for conflicting opinions, which can be dealt with collectively through freed intelligence. Allowing the vast store of human knowledge to come to bear upon perceived difficulties will lead to a deepening not only of democracy as it functions through institutions, but also of our lives more generally.

7. Inclusive Democracy & Democracy as Cooperative Inquiry

Having explored Young's and Dewey's respective accounts of democracy, it should be clear that there are distinct areas of overlap between both models. The obvious linkages between pragmatism and deliberative democracy more generally, however, should not be all that surprising, as some deliberativists, most notably Habermas, have admitted to counting pragmatist philosophers among their leading influences.⁶⁸⁷ Young also seems aware of the similarities between deliberative and pragmatist visions of democracy, as she remarks in a footnote that "democracy as a method of collective problem-solving recalls John Dewey's approach to democratic theory and practice."⁶⁸⁸ Indeed, this emphasis on joint, communicative investigation of a perceived difficulty, issuing in a resolution, itself the result of shared and equal input and reasoning, is indicative of both the deliberative and the pragmatist conception of democracy. Accordingly, democracy functions as an arena in which problems are thought 'through' by citizens publically, and cooperatively. As we know, this does not mean that everybody has to share the same opinion, nor does it mean that all have to ultimately approve of the particular resolution, but merely that discussants can recognise their particular contribution as having been engaged with, and having affected the ultimate outcome of deliberation.

⁶⁸⁶ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 56

⁶⁸⁷ For more on this see Aboulafia, Bookman and Kemp (eds.), *Habermas and Pragmatism*

⁶⁸⁸ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, p. 28, n. 20

In this regard, Dewey's emphasis on inquiry as cooperation recalls Young's principles of reasonableness and publicity. At a minimum, so Young argues, discussants must be willing and open to coming to an agreement, and the process potentially issuing in such agreement must be public, that is, participants must communicate with each other and try to make themselves understood. It is hard to imagine *cooperative inquiry* as anything other than a willed, communicative engagement with others in the public pursuit of a resolution to a given problem. Hence, I believe that Dewey's model of democracy as an engagement of freed intelligence involves both the ideal of publicity and reasonableness.

Additionally, Young's conditions of inclusion and equality can be met by Dewey's prioritising of sociality. An understanding of intelligence as a "social asset," benefitting the masses by including the masses, leads, in Dewey's view, to an enlargement of knowledge for all. Rescuing knowledge from the narrow purview of specialism and democratically opening it up, allowing it to flow freely between citizens as they are enabled to modify it and to add to it, brings with it an enrichment not only for a small elite, but for society more generally. All of this entails the equal inclusion of citizens, who are not only superficially contributive to democracy, but who must be active establishers of truth and knowledge. It seems, then, that Dewey's pragmatist articulation of democracy incorporates the principles of equality, inclusion, publicity and reasonableness, which Young deems to be imperative for meaningful deliberation.

Even more fundamentally, however, Dewey's vision of democracy as cooperative inquiry evinces the sensitivity in speech and listening, which Young stipulates as a basic necessity for communication. Cooperation surely is only significant if it entails the sort of receptivity and expressivity sought by Young. Dewey writes:

To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience. One shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagrely or amply, has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates left unaffected. Try the experiment of communicating...and you will find your own attitude toward your experience changing⁶⁸⁹

Moreover, the reasoned resolution, which is said to give deliberative models an advantage over aggregative models in terms of legitimacy, is also to be found in Dewey's philosophy. According to Young, citizens accept outcomes of deliberation precisely because they feel their input to be valued, and to have ultimately played a part in the final decision of the discussion. This gives the process of deliberation an objectivity which aggregative democracy cannot accommodate, as it results in the adoption of what is commonly believed to be the best resolution at hand. Legitimacy and objectivity thus go hand in hand, as

⁶⁸⁹ Dewey, J., *Democracy and Education*, Echo Library, Teddington, 2007, p. 9

arbitrary, unfounded preferences are replaced by collectively examined stances issuing in optimal decisions.

Dewey's cooperative inquiry similarly requires the joint investigation of differing claims, as freed intelligence examines and evaluates said claims by means of 'scientific method.' Again, the collective establishment of truths undercuts appeals to subjectivity, allowing cooperative inquirers to arrive at what is deemed the objectively best solution for present circumstances. Knowledge, on this account, is legitimate, while preferences with the propensity for irrationality, are countered through the reasoned process of inquiry.

The areas of accord between Dewey's and Young's schemes thus highlight not only how much they have in common, but also how much they share *in opposition to* aggregative democracy. While Dewey of course never had the benefit of analyses of democracy along aggregative or deliberative lines, I believe that he comes closest to the difficulties posed by the former model, when he speaks of the ill effects of liberalism's stringent individualism:

Existing political practice...manifests a dependence upon a summation of individuals quantitatively, similar to Bentham's purely quantitative formula of the greatest sum of pleasures of the greatest possible number. The formation of parties or, as the eighteenth-century writers called them, factions, and the system of party government is the practically necessary counterweight to a numerical and atomistic individualism. The idea that the conflict of parties will, by means of public discussion, bring out necessary public truths is a kind of political watered-down version of the Hegelian dialectic, with its synthesis arrived at by a union of antithetical conceptions. The method has nothing in common with the procedure of organised cooperative inquiry which has won the triumphs of science in the field of physical nature.⁶⁹⁰

Dewey is saying here, that even with the aid of collectives, i.e. parties, the difficulties posed by individualism cannot be overcome, and the results arising from democratic discussion will remain superficial in nature, as long as politics is viewed as a matter of "summation of individuals quantitatively." A second-rate approach to deliberation, constituting a mere "watered-down" version of dialectical synthesis, can never approach the true knowledge arising from cooperative inquiry.

Like Young, Dewey recognises that deliberation can only be successful if it involves cooperation, that is, if it constitutes a public process of reasoned investigation carried out by citizens applying freed intelligence to particular problems. This necessarily entails a communicative alteration of different, often opposing resolutions proffered by citizens in response to a specific difficulty. Democratic discussion, then, is not simply the same as participation, or preference aggregation, but rather constitutes the interactive, intelligent

⁶⁹⁰ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 50

engagement of selves with others in the search for what is objectively the best resolution to the question at hand.

8. Jane Addams & Communicative Difference

With that said, we must not be too quick in designating Young a pragmatist, or Dewey a deliberativist, for there are significant differences between both thinkers, which need to be carefully evaluated. For example, it strikes me that Young is far more aware than Dewey is, of the inhibiting factors attendant in deliberation. The cooperative inquiry Dewey envisages seems rather hollow, given that those who are deemed to be 'other,' those who do not fit the perception of the authoritative discussant, will often find themselves prohibited by powerful norms surrounding deliberative legitimacy. Inquirers, who do not conform to the dominant profile of deliberator, are usually delegitimized and undermined by virtue of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, class or sexual orientation. This means that 'other' discussants will encounter serious obstacles in becoming equal members of the community of inquirers, obstacles which relate not only to actual, physical inclusion, but also to the contributions made during the course of deliberation.

As Young points out, even when 'other' citizens gain access to public fora, what they have to say is often belittled and denigrated. This frequently takes place unconsciously, as our deep-seated internalisations concerning gender, *inter alia*, come to the fore in our interactions with others, albeit behind a veil of authoritative superiority. We thus return, once again, to Bartky's half-submerged weapons of oppressive systems, and to Dewey's inability to counter these and their impact upon our habits. Dewey is ill-equipped to deal with sexist (and other) oppressive norms, and the implications they hold for our selves and our transaction with other selves. This extends to the possibility of 'different' inquirers availing of freed intelligence, and becoming substantive participants in inquiry, rather than mere spectators. Dewey does not recognise differences in communication as a significant factor affecting the process of inquiry.

The fact that certain ways of inquiring, of deliberating, may be male-biased and are deemed to be authoritative over and against alternative modes of expression, such as gesturing, storytelling and rhetoric, is vitally important, if truth production is to be legitimate and valid. The way we express ourselves, the way we engage in inquiry, critically informs the outcome of deliberation, particularly as it is structured by power differentials along gender, class, race, and other lines. Young cautions, that although an accommodation of diverse modes of expression may lead to a more complex and perhaps incoherent process of deliberation, it nonetheless embodies a more inclusive one:

If democratic communication is not simply deliberation among gentlemen who already share basic understandings...but is often a struggle among society's members to have their interests, experiences, and opinions recognised by others, and a struggle to persuade others of the justice of their claims, then a theory of communicative democracy should reflect on the normative meaning of all the communicative interaction brought to such struggles.⁶⁹¹

Dewey's explication of the community of inquirers falls short of this exhortation, and for this reason fails to include the very real threat facing intelligence as truly *freed* intelligence. Ultimately, Young's rich sense of inclusion, allowing for deliberators to take part as equals in the discussions concerning their lives, is hampered in Dewey's model of democracy as cooperative inquiry, as no distinctions are made between inquirers and the impediments they face in being regarded as such.

While Dewey's contextualism and pluralism draws attention to the need for the inclusion of a multitude of voices in political deliberation, ignoring differences in *styles* of communication prohibits the instantiation of inclusion. I believe that Jane Addams, through her work with Hull House, is able to remedy this oversight in Dewey's thought. In fact, Addams readily acknowledges not only the importance of different experiences, but draws upon *how* those experiences are variously expressed in non-conformist, or non-dominant modes of communication. For instance, during the course of her activism, which saw her living amongst an impoverished community of immigrants of various ethnic and religious backgrounds in Chicago, she never sought to speak on behalf of the people whose interests she tried to further, but instead always had a member of the community with her when invited to speak.⁶⁹² This was indicative of Addams's understanding of the purpose and mandate she and her co-workers had assigned themselves, which was not philanthropic, but rather constituted a reciprocal process, in which the neighbours and the residents of Hull House learnt from each other.⁶⁹³

During the course of this continuous learning experience, Addams acquired a sensitivity to cultural 'differences,' which were often imbued with sexist, xenophobic and classist bias. In *Democracy and Social Ethics*, she recounts how the well-to-do and well-meaning social worker (an early incarnation of herself) misapprehends and judges the subjects of her supposed charity by being incapable of stepping outside of her own, rigid criteria or "standards" for 'proper' living, instead of engaging with the priorities of those in receipt of

⁶⁹¹ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, p. 79

⁶⁹² For an autobiographical account on Addams's work with Hull House, see Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*

⁶⁹³ See Addams, J., "The Objective Value of a Social Settlement" in *The Jane Addams Reader*, Elstain, J. B. (ed.), Basic Books, New York, 2002, p. 45

her 'help'.⁶⁹⁴ In contrast to this, Addams developed and strove to implement what today we would refer to as 'bottom-up' approaches to activism, as she dedicated her life to the betterment of the community *with* the community. This entailed not only a receptivity and openness toward the interests and concerns of her neighbours, but a sensibility attuned to how those interests and concerns may be expressed.

For instance, in *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, Addams recounts the now infamous tale of 'the devil baby,' wherein a rumour of the existence of such a creature sparked widespread excitement, with Hull House being inundated by visitors demanding to see the monster infant believed to be hidden there.⁶⁹⁵ Despite continued protestations to the contrary, several weeks passed before disappointed would-be believers gave up their demands to see 'the devil baby.' While it would be easy to view this incident as a prime example of mass hysteria, or rampant misled superstition, Addams refrained from such reductionism, and instead found a deeper meaning in this dramatic episode of Hull House's history.

Struck by the seriousness with which especially older women treated the alleged existence of 'the devil baby,' she listened to the stories of the birth of this mythical, wicked child. These took various forms, depending on the background of the storyteller, with different interpretations ultimately serving the same purpose. In the Italian version of the tale, a Catholic woman married to an atheist bore a devil infant, as her husband "in a rage had torn a holy picture from the bedroom wall saying that he would quite as soon have a devil in the house as such a thing."⁶⁹⁶ Similarly, the Jewish interpretation of the story saw a father's desire to have a boy, after being given six daughters, thwarted, as his seventh infant turned out to be 'the devil baby.'

Addams reads these myths as tools utilised by women to yield power in seemingly powerless situations. Brutal husbands and misbehaving children could be disciplined by the indirect admonishment contained in the frightful fate besetting the wrong-doer of the narrative. Moreover, old women, who had experienced hard lives and now found themselves forgotten or silenced by disrespectful relatives, could regain a moment of glory, by stepping into their domain, as it were, to obtain the status they desired – even just to be listened to for a while. As Addams explains:

The story of the Devil baby evidently put into their hands the sort of material with which they were accustomed to deal. They had long used such tales in their unrelenting efforts at family discipline, ever since they had frightened their first

⁶⁹⁴ Addams, J., *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Seigfried, C. H. (ed.), University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago, 2002, chapter 1

⁶⁹⁵ Addams, J., *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, Seigfried, C. H. (ed.), University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago, 2002

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8

children into awed silence by tales of bugaboo men who prowled in the darkness. These old women enjoyed a moment of triumph – as if they had made good at last and had come into a region of sanctions and punishments which they understood.⁶⁹⁷

In this light, the fleeting prestige conferred upon these women by virtue of an assumed connection between (old) womanhood and the supernatural forms an understandable motivation for the ardent insistence upon and intense desire for the ‘the devil baby.’⁶⁹⁸

Addams goes on to outline yet another version of the tale, wherein a woman married a man guilty of previously committing a crime, who fails to confess this either to his wife, or to the priest wedding them. The husband meets his fate when he becomes the father of ‘the devil baby.’ Apparently this particular interpretation of the story appealed to mothers who felt their children had been taken from them by dark, uncontrollable outside influences, who were disappointed by their children, and who suffered loss and tragedy. Addams explains:

Because the Devil Baby embodied an undeserved wrong to a poor mother whose tender child had been claimed by the forces of evil, his merely reputed presence had power to attract to Hull-House hundreds of women who had been humbled and disgraced by their children; mothers of the feeble-minded, of the vicious, of the criminal, of the prostitute.⁶⁹⁹

Being able to cast blame on the criminal father in the narrative, these women felt they could finally speak out about the wrong-doing and hurt covered up for many years, for in “their talk it was as if their long role of maternal apology and protective reticence had at last broken down, as if they could speak out freely because for once a man responsible for an ill-begotten child had been “met up with” and had received his deserts.”⁷⁰⁰

These stories, then, convey in allegorical form the longed-for justice women – the aged, the poor, the terrorised and brutalised, the haggard and infirm – hoped for despite of and because of the injustices they endured throughout their lives. Defining art as a longing for satisfaction arising from the unattainability thereof in real life, Addams attributes an aesthetic dimension to this semi-imaginary seeking for justice. Thus, “baffled desires, sharp cries of pain, echoes of justices unfulfilled, the original material from which such tales are fashioned, would defy

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 10

⁶⁹⁸ Notably, this connection was required for the disciplinary power of the story to be effective. Thus, Addams writes of a “group of hard-working men” seeking out ‘the devil baby,’ that each of them “wore a hang-dog look betraying that sense of unfair treatment which a man is so apt to feel when this womankind makes an appeal to the supernatural...Their talk confirmed my impression that such a story may still act as a restraining influence in the sphere of marital conduct...the touch of mysticism, the supernatural sphere in which it was placed, would render a man quite helpless.” - Ibid., p. 18

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 20

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

Memory's appeasing power and break through the rigid restraints imposed by all Art" thereby re-emblazoning the yearning for justice, which is marked by women's gendered experiences.⁷⁰¹

Addams's analysis is powerfully insightful and evinces the sensitivity to different styles of expression, which Young finds so important in the context of democratic deliberation. Rather than dismissing the narrative structure of the 'devil baby' communications as mere story-telling, Addams accepts the seemingly fantastical tales of women as expressions of something immensely important (initially owing to the tumultuous events spawned in Hull House by the rumour of the baby's existence). Her willingness to take these stories seriously paid off, for as Addams discovered, belying the somewhat far-fetched, superstitious anecdotes of 'the devil baby' is a much deeper significance – the quest for gendered justice. As such, Addams's explication of the complexities involved in 'the devil baby' case, acts as an exhortation for us to beware of dismissing stories and narrative as pointless or inappropriate for democratic deliberation, for what could be more central to democracy than the realisation of justice? The *injustice* of a lifetime of suffering domestic abuse, exploitation and neglect, would surely be reinforced by a denigration of this alternative method of expression, silencing yet again those who are already marginalised by gender, ethnicity, class, age and social status for their lack of adherence to dominant communicative style.

This, in fact, is how deliberative exclusion functions to the detriment of those perceived to be 'other': established norms of deliberation confer power upon those already conforming to or able to adopt said norms, while non-conformist deliberators are delegitimized and tainted by insinuations of sub-standard deliberative capability. This not only diminishes the recognition of other styles of speech and gesticulation as genuine modes of communication, it also hides the particularity and bias of dominant expressive style behind a veneer of objectivity and authentic knowledge. As Young notes:

The speech culture of white, middle-class men tends to be more controlled, without significant gesture and expression or emotion. The speech culture of women, racialized and ethicised minorities, and working-class people, on the other hand, often is, or is perceived to be, more excited and embodied, values more the expression of emotion, uses figurative language, modulates tones of voice, and gestures widely.⁷⁰²

Addams showed a keen awareness of this communicative difference displayed by the people she encountered throughout her working life, with the stories of 'the devil baby' perhaps most vividly capturing the connection between alternative modes of expression and the

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., p. 21

⁷⁰² Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, p. 39

marginality experienced by those utilising 'other' styles of speech. Truly including democratic participants in debate by treating narrative, emotive language, seemingly unorthodox gesture and speech, as valid and on a par with dominant communicative style, leads to richer and more complete democracies, not only because the previously voiceless can now take part in democratic deliberation, but because such inclusion allows for *further* discussion.

As Addams points out, women previously silent on issues wrought with feelings of shame, disappointment, and hurt, began to talk about their experiences of children "claimed by the forces of evil," hence the story of 'the devil baby' acted as a catalyst for greater probing and exchange. In other words, once alternative communicative styles are given legitimacy, discussants feel comfortable to engage in yet more discussion. This surely can only contribute positively to Dewey's view of democracy as cooperative inquiry, as inclusion in Young's rich sense is instantiated, and intelligence really is *freed* by rescuing it from a constricting, domineering communicative mode, thus mining hitherto hidden reservoirs of knowledge rooted in the lives of those traditionally excluded from democratic debate. The liberating effect this has on discussants, and presumably on the larger polity as well, is an unblocking of reservedness, allowing for the uninhibited flow of intelligence Dewey has in mind when he posits knowledge production as a social, democratic and cooperative venture. While he lacks the recognition that large swathes of societies might be unable to contribute to this freely flowing intelligence of democracy owing to a marginalisation predicated upon communicative difference, Addams engages with such difference and places it on an equal footing with established and potentially exclusionary norms of communication.

Her writings are a testimony to this, incorporating stories told to her by neighbours, which she places alongside the thoughts of great philosophers and thinkers.⁷⁰³ While the latter usually exhibit the detached, unemotional style of dominant expression, their insights are not totalising or dominant, as Addams creates a kind of communicative egalitarianism, wherein anecdotes and narratives originating in the community are given equal (if not greater) weight than the more formal musings of intellectuals. Narrative as a means of communication is therefore doubly legitimised in Addams's texts: first, she listens to and takes seriously the stories of those generally excluded from decision-making processes and political fora; and then, by retelling these stories in her own work (modifying them to include her own thoughts and feelings thereof and in due course creating a unique second-level narrative), she situates herself within the context of a wider audience as a writer-activist who subverts dominant modes of expression, hence her two-fold endorsement of communicative difference.

⁷⁰³ For more on the influences on Addams's writing and style, see Joslin, K., "Reading Jane Addams in the Twenty-first Century" in *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams*, Hamington, M. (ed.), 2010

Unfortunately, much of the discriminatory treatment shown to people with 'other' styles of communication, was and is reserved for Addams's work, and her reduction to a mere storyteller, without significant academic, worldly-wise gravitas continually risks undermining the real philosophical, sociological and political insights she can give to her readers. Several feminist theorists have shown that Addams is so much more than a purveyor of anecdotes, and the forgoing discussion highlights the fact that such a caricature of her work serves a sexist agenda, which rests upon the denigration of non-dominant modes of communication, thereby bypassing the knowledge she holds for a deeper understanding of cooperative inquiry.⁷⁰⁴

Addams's reluctance to submit to dominant styles of expression, and her engagement with and championing of communicative difference, especially through narrative, mean that she avoids the pitfalls posed by an all too abstract 'community of inquirers' wherein complexities pertaining to access to freed intelligence are masked. She highlights the fact that gender, class, ethnicity and age structure the way we inquire, and the diminishment of her own work acts as a sad reminder that power differentials in inquiry invidiously delegitimize or authenticate deliberators owing to sexist readings of various modes of communication. Addams's work can be utilised to overcome the shortcomings of Dewey's model of democracy as cooperative inquiry by imbuing the rather shallow 'community of inquirers' with substance, ensuring that those who are traditionally excluded from political processes now meet with the rich sense of inclusion Young advocates in her inclusive democracy model.

9. Proceduralism

Having said that, the charge of abstraction need not only be levelled against Dewey. While Young deals far more successfully with differences in the way we communicate, drawing attention to the connection between gender, race, ethnicity, class and our capacity to engage meaningfully in political deliberation, I find her discussants equally removed, not in terms of the discriminatory challenges they face in being included, but rather with regard to their existential make-up and functioning. In order to expand upon this point, more must be said specifically about Young's treatment of alternative styles of communication.

While dominant modes of expression frequently serve to exclude others, Young argues that rather than submitting to an arbitrary division between the emotive, narrative, and figurative on the one hand, and the rational, calm and unemotional on the other, we should refrain from

⁷⁰⁴ Notably, Seigfried draws attention to Addams's pragmatic method – see, for example, Seigfried, C. H., "Introduction to the Illinois Edition" in *Democracy and Social Ethics*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago, 2002

viewing these hierarchically. In fact, we can learn from non-dominant communicative styles, traditionally deemed inferior or unconventional, as they actually enrich cooperative decision-making by facilitating a more fruitful engagement of discussants. Specifically, Young designates greeting, rhetoric and narrative as discursive practices, which “aid the making of arguments and enable understanding and interaction in ways that argument alone cannot.”⁷⁰⁵ Thus, like Addams, Young gives credence to both dominant and non-dominant communicative styles, and highlights the fact that a shunning of the latter leads to an impoverishment of democratic deliberation. While we have already examined how this is manifest in Addams’s work through narrative, an elaboration of Young’s use of ‘greeting’ will follow.

According to Young, greeting acts as a way to diffuse tension and to make discussants comfortable with each other. Basic courtesies such as introducing oneself, shaking hands, and making small talk, put people at ease and set up standards of civility rather than antagonism. As Young explains:

At the most basic level, ‘greeting’ refers to those moments in everyday communication where people acknowledge one another in their particularity. Thus it includes literal greetings, such as ‘Hello’, ‘How are you?’, and addressing people by their name. In the category of greeting I also include moments of leave-taking...as well as the forms of speech that often lubricate discussion with mild forms of flattery, stroking of egos, deference, and politeness.⁷⁰⁶

Greeting involves vulnerability and hence, trust, as “greeting is the communicative moment of taking the risk of trusting in order to establish and maintain the bond of trust necessary to sustain a discussion about issues that face us together.”⁷⁰⁷

Importantly, for Young, greeting creates respect between those who are about to embark upon communal deliberation. In the absence of expressions of greeting, communication is jeopardised, as discussants feel they are not treated fairly or reasonably. Hence,

without such spoken moments of politeness, deference, acknowledgement of the particular perspective of others, their goodwill and contribution to the collective, discussion itself would often break down. To be sure, such gestures of flattery and deference are often absent from political contest, often making discussion impossible because some or all contestants do not believe the others respect them.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁵ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, p. 57

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 58

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 60

Lack of greeting, then, risks a collapse of communication, and is counterproductive to the kind of inclusive democratic decision-making Young envisages as an engagement of all of the relevant discussants in collective problem-solving.

While the importance of recognising different styles of communication has already been noted, I find this account of greeting rather misleading. As an alternative mode of expression, often underestimated for its role in facilitating cooperative inquiry, Young's 'greeting' is valuable. However, as a tool for creating respect between inquirers, its capacity is somewhat exaggerated. As Desirée Melton similarly notes:

The procedural changes Young proposes will likely increase inclusion and promote more civil and *respectful* deliberative practices, but to *have respect for* the other requires dispositional change on the part of individuals.⁷⁰⁹

I believe this criticism of 'greeting' belies a more general absence of substantiveness in Young's inclusive democracy model, which is continuously hampered by a narrow focus upon deliberation. Large swathes of Young's theory are dedicated to setting up the correct procedures for discussion to take place, such as reasonableness, publicity, and so forth. However, the changes in selfhood required for these principles to take hold are under-theorised, and one gets the sense that receptivity to others, public accountability, open-mindedness, and other attributes of inclusive democracy, somehow just emerge during the course of deliberation.

Young assumes that respect arises as a result of greeting, just as sensitivity to 'different' deliberators is somehow evoked by the principles of inclusive democracy. A mere exhortation for deliberators to be mindful of alternative modes of communication, to resist judging others before hearing them out, or to put aside their own dogmas in favour of openness to other deliberators' views, presupposes changes in selves, which need to be addressed with a theory of selfhood capable of explaining change in the first place. I maintain that the feminist-pragmatist self elucidated in this thesis can do precisely that, as it gives us a much more concrete picture of the self and its capacity to change as part of the larger polity. It can connect changes in selfhood to deliberation in a meaningful way, without merely stating that changes in selfhood are automatically attendant if all the requirements for 'proper' democratic communication are fulfilled.

Young's theory often tends toward the superficial, a mere proceduralism, focused upon speech and listening, rather than on the flesh and blood of citizens living in and partaking in the governance of a democracy. While earlier I made the same criticism of Dewey's

⁷⁰⁹ Melton, D. H., "Making Character Disposition Matter in Iris Young's Deliberative Democracy" in *Dancing with Iris: The Philosophy of Iris Marion Young*, Ferguson, A. and Nagel, M. (eds.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009, p. 174

‘community of inquirers,’ and praised Young for pointing out the importance gender, race, class, and other markers of difference, hold for democratic deliberators, I similarly find her discussants empty and unreal – not with regard to the role communicative difference and power play when it comes to deliberators’ exclusion from political debate, this Young integrates very successfully. However, a deeper understanding of selves as they are constituted, their characters, what shapes them, how they become socialised, how, exactly, others impact upon them, all of this is vitally important if democracy truly is to be a site of transformation.

The feminist-pragmatist self offers us a model of the habituated self, which can deal with all of these questions by going beyond “speech acts” and “listening,” thereby giving solidity to selves, which are treated as more than mere deliberators.⁷¹⁰ This means that sensitivity to others, for example, is not just a matter of discursive practice, but a matter of selfhood. Pragmatists’ positing of a habit of sympathy, or what we would call empathy, could be instrumental in this regard, as a focus on selves avoids Young’s narrow preoccupation with procedures by drawing attention to habitual change.⁷¹¹ This could then overcome the limitations of her approach, which Melton similarly identifies as the conflict between the concrete, existential changes Young desires, and the ill-equipped discursiveness she charges with realising them.⁷¹²

Just like other deliberativists, Young emphasises discussion as the primary topic of concern for democratic theory. This often places the very purpose of inquiry in the background, for as Noëlle McAfee notes:

deliberation is about choosing what to do, not about deciding what is true or false; and what we should do is a matter up for deliberation and will stand or fall depending upon what our purposes are.⁷¹³

Pragmatism’s focus on doing, on action, further prohibits the kind of proceduralism encountered in Young’s *Inclusion and Democracy*. Significantly, action is a vital part of cooperative inquiry, as the pragmatist experimental approach involves doing, with decisions

⁷¹⁰ Pappas similarly warns of the “intellectualist temptation” posed by deliberative theories, and argues that “there is more to democratic experience than democratic deliberation. How we experience each other in our everyday local and direct interactions is something more inclusive than how we talk and inquire together.” When selves are viewed as transacting, unique, socially embedded beings, democracy will cease to be merely a realm of deliberation. See Pappas, *John Dewey’s Ethics*, p. 252

⁷¹¹ I have argued for this in Fischer, *Progressive Cannibalism*, accessed 22/02/2010

⁷¹² Specifically, Melton writes of Young’s explication of respect in relation to greeting: “Young’s description of the greeting moment in deliberation reveals that she wants an *existential* response on the part of deliberators...Existential acknowledgement (or recognition) involves a demand that greeting is incapable of meeting. Recognizing another’s vulnerability and then feeling responsible and claimed by it requires selves to have a *disposition* that encourages one to feel claimed and responsible.” - Melton, “Making Character Disposition Matter”, p. 179

⁷¹³ McAfee, N., “Democracy’s Normativity”, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 2008, p. 264

being evaluated in relation to the consequences they instantiate. Discussion is never at risk of just remaining discussion, then, but is imbued with our requirements for change through action. This gives us a richer sense of selves who are not just deliberators, but agents.

On top of this, Dewey explicitly links the changes undergone by these more concrete selves to deliberation, rather than implicitly assuming such a link. As we know, habits exist at the nexus of action and character, which means that every act has an effect on us, and on our environments. Thus choice, issuing in action, forms the self. As Dewey explains:

We prefer spontaneously, we choose deliberately, knowingly. Now every such choice sustains a double relation to the self. It reveals the existing self and it forms the future self...In committing oneself to a particular course, a person gives a lasting set to his own being. Consequently, it is proper to say that in choosing this object rather than that, one is in reality choosing what kind of person or self one is going to be. Superficially, the deliberation which terminates in choice is concerned with weighing the values of particular ends. Below the surface, it is a process of discovering what sort of being a person most wants to become.⁷¹⁴

Deliberation is intimately tied to changes in selfhood on this account, as our choices, the outcomes of deliberation, affect the kind of selves we become. Deliberation ultimately shapes us, as habits are dropped, acquired and reconfigured in accordance with action resulting from a particular choice. When this connection between deliberation and selfhood is placed within the larger context of the transacting, that is, the continuously-transforming-yet-stable self, the existential changes sought by Young in her inclusive democracy model, become far more tangible.

To summarise what has been said so far: having established that changes in selfhood need to be accompanied by changes in environments, particularly in democratic institutions, I argued that Young most aptly captures the dialogical relationship of self and environment typical of change as transaction. I then sketched Young's model of inclusive democracy and, noting the similarities to Dewey's conception of democracy as cooperative inquiry, went on to outline the latter. While both thinkers seemed to resemble each other in many regards, they were also found to differ in several respects. Similarities included, amongst others, their interpretation of democracy as collective problem-solving; their positing of deliberators/inquirers who benefit from increased knowledge and enriched understanding; and most importantly perhaps, their unfaltering belief in the ability of communication to allow for inclusive and equitable decision-making, used to the benefit of all.

Significantly, Dewey underestimates the power of established deliberators to skew inquiry, and the knowledge resulting therefrom, an oversight which risks masking the exclusion of

⁷¹⁴ Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 286. I am indebted to McAfee's article for this insight regarding the intimate connection between choices and selves.

‘other’ deliberators from democratic discussion and their deprivation of the freedom to contribute to cooperative inquiry. Addams, on the other hand, can successfully overcome this difficulty posed by Dewey’s abstract ‘community of inquirers’ by being sensitive to and practicing communicative difference, which frequently acts as a marker of gender, race, and class difference more generally. Addams’s insights can thus be used to rescue Dewey’s model of democracy as cooperative inquiry from a disregard for the *way* we inquire, thereby allowing for the full inclusion of citizens in deliberative democratic processes.

While Young advocates inclusion in this strong sense, she nonetheless merely focuses on the procedures required for fair discussion. This overshadows the need for more substantial selves, who are capable of changing as she describes – as citizens capable of becoming open-minded, receptive, nonjudgmental, showing mutual respect for each other. The centrality of action in pragmatist thought undermines any shallow proceduralism by pointing toward the importance *doing* plays in cooperative inquiry, and by linking deliberation to changes in selfhood.

The feminist-pragmatist self established during the course of this thesis perhaps most aptly captures the kind of self Young’s model is missing, while holding the potential to significantly imbue Dewey’s explication of democracy with the regard for communicative difference it lacks. In the previous chapter Dewey was found to be inadequate for a feminist theory of selfhood owing to his inability to account for the internationalisation of oppressive norms. Accordingly, he underestimated the ability of such norms to inform the kind of selves we are or might become. In the forgoing discussion, we saw that this short-sightedness also extends to the serious impediments ‘other’ citizens face as deliberators or inquirers in democracy.

In Dewey’s thought, such ‘otherness’ does not seem to spur further elaboration on the abstract category of the ‘community of inquirers’ largely because such ‘otherness’ is not thorough-goingly addressed in his theory of selfhood. The feminist-pragmatist self advanced in this thesis does however, expand upon ‘otherness’ in a meaningful way, hence an adoption of this vision of selfhood can somewhat mitigating the ill effects of Dewey’s neglect of communicative difference and the role it plays in democratic inquiry. Indeed, Addams seems to foreshadow such an approach in her work, although she does not explicitly expound a feminist theory of selfhood in the way I have tried to do in chapter four. Nonetheless, Addams’s sensitivity to communicative difference, when coupled with the feminist-pragmatist self, can successfully overcome the shortcomings in Dewey’s view of the self as it exists as a member of the larger polity engaged in democratic discussion.

Having said that, a reduction of citizens to *mere* deliberators was found to be problematic in Young's model of inclusive democracy. In this regard, then, my critique of Dewey's 'community of inquirers' and of Young's abstract 'discussants' is one and the same: both deny the complexity of selves as they inhabit democracies. For Dewey, this is directly attributable to his problematic disregard for communicative difference owing to his theory of selfhood, while for Young, it stems from a restricting proceduralism. My answer to this problem, if inclusive democracy, or democracy as cooperative inquiry, are to be used as models for understanding change as transaction, lies in supplementing 'democracy as cooperative inquiry' with Addams's regard for non-dominant expressive styles, and in adopting the vision of selfhood argued for during the course of this thesis, the feminist-pragmatist self. As a feminist self, this self can undo the undertheorised or problematic aspects of Dewey's thought in relation to selves, democracy, inquiry and power; while as a pragmatist self, it can counter Young's prioritisation of deliberation by allowing for existential change in habituated, concrete beings. In turn, this shall allow us to think of democracy not just as a truly inclusive realm for achieving decisions, but perhaps bring us more closely to Dewey's idea of democracy as a way of life.

The purpose of this exploration of Young's and Dewey's respective interpretations of democracy was to envisage a type of democracy wherein institutions can be flexible enough to transact with selves to allow for continuous adaptation between selves and environments. Such institutions, which prize openness and receptivity, can still be achieved if we understand them in terms of the feminist-pragmatist selves they entail. Inclusive democracy and democracy as cooperative inquiry can thus accommodate change as transaction, as long as they incorporate a vision of the feminist-pragmatist self. This self is informed by feminist insights regarding oppressive internalisations, 'otherness' and marginalisation, knowledge and expression; it is also informed, however, by a view of a self composed of habits, possessed of permanence and dynamism, freedom and agency.

In fact, this feminist-pragmatist self has the potential not only to allow for change as transaction, explaining feminist change as personal, public, inner, outer, ethical, political change, it also broadens the scope of democracy beyond institutional democracy to a democracy enveloping our lives, as self and environment continuously adapt, even outside of the official structures of democracy. While these structures are of course important, especially as they hold the power to design and enforce laws and policies which many women currently are the subjects, and not the creators of, I believe that the existential changes in selfhood, such as openness to others, empathy, and so forth, should not and cannot be restricted to processes of deliberation, but have to take hold in our lives more generally.

10. Democracy & Progress

Finally, I wish to close the discussion by briefly returning to the difficulties posed by ‘growth,’ detailed in the previous chapter, and some of the points elaborated upon above. If we recall, growth was deemed to be problematic, as it sets up change as progressive, and stasis as regressive. Dewey does not seem to account for negative change, but instead describes growth as unidirectional movement toward improvement.⁷¹⁵ The notion of progress itself, however, need not be all that challenging – we constantly determine what is progressive and regressive, what is better and worse. The feminist-pragmatist self must of course make choices, and these choices involve judgements of ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘better’ and ‘worse.’ Similarly, communities must make choices as they are faced with problems and the possibility of multiple, often opposing, courses of action to take.

Democratic deliberation or inquiry can aid us in coordinating multiple accounts of progress, that is, multiple accounts of what is ‘good,’ ‘bad,’ morally desirable or undesirable. In fact, democracy is meant to function in this way, as an arbiter in deciding what the appropriate response to given problems is. As such, it attempts to realise justice and fairness for its citizens, that is, it coordinates the multiplicity of accounts of ‘progress’ and ‘regress,’ of ‘goodness’ and ‘badness.’ When understood like this, progressiveness, or growth, is not an unfolding, a predictable momentum toward the better, but rather constitutes the coordination of a multiplicity of interpretations of ‘progress,’ all of which are equally important in enriching democracy as a way of life without needing to be subsumed in a univocal expression of ‘progress.’ The notion ‘progress’ therefore loses any negative connotations it may hold, especially when set in the context of inclusive democracy, or democracy as cooperative inquiry. Enriched by Jane Addams’s regard and championing of communicative difference, and given substance via the feminist-pragmatist self, both models of democracy can allow for true inclusiveness, which in turn enables a thoroughgoing multifariousness of progress.

My explication of democracy as a realisation of inclusive compromise among various accounts of ‘progress’ might be indicative of the liberal theories charged with creating the ethics/politics split, but I nonetheless think that this cooperative aspect of democracy is vitally important, precisely as citizens need to truly be able to contribute to the processes affecting their lives. Aristotle’s philosophy by contrast, avoids a dichotomy between ethics and politics with his account of ‘progress’ or ‘the good life,’ which conflates what is good for oneself with what is good for the polity. Such a singular account of ‘the good’ or ‘progress,’ however, should not be advocated lest we succumb to exclusionary democracies. There is somewhat of a quandary here then, involving questions surrounding

⁷¹⁵ See chapter four, section three.

cosmopolitanism, political power, personal morality, and much more. Such questions regarding the avoidance of the ethics/politics split and the simultaneous coordination of multiple goods shall not be resolved here, but require further in-depth exploration beyond the bounds of this thesis. What shall be emphasised, though, is that 'the good' / 'progress' of democracy should not be a singular determinant, but should form a series of fluctuating, constantly revisable compromises.

Nonetheless, for further probing of said questions, Young's and Dewey's respective theories may still serve as useful resources. For instance, Dewey's emphasis on the habit of sympathy, or empathy, could act as a means for fostering the cooperative, inclusive compromise both he and Young advocate, while furnishing deliberators with the existential substantiveness they currently lack in Young's thought. This approach would also constitute a re-contextualisation of a concept which has been subsumed in the private sphere, that is, as a part of women's (read personal) morality. By emphasising sympathy and bringing it into the public sphere of politics, distinctions between the good and the right may be undermined, and the difficulties posed by dualisms of ethics, politics, public and private may be redressed.

In closing, I want to merely reiterate the most salient point raised during this chapter: by interpreting change as transaction; by allowing for this to take hold dialogically between selves and environments; and by drawing upon Young's and Dewey's respective models of democracy *in conjunction with* the feminist-pragmatist self and Addams's regard for communicative difference, we can articulate and instantiate our own ideas of what constitutes progress cooperatively with others, thereby allowing feminists to realise the amelioration of present problems posed by the persistent inequality of women and men.

Conclusion

Whether or not indeterminateness, uncertainty, actually exists in the world is a difficult question. It is easier to think of the world as fixed, settled once for all, and man as accumulating all the uncertainty there is in his will and all the doubt there is in his intellect...we do not have to settle the question. A hypothetical answer is enough. If the world is already done and done for, if its character is entirely achieved so that its behaviour is like that of a man lost in routine, then the only freedom for which man can hope is one of efficiency in overt action. But if change is genuine, if accounts are still in process of making, and if objective uncertainty is the stimulus to reflection, then variation in action, novelty and experiment, have a true meaning.

- Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct

This thesis sought to provide not only a hypothetical answer to the question posed by change, but to elucidate a vision of change, which could overcome the problematic nature of *gendered (im)mutability* attendant in philosophy's very inception. Having shown that certain early Greek themes, such as a desire to be immortal and self-sufficient (*autarkeia*), when coupled with misgivings about women's sexuality and physicality, resulted in theories of change wherein women were identified by analogy with mutability or immutability, we concluded in chapter one that woman's traditional designation of secondary oppositional in classifications of "opposites" meant that regardless of whether change was deemed 'good' or 'bad,' woman was always contained within the latter axiological group, and therefore occupies a contradictory position within traditional male thinkers' expositions of change. Fundamentally, woman is marked by her difference from the human, male norm, and thereby brings danger, whether this is identified as death, sexual dependency, or a life of toil.

While this is expressed in Parmenides' philosophy in absolute terms, that is, difference necessitates a complete denial of woman, as Being is opposed to Not-Being, mutability to immutability, singularity to plurality, and ultimately man to woman, by Aristotle's time, difference becomes a matter of degrees. So, although he still makes use of contraries in certain contexts, his translation of otherness into the "great chain of being" – wherein each existent differs from the previous existent in accordance with rank – expands the either/or exclusivity of previous theorising in opposites. By and large, the subject matter of philosophy (existents, statements, natural phenomena, amongst others) are no longer simply understood in terms of polar pairs, however, the axiological assumptions behind conceptualisations of polarity and analogy remain. In other words, women continue to be

classed as inferior, to take the place of secondary oppositional, although they are now placed within the graded scale from superiority to inferiority entailed by Aristotle's hierarchical scheme of beings.

In chapter two we saw that this is reinforced by Aristotle's theory of change, which posits matter and form as a 'solution' to the problem posed by change in a post-Parmenidean world. Through his hylomorphism, Aristotle can account for change from hot to cold, say, within the same subject. While this forms a formidable response to the seeming impasse created by Parmenides' denial of change, with its strict demarcation of opposites, it nonetheless goes hand in hand with an essentialism which traps women on the secondary rung in the hierarchy of human beings, and in fact questions their very humanness. For, if we recall, Aristotle attributes complete humanity to those with the full capacity for reason, and this, by degrees is denied to women, children and slaves. In order to explain how an apple seed changes into an apple tree, and not into a chair, for instance, Aristotle distinguishes by species, and by giving each its appropriate telos, ensures that change takes place only in accordance with a particular species plan. This now means that women are 'by nature' stuck on the secondary rung assigned to them, for as Aristotle tells us, nature cannot be changed. For us as moral beings, this means that full virtue is reserved for men, and again, by degrees is denied to women, children and slaves.

Dewey, of course, critiques this essentialist and teleological ontology and moral philosophy, and argues instead that the world and the beings it contains, are never finished, but rather continuously in the making, and therefore outside of the bounds of 'natural' unfoldings. This is not to say that the world is in a state of constant flux, indeed, Dewey finds such theories similarly prohibitive of the novel and unpredictable. We need to, however, accommodate change and permanence – not through essentialism, or through a striving toward teloi, whether in the species plan, or in the divine plan, but via an ontological theory premised upon the lively interaction of events. Aristotle's hierarchical ordering of beings in accordance with reason is thus undermined, particularly as Dewey juxtaposes the attainment of Truth in a complete world, with warranted assertability and productive knowledge in an incomplete world. Just as knowers are creatively involved in ascertaining interim, agreed upon hypotheses, rather than antecedently existing truths, so existents play a productive role in the world, as they mutually affect each other through ongoing interaction.

In terms of moral responsibility for selfhood, this means that the heavy burden placed by Aristotle upon selves is diminished, as selves are understood in constant transaction with environments. Since selves are shaped by environments, and in turn shape environments, sole responsibility for the kind of person we are is rejected, as this would entail the abstract existence of human beings in complete isolation from environing forces. For Dewey,

however, we are embedded in the world, and in our relationships with others we come to acquire morality. This is also true for Aristotle, although habituation is only important for him in childhood. In adulthood, we bear responsibility for our characters, although it becomes clear that the highest order of virtue, that is, virtue as excellence, can only be acquired by the male citizen ruler, who must enforce virtue for the rest of the polity by means of the law. That this should be so, is due to his sole possession of *phronesis* – the virtue enabling all other virtues, which, as practical wisdom, allows us to act within the specific moral situation toward the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, for the right reason, in the right way.

It is somewhat inconsistent of Aristotle to assign habituation only an important role in childhood, for *hexis*, or habit, forms the self also for him, as he recognises the circularity of character and action. This is why he asserts that young people must be ethically well-trained, for it is difficult to change what has become ‘second nature.’ Thus, the vicious person will never be virtuous, as inferior habits have become engrained through repeated activity, and are now inescapable. Dewey is also aware of the power of such constant reinforcement of habits – indeed, this was highlighted to him during lessons with F. M. Alexander, as habits of bodily comportment appeared incapable of interruption. This often unconscious functioning of habits, however, does not mean that we are bound to continuously re-enact our etched grooves of being, for while they are difficult to change, it is not impossible.

In order to escape the ‘vicious circle’ posed by *habitual conservatism* (that is, habits’ reluctance to change, which simultaneously provides structure and inhibits novelty), selves must become aware of the constant need for change, hence, they should foster habits of open-mindedness or self-reflexivity. Rather than allowing our habits, and therefore our selves, to be automated, like the musician reciting a piece of music mechanically and unfeelingly, we should allow for the creative interplay of habits by being continuously aware of our innate capacity to revert to the familiar and trusted. That this is undoubtedly a difficult task, is not denied by Dewey, for just as he says above, “it is easier for us to think of the world as fixed, settled once for all,” and so it is with the self.

This, indeed, is the primary difference between Dewey’s and Aristotle’s philosophies. For Dewey, the world and the beings it contains are unfinished and in-the-making, whereas for Aristotle they are finished and complete. The criticisms levelled by Dewey against Aristotle stem out of this insight, as completeness and fixity limit change in Dewey’s eyes. So, although these two thinkers are akin in many ways – one need think only of their joint concern for an accommodation of change with permanence, their naturalism, their comprehension of ethics as a matter of *doing*, the moral uncertainty they attribute to ethical questions, the role they ascribe to the aesthetic in ethics, their understanding of

experimentation in terms of determining right action – all of these affinities exist despite the distinct juxtaposition of Deweyan incomplete world on the one hand, and Aristotelian finished world on the other. This has important consequences for a feminist analysis of change, which seeks to re-appropriate Dewey's theorising for its own ends.

Indeed, when Dewey's critique arising from said opposition between fixed world and ongoing world is linked with his radical anti-elitism, several aspects of Aristotle's thought cease to be a threat to an elucidation of change from a feminist-Deweyan perspective. Thus, Dewey undermines the "great chain of being" with its ensconcing of woman on the second rung, and he thereby rejects a limiting of virtue by socio-biological type (man, woman, slave, child). Nor does Dewey condone classifications of moral selves in terms of virtuous, vicious, continent and incontinent (in which the former two classes are deemed immutable), as all character, so Dewey tells us, is 'speckled.' Theories of virtue and vice generally are viewed as perpetuating dominant norms through power, and, according to Dewey, fail to see their own cultural specificity. Most importantly, though, Dewey's refutation of a hierarchical ordering of beings in accordance with reason, and his anti-teleological stance, overcome those shortcomings in Aristotle's thought one could deem inappropriate for a feminist explication of change.

With that said, Dewey proves to be somewhat problematic in chapters four and five, which establish the feminist-pragmatist self, and situate it within its social and political contexts. Dewey's concept of 'growth' introduces a teleological element into his philosophy, which appears odd, given his explicit opposition to this in Aristotle's thought. While the latter contains distinct *telois*, and delimits change within unfoldings according to species, Dewey's thought does not, hence criticisms of teleological theorising in Dewey's philosophy are somewhat undermined. However, an explication of growth as unidirectional, forward-looking progress, leaves Dewey open to being interpreted as a teleologist, and indeed, several commentators have read him as such. While the issue of Dewey's identification of change with progress and lack of change with regress is partially refuted by reference to missing *telois*, it is put to the side during the explication of the feminist-pragmatist self, and is revisited later within the setting of Young's and Dewey's respective accounts of democracy.

The main difficulty pertaining to Dewey in this context turns out to be his disregard for communicative difference, which poses a serious threat for 'other' citizens and their capacity to engage in democratic inquiry. Dewey fails to recognise that disadvantaged members of a polity are delegitimized in accordance with the non-dominant expressive styles they employ, a shortcoming which has serious implications for a model of democracy situating cooperative knowledge production and problem-solving at its core. Democracy as cooperative inquiry must therefore incorporate Jane Addams's insights regarding alternative

modes of communication, which in turn can create a rich sense of inclusion, allowing for marginalized citizens to become active discussants in the political processes affecting their lives, while simultaneously leading to more open and fruitful deliberation.

The problematic aspects entailed by growth, or ‘progress’ when placed within this context of inclusionary democracy, are thus undercut, with ‘progress’ and the ‘common good’ being rearticulated in terms of diversity and multiplicity rather singularity. This means that what might be seen as Deweyan teleological inflections are undermined, as progress can no longer be understood in terms of a predetermined path of unfolding, but becomes a matter of a plurality of accounts of progress coordinated within the overall remit of an enrichment of democracy.

The difficulty posed by Dewey’s disregard for non-dominant styles of inquiry can be traced to his theory of selfhood, which is inadequate for dealing with the operation of habits below consciousness, as they internalise and sustain oppressive norms. While Dewey is far more cognisant than Aristotle, of the potential arduousness involved in disrupting the unconscious workings of our habits, his appeals to the necessity for selves to be self-reflexive and aware of change, are not enough to counter what Bartky calls the “half-submerged weapons of a sexist system.” For, although Dewey recognises the ‘vicious circle’ posed by habitual conservatism, and understands habit acquisition to function through what I have termed the *approval/disapproval mechanism*, he is unaware of the distinctly gendered implications this holds.

Feminists, though, take such oppressive internalisations as a starting point, and theorise the obstacles they pose in terms of women’s mental and physical health. If we are to construct a model of selfhood, then, which seeks to minimise the inclusion of oppressive norms in our very being, then a feminist-pragmatist explication of selfhood is in order, and indeed, this is what I have argued for in chapter four. Here, the feminist-pragmatist self moves beyond Deweyan assumptions of change, and draws upon feminist insights regarding the insidiousness of oppressive norms, which are instilled in us through our transaction with others, as we occupy unique positionings on the intersections of groupings we are a part of.

Rather than viewing the self as determined by such environing forces, however, the feminist-pragmatist self remains relatively free, as our habits are never completely dominated by sexist internalisations. Indeed, habits unaffected by oppressive norms may exist side by side with their oppressive counterparts. When these come into acute tension with each other, change occurs, as existing habits are no longer appropriate, and release is found in a re-stitching of the fabric of self. The subsequent discarding and recycling of habits, or the adoption of entirely new threads of being, seem all the more intense during the process of

coming to feminist consciousness, since this appears to envelop every aspect of one's life. What was previously taken for granted, and deemed to be unproblematic and straightforward is now problematised and questioned. An emerging altered understanding of the world and one's place in it, is critically informed by one's comprehension of patriarchy as an oppressive system.

All of this is fuelled by a doubt, or as pragmatists describe it, an irritation of doubt, which can be protracted and sustained over long periods of time, and which ultimately results in raised consciousness, constituting a monumental process of 'reflective thinking.' While the self's embeddedness is of course important in this context, as feminist communities can foster feminist habits through the approval/disapproval mechanism, it is also possible to come to feminist consciousness oneself, although this must be extremely arduous and lonely. Thus, feminist-pragmatism offers a model of the self, which is both stable and dynamic, and is endowed with agency. Ann Ferguson's "determinism-responsibility" problem is thereby resolved, as the feminist-pragmatist self is deemed to be morally responsible for changing oppressive systems, or indeed, for failing to do so.

We saw in chapter five that this connection between moral agents and changed systems is one in which selves and environments need to be responsive to each other, in order for change to occur *as transaction*. Focusing merely on changed selves or merely on changed systems is misled, for as Dewey rightly asserts, the self exists in a constant reciprocal relationship of change with its environment. While democracies have shown themselves to be largely impervious to the demands for change placed upon them by women, I argued for democratic institutions, which are sensitive to the dialogical back-and-forth between selves and their milieus. Iris Marion Young's inclusive democracy model has proven fruitful in this regard, as her theory allows us to view citizens as equal participants, who are engaged with the processes issuing in decisions affecting their lives.

Young builds upon deliberative theories of democracy, but highlights the fact that differences in discursive style are often used as a pretext for continued exclusion of those already marginalised. By placing Young into conversation with Dewey, we've seen that Dewey's otherwise similar conception of democracy as cooperative inquiry falls short of recognising the exclusionary potential contained in the way we inquire. Hence, Dewey's abstract category of the 'community of inquirers' is unable to excise this exclusionary potential, despite Dewey's desire for freed intelligence, that is, knowledge in which all can share. On the other hand, Young's discussants seem unduly shallow, for if existential changes in selfhood are to be brought about, then a more concrete vision of the self is needed. The inadequacies of Dewey's inquirers and Young's deliberators are overcome by drawing attention to Addams's work on communicative difference, and by situating the

feminist-pragmatist self, yet again, at the centre of the explication of change posed by this thesis, thereby making the feminist-pragmatist self the focal point of a depiction of democracy, which can overcome resistance to change through a re-visioning of democratic institutions by drawing upon Young's, Dewey's and Addams's respective political theories.

During the course of this thesis we have moved from an exposition of change as it exists in the world, to how it occurs in selves, to how it functions in connection with political systems. I have sought to shed light on the outstanding meta-questions surrounding change, and have answered these by using Dewey's ontology and theory of selfhood (itself shown to be informed by Aristotle) as a starting point from which to establish a feminist-pragmatist self. Having ascertained this self's capacity to effect change, it was argued that systemic change is most effectively tackled by interpreting change *as transaction*, that is, by focusing upon changed selves in their dialogical relationship with changed systems. While we have gained several insights pertaining to larger debates in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and political philosophy, amongst others, I have been mostly concerned with elucidating change from a feminist perspective, and have aimed at providing an alternative vision, which is capable of overcoming the paradoxical treatment of women and change attributed to philosophy's very inception.

Given the immanence of the necessity of change mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, both from a pragmatist and a feminist point of view, I wish to close by quoting the following passage, which highlights the importance of our capacity to effect change in the here-and-now, in a world that is unfinished and in-the-making, and which I hope to have met by the forgoing account of change. Despite Dewey's gendered language, I believe these words to be applicable also to women, and given the persistent inequalities between women and men, perhaps even more so:

Variability, initiative, innovation, departure from routine, experimentation are empirically the manifestation of a genuine *nisus* in things. At all events it is these things that are precious to us under the name of freedom. It is their elimination from the life of a slave which makes his life servile, intolerable to the freeman who has once been on his own, no matter what his animal comfort and security. A free man would rather take his chance in an open world than be guaranteed in a closed world.⁷¹⁶

⁷¹⁶ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*

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