

TOLSTOY AND JOHN DEWEY: PRAGMATISM AND PROSAICS

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Among the eighty-seven warehouse boxes of material that the John Dewey Foundation donated to the Dewey Center at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in 1972 was an untitled 17-page typescript paper about Tolstoy written by Dewey.¹ It is interesting that this work, the only one which Dewey devoted exclusively to Tolstoy, focuses on didactic works such as "What is to be Done?," "Life", "Patriotism", and "Letter to the Liberals." Although Dewey praised Tolstoy as an artist, any discussion of his novels and short fiction is conspicuously absent from Dewey's critique. Perhaps this can be partially explained by Dewey's insistence on treating Tolstoy as a "thinker" rather than an artist. At that time, the "late" Tolstoy, the thinker, was still a living force for those engaged in practical solutions to the ideological issues of the day. Therefore, Dewey's assessment of Tolstoy was grounded in his achievement, not as a novelist, but rather as a philosopher (albeit an unsystematic one) whose primary concern, like Dewey's own, was to examine how people think and act, how they might learn to think more clearly and consequently, and how to live in more ethical relations with one another.

The parallels that exist between Tolstoy and Dewey in their approach to intellectual processes and social behavior are striking and profound. A close examination of Dewey's essay on Tolstoy serves as a good introduction to the unmistakable similarity between their understanding of how the mind works and how the individual acts in society. I will begin by discussing Dewey's paper to demonstrate the correspondence of their thought (one Dewey himself indirectly reveals by acknowledging aspects of Tolstoy's thought which remarkably coincide with his own). Then I will raise some broader questions: do Tolstoy's novels and short stories embody on an artistic plane what Dewey's "instrumentalism" propounds on a philosophical plane? Furthermore, is there a contemporary school of literary theory that can serve as a bridge between the philosophical achievement of Dewey and the aesthetic achievement of Tolstoy?

It was Tolstoy's ability to arrive at general conclusions about how people should live and through his deep insight into individual cases, that so struck Dewey. Like Tolstoy, he was deeply concerned with the connection between the way people thought and the way they behaved, which both saw as grounded in specific events. In Dewey's view, it was precisely Tolstoy's achievement as a novelist, based as it was on the minute

¹The editors of *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953* entitled the paper "Tolstoy's Art." It is included in Volume 17 together with speeches, various publications, forewords, prefaces, lectures, and unpublished manuscripts written from 1889-1953. Editor, Jo Ann Boydston, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990). The editors of *The Collected Works of John Dewey*, an approved edition supervised by the Committee on Scholarly Editions of the Modern Language Association, estimate that this paper was written in approximately 1910 in preparation for a publication or a speech commemorating Tolstoy on the occasion of his recent death. For convenience, the editors entitled the paper "Tolstoy's Art."

observation of human gestures, words, and the correspondence of thought and physicality as it is traced from moment to moment in its contextual and environmental plentitude, that was also the foundation of his power as a didactic essayist. In the Western tradition, from Plato to Hegel, intellectual operations of the mind reflect or display some sort of ideal and eternal principles of a perfect mind or soul. In distinction, Dewey, like Tolstoy, conceived of the mind as actively engaged and formed through its attempt to deal with specific situations.

Dewey forged his philosophy while deeply embroiled in the social and political controversies of his time. It was a touchstone of his belief that philosophy was intimately tied to everyday life, and that the philosopher had an obligation to society to use his/her observations and investigations to help effect the good of the human community. For him the academy was not a place to escape from the turmoil of the world, but an institution whose *raison d'être* was to provide the human community with an intellectual apparatus capable of formulating active solutions to its problems. In one of his more memorable sayings he chided academics who use the university as a refuge from the "real world": "The saint sits in his ivory tower while the burly sinners run the world."² He was a founder of the American Civil Liberties Union, a leading member of the Outlawry of War Movement after World War I, and a founding member of the Union of American University Professors (as first president he insisted that the union maintain close fraternal ties with the American Federation of Labor). In 1937, at the age of 78, he traveled to Mexico to preside over a committee that sought to hold a fair hearing on the charges brought by the Soviet judicial system against the exiled revolutionary Leon Trotsky.³ Theory and practice, philosophy and its application in life were inextricably linked for Dewey. Tolstoy, of course, also was convinced that his intellectual work should work for the good in his society.

Both men preferred the precise description of the truth they were trying to depict over the claims of aesthetic form. In reading their work, one senses the presence of a profound, subtle intelligence capable of rendering external and internal perceptions into a record of words that is at the same time commonplace, direct, and accessible to educable people of ordinary intelligence. Dewey, often praised for the acumen of his thought, was castigated for his cumbersome prose style. Irwin Edman, a student of Dewey's at Columbia University, said of his writing: "I had not found Dewey's prose easy, but I had learned that its difficulty lay for the most part in its intellectual honesty, which led him

²Quoted by Irwin Edman in *John Dewey: His Contribution to the American Tradition*, (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), 23.

³See William W. Brickman for "Soviet Attitudes Toward John Dewey as an Educator," in *John Dewey and the World View*, ed. Douglas E. Lawson and Arthur E. Lean. (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 64-136. Among other topics Brickman discusses Dewey's reception in pre-revolutionary Russia, his visit to the Soviet Union in the early twenties and his favorable views of the progressive nature of Soviet education at that time, his contributions to the Trotsky hearing, and the vilification of his reputation during Stalin's regime.

to qualify an idea in one sentence half a page long."⁴ Oliver Wendell Holmes said of Dewey's *Experience and Nature* that "... although Dewey's book is incredibly ill written, it seemed to me after several rereadings to have a feeling of intimacy with the inside of the cosmos that I found unequalled. So methought God would have spoken had He been inarticulate but keenly desirous to tell you how it was."⁵ Similarly, one can argue that the ungainliness occasionally noted in Tolstoy's art comes from his attempt to encapsulate in prose the tiny perceptions human beings flickeringly experience but permit for the most part to pass unrecorded. Commentators on both Dewey and Tolstoy have felt that this characteristic combination of plainness and profundity is somehow paradoxical and inexplicable. They have attributed Dewey's uncomely prose style to his commonsensical New England background. Tolstoy's seeming obliviousness to received aesthetic norms was purportedly rooted in his barbaric Russian background.⁶ But I think there is really an intrinsic connection between the apparent ungainliness *and* the penetration of their prose. I believe that the apparent combined plainness and complexity of their writing can precisely be attributed to their steady refusal to permit putative aesthetic standards from obscuring their unrelenting analysis of human thought and behavior. This is not to claim that awkward writing is a sure indication of profound thought. In Dewey's instance he often was too involved in the excitement of intellectual pursuit as he tracked down his ideas to frame them in a more palatable manner. Sidney Hook said that he had more than once observed Dewey write a chapter a day, then reject and rewrite the entire chapter from scratch the next day without referring to the original text. Though he may have sometimes been a careless writer, he was a penetrating and precise thinker.

Outside of "Tolstoy's Art" and later, *Art as Experience*, there are only a few scattered references to Tolstoy's work. Nevertheless, Tolstoy had an undeniable influence

⁴Irwin Edman, *Philosopher's Holiday*, (New York: Viking, 1938), p. 139. The rest of this quote bears repeating. "In part it also lay in the fact that this profoundly original philosopher was struggling to find a vocabulary to say what had never been said in philosophy before, to find a diction that would express with exactness the reality of change and novelty, philosophical words having been used for centuries to express the absolute and the fixed. Once one had gotten used to the long sentences, with their string of qualifying clauses, to the sobriety, to the lack of image and of color, one sensed the liberating force of this philosophy. Here was not an answer but a quest for light in the living movement of human experience; in the very precariousness of experience there lay open to the perplexed human creature the possibilities that peril itself provocatively suggested. I had found here, as have so many of my generation, a philosophy that, instead of laying down a diagram of an ideal universe that had nothing to do with one of actual doings and sufferings, opened a vision of conscious control of life, of a democracy operating through creative intelligence in the liberation of human capacities and natural goods."

⁵Mark De Wolfe Howe, ed., *Holmes-Pollock Letters*, vol.2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), 287.

⁶See Gary Saul Morson's discussion, particularly of early Western critics of *War and Peace* such as Matthew Arnold and Henry James, in his chapter "Solving the Puzzle of 'War and Peace'", *Hidden in Plain View*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 66-80. Hereafter cited within the article as *Hidden*.

on Dewey, as he did on most of his thinking contemporaries. The beginning of Dewey's career as a writer in 1882, at the age of twenty-three, coincided roughly with Tolstoy's "final" phase as a social critic and religious thinker. His reading of Tolstoy most likely would have occurred during his years as head of the Department of Philosophy and Education at the University of Chicago from 1894 to 1904, when he was formulating his own views about instrumentalism or pragmatism, a uniquely American approach to philosophy.

In the years between 1895 and 1915, having severed his intellectual ties to idealism, Dewey moved into a stage of philosophical maturity in which he formulated instrumental logic, more popularly known as pragmatism. He examined the fields of education, psychology, logic, ethics, politics, and religion in formulating applications for the instrumental method.⁷ In his article "Tolstoy's Art," Dewey focuses on those aspects of Tolstoy's thought that he was most concerned about in his own work. In 1910-11, when he considered Tolstoy's achievement, he did so in the light of the ground breaking discoveries he was then making in philosophy.

In "Tolstoy's Art", Dewey credits Tolstoy as a thinker who derives general philosophical solutions to problems, not as a professional philosopher characteristically would, by applying principles drawn from a comprehensive, all-encompassing philosophical system, but as an artist would, from the observation and description of specific conditions. Dewey observes that Tolstoy was primarily a "dramatic artist" who always sought to find solutions to general problems under the spur of a dramatic incident or a problem facing an individual: "Some actual and individualized happening, involving the suffering and joy of some actual human being, struck him, impressing him so deeply that it stayed by him, and tortured him till he discovered a *general* reason for a whole class of failures and perplexities."⁸

In Dewey's view, what makes Tolstoy interesting as a thinker is the extent to which the novelist underlies the philosopher. What Dewey finds worthy in Tolstoy is not the static content of his ideology but his approach to thinking, and that this thinking is the thinking of an artist. In "Tolstoy's Art" Dewey does not use illustrations from his novels or stories, but rather from his novelistic impulses of description used to buttress general

⁷A few of the most important titles are *Democracy and Education*, (New York: Macmillan, 1916), *Human Nature and Conduct*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1922). *Experience and Nature*, (New York: Norton, 1929), *The Quest for Certainty*, (New York: Minton, 1929), *Art as Experience*, (New York: Minton, 1934), *A Common Faith*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934). *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, New York: Henry Holt, 1938).

⁸"Tolstoi's Art" , in Vol. 17, *Dewey: The Later Works*, 381. Hereafter, citations will be given in the body of the article as TA.

ethical principles in such essays as "Life", "Power and Liberty," and *What is to be Done?*⁹ Dewey may not have felt competent as a literary critic to actually comment upon Tolstoy's fiction. But perhaps a more salient reason is that Tolstoy as a didacticist displayed an intellectual operation that Dewey valued in pragmatism, the lesson that each problem facing a human being must be understood and solved in its environmental context.

Dewey cites the passage in "What is to be Done?", where Tolstoy described his immediate revulsion to a guillotining he chanced to witness in Paris. Due to this incident, Tolstoy claimed to base his opposition to what he perceived as the moral evil of capital punishment. Again, when he went to the slums of Moscow, Tolstoy was stung by his conscience to do something for the poor. Dewey notes, "...the eye and the emotion of the artist showed him that the problem was concrete, not abstract." [382 TA] Seeing the actual individuals who comprised the urban poor of Moscow, it struck Tolstoy that "...now for the first time I was aware that it was not a matter of feeding a thousand beings like a thousand sheep, but that each of the thousand was just such another man as myself." [382 TA]

Tolstoy understood, as Dewey points out, that "...the really serious evils do not flow from anything in the nature of things or in the nature of life; they are all due to false conceptions of the meaning of life, to false philosophies in short." [382 TA] Tolstoy sought to discover "the true conception of life which if generally entertained would put an end to these miseries that contradict the meaning of life." [382 TA] At the same time, Dewey identifies in Tolstoy's critique two modes of thought that nullify life's meaning. Each mode is responsible in its own way for the wrong thinking that prevails in much of humanity. Tolstoy divides those who err in their conception of life into two categories, "Pharisees" and "Scribes".[382 TA]¹⁰

⁹Dewey consulted Isabel F. Hapgood's translation of *What is to be Done?* in the volume entitled *What is to be Done?* (New York: Thomas F. Crowell, 1899). Hapgood originally translated "What is to be Done" for Crowell in 1888. *Tak chto zhe nam delat'? Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*. 1928-54. T. 25. Dewey was very loose with his quotations, he did not cite the names of the works from which he quoted, let alone page numbers. When checked against the originals, words are substituted, syntax changed and considerable abbreviations are employed, but the general sense of Tolstoy's thought is always preserved.

¹⁰Ecclesiastical institutions are the domain of the Pharisees. They maintain that the present life on earth is evil, that this life is a trial for human beings with a reward waiting in eternity for those who pass the test. It is impossible to achieve happiness in the present conditions of life. This awaits those only who have discovered the law of life of the pharisees-- a law revealed through "'faith' or the acceptance of doctrine or dogma and therefore totally beyond the grasp of reason..." [385 TA] The law of life of the Pharisees usurps the possibility for understanding a law of life based in the present life grounded in reason. Therefore, an inherent feature of the Pharisaical law of life is that it is "self-centered", true happiness resides in the eternal perpetuation of personal existence, but the state of blessedness exists only in the "beyond", in the extratemporal. The Pharisees, according to Tolstoy, have perverted the teachings of the true philosophers of humanity, Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, Jesus and Epictetus and others..." [386] Professing happiness in the afterlife for the worthy, the ecclesiastical representatives of the true masters have accepted the ills of the present economic and social order as unchangeable, "as necessary" and as in fact having some value in

Tolstoy asserted that the first group of thinking that needed to be repudiated, that displayed by "the Pharisees", was that humanity was beset with evils due to freedom of will. He saw this belief as due to a faulty understanding of the concept of free will. Dewey agrees with Tolstoy that people have freedom of will not as the theologians and criminal lawyers conceive it, i.e., by sheer self-volition, but "in the relation of one's reason to the *meaning* of one's acts." [383] He cites Tolstoy's vivid illustration of the true meaning of will: a human being is like a horse drawing a cart with other horses. The horse is not free to refuse to pull the cart or to go in any direction it pleases, nor can it stop at will. What it can do is pull willingly, or be drawn along. So it is with human beings. A human being "... may recognize the end of the activity as his own end, and so be in an attitude of peace and joy in the performance of his tasks, or he may isolate his consciousness, his own wish and purpose and so be in a state of opposition, of struggle condemned in advance to failure, and hence to discontent and misery." [383] "Activity," Dewey asserts in agreement with Tolstoy, "the actual doing of things, proceeds from the energy of the universe itself, not from will in its fancied isolation." [383] Human beings, he maintains, can recognize this law and make it their own. Only by doing this can they hope to be "truly free" and happy.

Dewey uses an artistic illustration himself to support his (and Tolstoy's) position. Comprehending Tolstoy's quest for truth and happiness through reason or thought as a universal law and aim, he likens the law of life, identified by Tolstoy, to the building of a house. In both certain laws are immutable. In achieving a "happy" life, one in keeping with the "truth", one must aim to achieve certain necessary ends, and to achieve them only through certain necessary means. Both ends and means are governed by immutable laws: "...laws which man cannot change or deceive, any more than in the case of building the house." [384] Although the building of the house is contingent upon certain laws, and everyone may agree that this is so, few recognize "...that there are laws as fixed in themselves whose discovery and acknowledgement is our primary business in the case of building of the house of life." [385]

In the classic conception of philosophy in the Western tradition, mind or spirit is

training individuals through suffering and redemption in preparation for the happiness they will receive in afterlife.

Scribes, those thinkers who focused on a scientific examination of the world. Tolstoy feels that science was a manifestation of wrong thinking as "religion" in its "Pharisaical" interpretation. Scribes were split into two subgroups. Those thinkers concerned primarily with the phenomena of the natural sciences led humanity astray by focusing their attention on trivialities. This group includes such thinkers as Comte and Spencer. The other group, which includes such thinkers as Hegel, insists on the observation and classification of the world through rational thought, encouraging humanity to accept the status quo of human affairs. These thinkers, describing the laws they observed, enshrined them as unmitigable verities of human existence. That which ought to be the infallible measure of how to seek the highest good of the human race, i.e., the simple quest for happiness, is ignored in one version of Scribal knowledge and dismissed as impracticable in the other. "As a result," Dewey remarked of Tolstoy's analysis, "what now passes for science is either an attempt to justify the existing order of life-- as the social sciences-- or a collection of trivialities without reference to the guidance of life and the happiness of the masses-- the physical sciences." [386]

unfettered by the laws of nature. In the Western philosophical tradition there has always existed a dualism between mind and body. This philosophy, Dewey asserts, is in error because it holds that "life, or existence, is an individual thing, with an individual aim: that the self which the senses reveal and which manifests itself through the bodily appetites, a self which as thus expressed, is separate, is real." [385] Concomitantly, Dewey asserts that this mode of belief leads to a conception of the self as an isolated entity. The isolated self which manifests itself in "belief in free will" gives rise to "the illusory consciousness from which all the evils of life proceed." [385]

Dewey concludes that Tolstoy saw that belief in afterlife was proof that the Pharisees had actually abandoned their purported masters' teaching while diverting the "followers" of Buddha, Jesus, and others from these teachers' central message. According to Dewey, they had instead reverted "to the illusory consciousness that happiness or the good is something connected with a separate, individual self." [386]

The Scribes, according to Tolstoy, have quite a different approach to life, and in their own way lead to another type of fallacious reasoning and behavior. Dewey sees that in Tolstoy's understanding of the Scribes, all life, both in history and in the natural sciences, presents an infinitude of "facts" or "things to be studied." No fact, historical or scientific, in and of itself can present itself as worthy or unworthy of study. What is called for, in Tolstoy's estimation, is a judicious selection of facts. Dewey cites Tolstoy's metaphor of a miller to illustrate the failure of the Scribal approach. The miller is at first concerned with the operation of the mill in relation to its production of acceptable flour. Little by little the miller becomes interested in the workings of the machinery and then the river current itself to the point that the end product is neglected. Scribal knowledge makes a similar mistake. "Scientific philosophy", according to Tolstoy, sees life as "an arrangement of purely physical energies." Science (both in the humanistic studies, and in the natural sciences), the "logies" as Tolstoy disdainfully called it, leaves out that which is precisely most important in life, and omitting this loses all sense of proportion and order.¹¹

Dewey feels that Tolstoy had identified for himself a relatively stable means of sifting out the essential facts from those which were meaningless; a trait Tolstoy asserted that only the laboring classes still understood, but that the educated classes of his time had forgotten in their penchant for learning for learning's sake. "The thing that is indubitably certain about life," Dewey remarks, "is that it is a struggle away from suffering, from evil, and towards joy, towards good, happiness. But fears and hates, hopes and loves, joys and miseries-- this is just the thing that scientists and philosophers leave out of account."

¹¹Tolstoy continues irascibly in this vein, "...and of sciences we have manufactured a great number too; for one need only to put to a Greek word the termination *logy*, and arrange the subject according to ready-made paragraphs, and the science is made..." "...a blago ikh legko delat', stoit prilozhit' k grecheskomu nazvaniuu slovo logiia i raspolozhit' po gotovym rubrikam-- i gotova nauka, -- nadelali nauk stol'ko. Chto ne tol'ko odin chelovek ne mozhet znat' ikh, no ni odin ne zapomnit vsekh nazvanii sushchestvuyushchikh nauk..." *Tak eto zhe nam delat'? PSS 39:370.*

[387] He cites with tacit approval Tolstoy's definition of true philosophy:

The essence of true philosophy is then simply the recognition of the testimony of rational consciousness regarding the happiness of man and the conditions of its attainment; and this is simply the repudiation of the illusory, or sense conscious of separate or individual existence: the recognition once for all that happiness resides in identification of individual aim and effort with that of all living beings. [387-88]

This "true philosophy" is readily comprehensible to any rational human being regardless of social class or of educational status. Tolstoy claimed that the masses of working people have been living according to the true teachings of Christ, Confucius, Moses, and other spiritual masters. They have known all along to seek happiness by putting first the good of others. Their condition in life leads them naturally to repudiate the happiness of the "animal personality" of the human being. They serve others and themselves by providing food, clothing, and shelter. They do not, as the educated classes do, impose burdens on others to support their comfortable lives.

Tolstoy said that the better educated person would be far more likely than the masses of working people to be deluded by the teachings of the Scribes or the Pharisees. True science and art, in Tolstoy's view, "ought to teach men their welfare, which consists entirely in self-denial, and in serving others, and to express powerfully this teaching."¹² Although Dewey feels Tolstoy's critique was correct, he thinks that his method for making corrections was at fault due to its excessively narrow scope.

For Tolstoy, people can express the highest form of rational behavior through self-sacrificial love of others. Tolstoy defined this in "Life" and in "What is to be Done" as, for men, physical, useful labor, and for women, the bearing and upbringing of children. Anything falling short of this serves "animal individuality" and leads people into self-contradictory thought and unhappiness.¹³ Dewey insists that it is incumbent upon humanity to make systematic and rational its apprehension of knowledge so that knowledge

¹²Tolstoy continues in this vein, "...to zhe, chto nazyvaetsia u nas naukoi i iskusstvom, est' proizvedeniia prazdnogo uma i chuvstva. Imeiushchie tsel'iu shchekotat' takie zhe prazdnie umy i chuvstva: nauki i iskusstva nashi neponiatny i nichego ne govoriat narodu, potomu chto ne imeiut v vidu ego blaga." PSS: 39: 374. ["...that which we call science and art are the products of idle minds and emotions. Having the goal of stimulating these very same idle minds and emotions, our science and art are incomprehensible and meaningless to our people, because their good is not held in mind." *What is to be Done*, 238-39.]

¹³If Isabel Hapgood was reluctant to translate *The Kingdom of God* in 1890-93 as Robert Whittaker reports (in "The Tolstoy Archival and Manuscript Project," *Tolstoy Studies Journal* I(1988): 64), one wonders what she might have felt translating such sentiments in *What is to be Done?* as "Woman's service to God consists chiefly and almost exclusively in bearing children (because no one except herself can render it)" 282 and "Well, and if you ask what those are to do who have no children, who are not married, or are widows, I answer that those will do well to share in man's multifarious labor. But one cannot help being sorry that such a precious tool as woman is, should be bereft of the possibility of fulfilling the great vocation which it is proper to her alone to fulfil." *What is to be Done?* 283.

would serve rather than steer the human race (as it had done in the past). Dewey, like Tolstoy, would discard the teachings of the "Pharisees" and insist upon focusing people's efforts on shaping life in the fullness of the present. As Tolstoy wrote in "Life," a text Dewey uses extensively in his paper, "There is no love in the future. Love is only an activity in the present. And the man who manifests no love in the present has no love."¹⁴ However, Dewey, unlike Tolstoy, holds a different conception of the knowledge of the "Scribes". Although he nowhere states this explicitly in "Tolstoy's Art", Dewey feels that the facts of science could be examined, prioritized, ordered and used in order to enable human beings to live rational and happy lives. Useful knowledge in many spheres, both in the humanities and the natural sciences, could be used to base life in the present on rational thought, and therefore make it happy.

Moreover, unlike Tolstoy, Dewey places his hopes in a social mechanism, democracy, to ensure that there would be the type of social connection among human beings that would enable them to work on the common task of securing happiness for others while pursuing their own "selfish" needs (those same desires of animal personality which Tolstoy so resolutely repudiated). For Dewey, democracy as a social institution is a means of mediating and, to some extent, resolving the needs of the individual with that of the community.

Dewey sees no break between Tolstoy's artistic and "moral career", as he terms it: "In his later life he but makes articulate the moral of all his earlier literary work." [388] That moral, as Dewey understands it, lies in Tolstoy's depiction of the irony of the search for personal happiness on the part of those characters whose every step towards attaining the things which constitute happiness brings them into destructive conflict with others bent on the same goals. They either learn or fail to learn that they can never be happy as long as they understand "happiness as something connected with their personal existence"; they cannot be truly happy until they see happiness as "proceeding from the renunciation of all such private and severed existence." [388] As long as they seek possessions and power which satisfy the needs of their exclusive ego, they are cutting themselves off "from the natural and healthy sources of enjoying life." [388]

Dewey concludes that while Tolstoy is a mystic and an ascetic, or teacher of renunciation, he differs from other mystics in that he affirms that the ultimate good in life, "the losing of one's separate personality in the life of all-- is to be attained by reason and exemplified in a life of concrete relations to nature and other people." [389] This was something that Dewey could ratify in his own work and thought. He remarks, "It would be impossible to exaggerate his [Tolstoy's] reliance on reason and rational knowledge, and his contempt for faith in the conventional sense of that term." Although Dewey deeply shares these sensibilities with Tolstoy, he parts with Tolstoy in his contempt for modern science.

Dewey feels that it is impossible and undesirable for the individual to renounce wholly all access to personal happiness ("animal individuality" as Tolstoy calls it) since

¹⁴"Life," 377. Dewey does not quote this particular passage.

it is a given in nature that consciousness is primarily rooted from moment to moment throughout life in individuals, and is indeed inextricable from the individual personality. To deny this would be unrealistic. As long as life continues, consciousness will be saturated with this parochial point of view. Dewey, moreover, asserts that while Tolstoy was correct in insisting on the impulse toward social participation that self-renunciation would bring, he differs from Tolstoy in insisting on a mutually beneficial continuum between the private and the public sphere. "Shared experience", the highest good in Dewey's terms, would not renounce individual happiness, but bring it into harmony with the commonweal. Ultimately, there could not be a fundamental contradiction between the two. Indeed, as he sees it, the supreme gift of participatory democracy is that it provides an instrument for connecting the private and the public, for integrating self-renunciation and service for others with private happiness and the common good. Pragmatism is the philosophical buttress for this understanding of the continuum between the individual and society.

EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION

Thus far we have examined Dewey's understanding of Tolstoy's beliefs as expressed in his reading of several of Tolstoy's essays. It may be argued that Tolstoy's proposals for ethical behavior, lodged in the context of experience and the situation of the present moment, are even more fully realized in his novels than in his philosophical essays. The new emphasis Dewey places on the pragmatic decision made by individuals in specific situations, makes ethics an unfolding narrative in which persons and circumstance (plot and characters) are inseparable. If we look further at Dewey's understanding of intellectual processes and, more particularly, his philosophy of education, we will arrive at an understanding of human thought and behavior that more closely coincides with (and indeed, complements) the operations of states of mind and behavior depicted by Tolstoy the novelist rather than Tolstoy the didactic philosopher.

Although Dewey and Tolstoy come to different conclusions about what should be done to improve society, their basic understanding of how the mind works is strikingly similar. Dewey, like Tolstoy, sees every human being as a bundle of pliant potential: "The bad man is the man who, no matter how good he has been, is beginning to deteriorate, to grow less good. The good man is the man who, no matter how unworthy he *has* been, is moving to become better..."¹⁵ This could be a description of any number of characters from Tolstoy. This openness is a capacity described in one of the most penetrating recent assessments of Tolstoy's art: "Tolstoy was ... a philosopher of the present, of the open present, with all its unrealized opportunities and wasteful carelessness; all its round simplicities and unnoticed, 'chance' details that do not necessarily fit any specific narrative pattern." [*Hidden*, 270-271] "Creative potentials," Gary Saul Morson's term for Tolstoy's

¹⁵Quoted in *Makers of the Modern World*, ed., Louis Untermeyer, (Chicago: Spencer, 1955), 292.

narrative strategy, the capacity to designate the plenitude of possibility for development (or stagnation) that dwells in every moment of human life, seems to be an apt term to describe Dewey's life-long project.

According to Dewey, (and I believe that Tolstoy would agree), mental change is grounded in experience. Thought is governed first by physical experience, followed by the symbolic experience that culture provides through social interaction. In Dewey's conception of experience, a second layer of facts-- ideas-- come into being that are "characters of a new interaction of events; they are characters which in their incorporation with sentiency transform organic action, furnishing it with new properties." This phenomenon underlines the foundation of all thinking in nature : "Every thought and meaning has its substratum in some organic act of absorption or elimination of seeking, or turning away from, of destroying or caring for, of signaling or responding. Its roots are in some definite act of biological behavior; our physical names for mental acts like seeing, grasping, searching, affirming, acquiescing, spurning, comprehending, affection, emotion are not just 'metaphors.'"¹⁶ It is important to remember that Dewey understands language and communication as a second stratum of facts in environment which is available only to human beings. He writes, "Ability to respond to meanings and to employ them, instead of reacting merely to physical contacts makes the difference between man and other animals; it is the agency for elevating man into the realm of what is usually called the ideal and the spiritual." [EN, 221] "Mind" is defined by Dewey as "the whole system of meanings as they are embodied in the workings of organic life." [EN, 303] Sidney Hook, a leading interpreter, friend, and lifelong colleague of Dewey, said that in later years Dewey would have substituted the word "'culture' in the anthropological sense for 'experience.'": "Culture," Hook observes, "is what characterizes man wherever he is found and differentiates human nature from animal nature. Human nature is cultural and historical rather than merely biological." [EN, viii]

For both Dewey and Tolstoy, experience leads to perception, perception leads to thought, thought to language, and language to culture, while culture is perceived as another layer or level of experience for the individual. Experience, however, is rooted in and begins for an individual in one's physical environment and the sensations it evokes. As Dewey writes, "Organic and psycho-physical activities with their qualities are conditions which have come into existence before mind, the presence and operation of meanings, ideas, is possible. They supply mind with its footing and connection in nature; they provide meanings with their existential stuff." [EN, 220]

At the heart of Tolstoy's and Dewey's shared goals for the ethical improvement of society was a concern for education. This was also intrinsically tied to their understanding of how people think. Here would have to be the battleground for any improvement of the

¹⁶John Dewey: *The Later Works*, Vol. 1, *Experience and Nature*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston, preface by Sidney Hook, (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), 221. Hereafter cited within the text as *EN*.

relation between the individual and society.¹⁷ Dewey's goal in educational reform, which he hoped would eventually make a decisive impact on contemporary society, was to be implemented through an exponential freeing up of education by basing it in experience.¹⁸ As Dewey understands it, the problem with the traditional model of education is that the values of a particular culture are "poured" without medication into pupils with little regard to current life. Whereas previously society has educated its young with the information that it has deemed important, this information often neglected to address the experience of everyday life. In Dewey's view, such a static structure of transmission, uncritically passed and passively received from generation to generation, should be exchanged for a dynamic model of learning, an education that has direct reference to the lives of those being educated.

Consequently, according to his views, the most effective educational approach would be one based on an understanding that "...a person, young or old, gets out of his present experience all that there is in it for him at the time in which he has it..." because "...we always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future."¹⁹ Because pedagogy in traditional schools has

¹⁷Tolstoy wrote *War and Peace* after abandoning his pioneering effort at educational reform in his school for peasant children at Yasnaya Polyana. Perhaps Tolstoy's frustrations (and achievements) as a radical educator led him to arrive at similar notions of how experience affects intellectual processes. See *Tolstoy on Education*, trans. Leo Wiener, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). A later translation of Tolstoy's publications based on his school (the journal which he edited in the early 1860's was entitled *Yasnaya Polyana*) was done by Alan Pinch, *Tolstoy on Education*, (London: Athlone Press, 1982). Each volume contains significant material that is lacking in the other. In *Studies in the History of Educational Theory: The Minds and the Masses, 1760-1980* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 305, G.H. Bantock has an interesting discussion of Tolstoy's educational theory of "moral non-interference", in which schools transmit knowledge but do not meddle with the value systems of students. He recognizes the dilemma this poses for Tolstoy as an educator: "...Tolstoy's idealisation of the masses is [not] without interest-- especially in view of the fact that it is to be found side by side in the body of his work with a much more realistic view of their shortcomings. Levin excoriating the blind ignorance and recalcitrance of the peasants must be considered alongside the Levin who gratefully allows himself to be enmeshed in the unselfconscious rhythms of domestic and Russian life. To come to an appreciation of the dynamics of a people's existence is only the essential first step towards the solution of its specifically educational problems; for education implies ameliorative imperatives which enforce some interference with 'natural' rhythms." PSS T8.

¹⁸In such works as *The School and the Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1899), *The Child and the Curriculum*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902), and *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, Text-Book Series in Education, ed. Paul Monroe (New York: Macmillan, 1916).

¹⁹P. 49. Other references from *Experience and Education* are cited from the 1963 Collier reprint of the 1938 Macmillan edition, New York. This volume is the published version of Dewey's Kappa Delta Pi Lecture delivered in Atlantic City at the 1 March 1938 meeting of the fraternity. Dewey was the first and tenth lecturer in the series. This work is hereafter referred in body of the text as *EE*.

sacrificed the present to remote goals which lay in the undefined future, Dewey asserts that "the educator has little responsibility for the kind of present experiences the young undergo." [EE, 49]

Dewey asks that the classroom not be divorced from life, that life be invited into the class and that, conversely, life be infused with the knowledge that rational and empirical examination can bring. Life itself, according to Dewey, is an educational process that is neither learned in a textbook nor through rote lessons. He has a consistent theory for the various manifestations of life as they are analyzed in the different sciences of cognitive theory, logic, and anthropology. He theorizes about how these findings ought rationally to be applied to effect what he calls a "reconstruction" in education, politics, religion, and the various institutional structures of everyday life.²⁰

My observation is that Dewey's educational and philosophical theories (his views of cognitive theory and logic) are a type of systematized prosaics. Dewey is working with the same phenomena in the humanistic sciences that Tolstoy used to explain human behavior, for he too sought to explain human thought and activity by prosaic, not heroic efforts-- by "the countless, small daily actions, hidden in plain view, whose motives and cumulative operation we do not understand." [Hidden, 126]²¹ But he was not content to describe these operations. He attempted to understand them and render them in rationally comprehensible language. Like prosaics, it is impossible for instrumentalism, as Dewey conceives it, to be subverted by any ideological viewpoint, or "semiotic totalitarianism" as Morson calls it. And while Dewey would agree with the deconstructionist that the world is filled with facts that do not necessary cohere in any meaningful fashion, by his own definition he is a "reconstructionist", for unlike the deconstructionist he sees that the human mind is an agent that cleans up messes. He understands that when messes are cleaned up, new conditions, new messes with their own attendant educative processes (i.e., those which attend their being cleaned up) will present themselves. The facts which are available to human beings are always in a state of flux, and so must be education. As long as human beings desire things, as long as they try to avoid pain, as long as they strive to be happy, they will be faced with problems that will force them to shape into a perceptual conception the facts of the environment in which they live into some sort of order, so that they may effect the acquisition of their desire, or their escape from pain, or their achievement of happiness, however loosely this may be defined.

²⁰Indeed Dewey wrote *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1920), for a wide general audience as a broad overview of his psychological and educational theories and their possible applications to existing social institutions.

²¹If prosaics is a harmonious blending of practice and theory, then Dewey leaned toward the theory end, while Tolstoy leaned toward practice. Or rather Dewey leaned toward analysis, while Tolstoy leaned toward description.

INSTRUMENTAL LOGIC AND THE REPUDIATION OF DUALISM

In one of Dewey's earliest works he states the guiding principle of his intellectual work in the fields of philosophy, education, and psychology as it was to unfold over a period of sixty years: "The duty of the present is the socializing of intelligence-- the realizing of its bearing upon social practice."²² Dewey seeks earnestly to employ this principle in every aspect of human endeavor, in the way we think and behave, in our government and schools, in all areas of human endeavor. This statement calls for nothing less than the rational analysis and program for the improvement of all aspects of human activity. Dewey insists on a precise description of the interaction between mind and experience. Once this is clearly understood, human beings would at last have in hand the possibility of rationally setting about to reform the ills that have perpetually beset them through the application of a "scientifically" deduced prescription for the "reconstruction" of human life. Dewey's work seems to envisage the possibility of a kind of secular kingdom of God on earth, which he is convinced it is possible to formulate and, in fact, ought to be the highest conscious and common task of humanity.

Dewey's "prescription" is devoid of ideological content. His verities are not ratified by any eschatological underpinnings, neither a Day of Judgment, nor the dictatorship of the Proletariat. Neither do Pure Reason nor the Hegelian Triad provide any absolute or ineluctable truths for him. Rather, Dewey merely offers the simplest and most powerful tool at hand: how we think.²³ He insists that if people could disengage themselves from the mystifications, creeds or dogmas which have blinded them to the full potential of the present moment in its unfolding and infinite possibilities, they would gain the means of building a heaven on earth. And even if this project were beyond their grasp, there could be no better way for them to employ their best efforts: for through this means alone--rationally striving to attain happiness for oneself and for other people-- is life made better in the present moment, and the present is the only place that this happiness can be secured.

In his late twenties Dewey began to shed his earlier idealism and to formulate the basic premises which led to instrumentalism. He asserted that intelligence has a practical task when a human being is faced with conflicting ends. Here, reflection (judgement) must be used, because impulse and habit are incapable of mediating this conflict. The individual uses ideas as "working hypotheses or plans" for solving problems. Ideas are tested by their success or failure in application to problems and the individual is then able to assess their "ability to work, to organize facts".²⁴ As one of Dewey's critics wrote, "Logic becomes

²²*Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics*, 1891, 127 (Ann Arbor: Register Publishing Co., Inland Press (Early Works of Dewey, 1882-1898, Jo Ann Boydston, Carbondale and Edwardsville: IL, 1969, 3:320) Dewey used *Outlines* as a text in his philosophy course (Early Works of Dewey, 3:237-388).

²³*How We Think*, revised ed. (New York: Heath, 1933).

²⁴"The Logic of Verification," *Open Court* 4(1890): 2227 (Early Works of Dewey, 3:88).

the study of the thought processes involved in learning through problem solving; since such processes are displayed at their best in the scientific enterprise, logic for Dewey becomes the study of the mental activities involved in acquiring scientific knowledge."²⁵

In this type of logic morality is not referred to as a "transcendent Self or Personality", but is realized in "the performance by a person of his specific function, this function consisting in an activity which realizes wants and powers with reference to their peculiar surroundings."²⁶ At the turn of the century, Dewey confronts a traditional transcendental logic which asserts "that our logical processes are simply the reading off or coming to consciousness of the inherently rational structure already possessed in the universe in virtue of the presence within it of this pervasive and constitutive action of thought."²⁷ This logic "has no place for the kind of practical doubt and inquiry that characterize science." Rather, Dewey insists, a logic was needed which would, like science, employ the "doubt-inquiry process," where "all the distinctions and terms of thought-- judgment, concept, inference, subject, predicate and copula of judgment, etc. ad infinitum-- shall be interpreted simply and entirely as distinctive functions or divisions of labor within the doubt-inquiry process."²⁸

In 1903 the Departments of Philosophy (which included Psychology and Pedagogy) of the University of Chicago, where Dewey served as chair, published *Studies in Logical Theory*, which was comprised of various contributions from faculty members. Dewey contributed four essays under the title "Thought and its Subject-Matter". These articles were his first extended discussion of what he had named "instrumental logic."²⁹ Dewey defines "instrumental logic" as a means of problem solving for a given situation. Unlike logic based in the tradition of idealistic philosophy, it refers to concrete situations in the present environment and dismisses any attempt to establish a correspondence with absolute values. Such logic would forsake in advance any claims about knowledge based upon an understanding of a prior reality. In contrast to idealistic philosophy there could be no

²⁵I am indebted to George Dykhuizen's lucid analysis of the original kernel of Dewey's mature thought as described in his excellent *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 1973), 69-70. Other nascent formulations of instrumentalism by Dewey are found in "Is Logic a Dualistic Science?" *Open Court* 3 (1890): 2040-43; "The Logic of Verification," *Open Court* 4 (1890): 2225-28; and "The Present Position of Logical Theory," *Monist*, II October 1891, 1-17. (also in *Early Works of Dewey*, 3:75-82, 83-89, and 125-41).

²⁶*Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics*, (Ann Arbor: Register Publishing Co., Inland Press, 1891), 101-2 (*Early Works of Dewey*, 3:304).

²⁷"Some Stages of Logical Thought," *Philosophical Review* 9 (1900): 465-89, 487.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 489.

²⁹"Thought and its Subject-Matter," *Studies in Logical Theory*, University of Chicago Decennial Publications, 2nd series, vol 11, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903), 8.

correspondence between reality and absolutes which have prior existence. Rather, as Dewey claims, truth is dependent upon "its functional or instrumental use in effecting the transition from a relatively conflicting experience to a relatively integrated one."³⁰

But Dewey does not confine his understanding of instrumentalism to logic alone. Through his association with F.J.E. Woodbridge, a colleague at Columbia, he began to comprehend an empirical metaphysics, one which "takes things as they are, in all their obvious plurality, and never supposes that they can be reduced to ultimates from which they sprang by miracle or evolution."³¹ Dewey maintains that each person, in any given moment, experiences the world unrepeatably. The world constantly presents to and demands from every individual fresh truth and it is the duty of each person to discover and reveal his or her own particular truth in it. Persons cannot abnegate that responsibility to tradition or system-- for this is the very truth to which they are present-- other truths are secondhand and therefore invalid for him or her. A corollary to this fact is that the individual is not separable from the environment but is integrally shaped by (and shapes) it.

One casualty of instrumental logic is dualism. Like Tolstoy, Dewey roots his analysis of mental processes in concrete physical and social environments. In the presence of instrumentalism, the Cartesian opposition between mind and body is dismissed as being incapable of adequately accounting for biological and social influences on mental states. Moreover, Dewey felt that the mind/body distinction, grounded in a belief in the Absolute, i.e., that there is a power or force or mind of which present actions and thoughts are but a shadow or an imperfect correspondence, was unable to accommodate the richness of experience.

In terms of instrumental logic, the rift between mind and body is untenable. Rather, in instrumentalism the human being is seen as a function of the environment in which it is an agent. As Sidney Hook states, Dewey insists on a continuity between "nature, body, society, and mind." In doing this he renders implausible the "dualism between the physical and the psychical without reading the properties of mind into nature, as do the mentalists and panpsychists, and without denying the existence of consciousness, as do extreme materialists and behaviorists." Moreover, he sees the human being as a unity which consists not in "the sum of separate ultimate elements, whether these be sensations or reflexes, ideas or glandular secretions, but an observable series of co-operative functions, a working together of interacting processes that constitute a personality."³²

Similarly, we see Tolstoy's characters as rooted in experience, physical and social.

³⁰Ibid., 75, quoted in Dykhuizen, 84.

³¹Frederick J.E. Woodbridge, "Confessions," in *Contemporary American Philosophy*, ed. George P. Adams and William P. Montague, vol. 2, (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 435.

³²Sidney Hook, *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971 rpt.), 111.

Despite their efforts to follow plans or impose meanings on the universe that are not inherent, whether or not they live according to a belief in mind or transcendence which would apply to the world around them, they experience frequent ruptures in the patterns of experience which they expect, and in making continuing adjustments to an ever newly perceived reality, are continually receiving an education. To a large extent this is why Tolstoy's great novel *War and Peace* has so many loose ends. Characters are continually readjusting their thoughts and behavior as they meet new situations, or find themselves in new environments which would force them to revoke their previously held assumptions and beliefs. This stands in stark contrast to a novel by Dostoevsky where an idea embodied in a character struggles against or finds consonance with other characters/ideas without specific reference to environmental conditions. It seems that for Dostoevsky physical states are signs of the inward conditions of characters. They do not impinge upon nor shape the intellectual content of characters as is the case with Tolstoy. With Dostoevsky the plot seems to be playing out the polyphony of the ideological perspectives of the various characters.

In *War and Peace* the characters follow desires, wishes, careers, loves, and hopes in a vast tangle of conflicting efforts, the effects of which constantly alter the social environment in which the characters move. Yet Tolstoy is careful to take note that the physical environment has a initial effect on characters (their ages, the seasons, thirst and hunger), as much as a social plane of environment (self-esteem, duty, the acclaim of others, love, and envy) has its own secondary yet crucial impact.

EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY

Dewey's new approach in education takes into consideration the child's nature. He understands this nature to be "constantly and spontaneously shaping and being shaped by the changing environment-- biological, gross physical, social-cultural, and individual." [*School*, vi-vii.] Curriculum that is handed down without reference to the needs and potentials of the students "is always likely to answer only to a bygone time and be partially and significantly irrelevant." [*School*, vi-vii.] In keeping with his understanding of a human being as a unity, which is set in and shaped by environmental conditions, he asks how students can be made to feel that their education involves them in an understanding of their community. School life should be integrated with the everyday life of the child in the home and the community. [*School*, 59]³³

³³One gets an unsettling feeling, despite Dewey's optimism, of the infinite complexity of the task he sets for human beings in educating their young: i.e., basing education on experience. Developing a rational system of application for such an educational system, it would seem, is a logical goal for humanity, and if the claims of instrumental logic are correct, it would seem proper and necessary to take steps to assemble education based on these principles: however it will be as difficult as, if not as impossible as, pushing a cart with a string. And that is why Dewey was always long on method and short on content, whereas, with the

Dewey's philosophy found corroboration and inspiration from the University Laboratory School which he founded on the University of Chicago campus in 1896. In February he delivered a series of lectures to the parents of that school with his observations and conclusions about the experimental school. The program initially accommodated students from six to nine years of age and grew from 15 to 95 students in the first three years of operation. Dewey used the Laboratory school as a means of trying to develop a curriculum and a method of instruction which would coincide with a new understanding of children's nature as essentially "dynamic, purposive or growth oriented," and "pluri-potential" rather than fixed by genetic heritage.³⁴

Dewey was trying to base his educational system on a modern understanding of the way in which the mind works. Many striking parallels exist between Dewey's new philosophy and the psychology with which Tolstoy endows his characters. Dewey was attempting to harness an understanding of the mind based in instrumental logic, or the "doubt-inquiry" method, in order to bring a new method of education into being. By examining Dewey's application of pragmatic philosophy in the field of education, we can see a definite correspondence between pragmatism and what has been identified in Tolstoy as prosaics, because here we can see instrumentalism in practice-- on something of the same level of engagement with reality that we see in the thinking processes of the characters of *War and Peace*. The difference is that Dewey, having mapped out pragmatism, immediately tries to apply it to a reconstruction of the institutions of society, while Tolstoy, or at any rate, the late Tolstoy, sensing the futility of cooperation with the corrupt system of Tsarist Russia, is ineluctably led to anarchism (the good man does good where he sees it to be done, regardless of "law"); if one tries to work within the system one will be compromised by the system and the good intended will be nullified. Acting for the good, anarchically, without reference to the existence of state structures, one (1) renders the law of the system under which we live void by direct appeal to action based on conscience, and (2) one further undermines the "law" of the government by setting a "subversive" example for others. If enough individuals acted solely according to conscience, the evils that have been promulgated and perpetuated through state institutions would soon vanish, along with all such institutions.

For Dewey education was the institutional instrument of mutual change between the

traditional educational schemes he repudiated it was the other way around. He really was asking that people be trained to adapt a prosaic, or pragmatic approach to any and all manner of content the world may chance to throw at them. His work seems to be a proselytizing effort to persuade society to implement institutionalized and systematized means of training people to think this using the instrumentalist approach.

³⁴Joe Burnett in his preface to Dewey's *The School and Society*, ed. by Jo Ann Boydston, (Southern Illinois University Press: Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL, 1976), vi. Hereafter referred to as *School*. For a brief history of the school and background into Dewey's resignation from the University of Chicago, based on his conflict with President William Rainey Parker of the University of Chicago over the management of the school see Robert L. McCaul's treatment, in *John Dewey: Master Educator*, ed. William W. Brickman, (New York: Society for the Advancement of Education, 1961), 31-74.

individual and society. Tolstoy saw meaningful education under the institutions authorized by the Tsarist government as practically impossible, and morally reprehensible. The only way he felt he could effectively promote education in Russia was through the direct dissemination of his ideas. Dewey had faith that a mutual participatory interactive development could be effected between individual and society through the democratic and civic institutions of the United States. In contrast Tolstoy was convinced that any efforts toward reform would be rendered impotent because they would be compromised simply by participating with the government, which constituted the promotion of institutional evil through the abnegation of rule of the individual conscience.

Moreover, Tolstoy's conception of arts and science was channeled into such a narrow ethical scope that much of human experience was simply disregarded as irrelevant or immoral. Recognizing as useful and good only those arts and sciences which would promote self-renunciation, he espoused a type of "totalitarian samaritanism" in his approach to the acquisition of knowledge. As Morson points out, in later life Tolstoy rejected "prosaics" as the kind of ethical approach that he had preached in his personal life and his art at the time he wrote *War and Peace*. Cleaning up the messes of everyday life are no longer enough for him. The later Tolstoy had a need to show everybody else how to clean up theirs. To the extent that he did this, he himself propounded an adherence to "second-hand truth" that he had so vehemently repudiated in his earlier career.³⁵

Both Tolstoy and Dewey set human happiness as the measure of what subject-matter one should study and utilize for human needs. Here it is interesting to point out a major difference between Tolstoy and Dewey. For Dewey, the experimental method is a means of rational analysis and problem solving that can be applied to all phenomena. But Dewey called Tolstoy a "rational mystic" because, in effect, he basically dismissed the usefulness of the empirical sciences (for all but the most obviously utilitarian purposes) for human happiness (the Doctrine of the Scribes). Dewey felt that all empirical evidence that the world would unceasingly yield to the investigator of the human and natural sciences could conceivably be appropriated to useful and necessary human goals.

While Tolstoy felt that there were some limited conditions where scientific research could be useful and moral, Dewey's wider tolerance for the sciences underscored his confidence that scientific knowledge might yield many beneficent and ameliorative applications to democratic society. Tolstoy, however, could not see the usefulness of scientific investigations that did not lift the masses from their misery. Tolstoy felt that for any application of science to be useful and ethical, it must have within it the means of impelling the rich, through moral persuasion, to forego their luxuries and learn to work to maintain themselves, thereby freeing the laboring classes from their excessive burdens. Dewey felt that the labor saving devices gained through science would increase

³⁵Confessions, p.15, in "A Confession," "The Gospel in Brief," and "What I Believe," trans. Aylmer Maude, London, 1940, quoted in *Hidden*, 128. Illustrative of Tolstoy's earlier approach is a quotation cited by Morson from Tolstoy's *Confession*, "I wrote: teaching what was for me the only truth, namely, that one should live so as to have the best for oneself and one's family."

democratization within American society, although he was well aware that American democracy could easily be malformed by the burgeoning impersonal powers of business, government, and the media. As is evident from his active participation in the American political and social scene throughout the entire first five decades of the twentieth century, Dewey was keenly aware that it was increasingly easy for an American citizen to lose his or her vital sense of participation in American democracy (certainly far beyond the citizen who participated in the town hall meetings of his boyhood New Hampshire, which no doubt served as his native model for representative government). Unlike Tolstoy, he had faith that scientific investigation (as well as artistic endeavor), which did not produce immediate useful results for humanity, still should be undertaken as potentially beneficial. For him, every sphere of human activity was part of the development of individual human beings and added to the knowledge and betterment of humanity.

The mind/body connection is stressed in every aspect of Dewey's idea of educational reform. At the laboratory school a half-hour daily for physical education (P.E. was not normally a part of the curriculum at the turn of the century) taught "moral and intellectual control through the medium of the body." Hand-work of a wide variety taught the child to gain knowledge "through his bodily activities, until he learns to work systematically with the intellect." (61) This, of course coincided with Tolstoy's understanding of how the mind is dependent on the body. Skills such as cooking, carpentry, sewing and weaving, which have always provided food and shelter in everyday life, and which the children will use when they are at home and in the community, enable them to understand chemistry, geometry and geography. History can be taught by explaining "the origin and growth of various inventions, and their effects upon social life and political organization." (62) Again, one can see a correspondence here with the later Tolstoy's idea of feeding, clothing, and sheltering oneself in order not to overburden the working classes. Of course, such a practical understanding of how to integrate mind and body, the knowledge of how to take care of oneself and develop oneself mentally and physically, has an intrinsic connection with what Dewey also saw as an inherently harmoniously socio-economic system that was rooted in his New England heritage where, ideally at least, the individual is a self-sufficient economic unit in cooperation with other like-minded individuals, who by "pulling their own weight" cannot impose unfair economic burdens on others-- as for example in the slave-holding ante-bellum South, or in Tsarist Russia.

In *War and Peace* the major characters learn the truth for themselves in the context of their own material, cultural, and historical conditions. This "education" takes place spontaneously, without rational plan. But education in *War and Peace* can be observed, measured, and rationally explained. I believe that a process very similar to what Morson identifies as prosaics in *War and Peace*, is what Dewey sees as the defining operating factor in human thought everywhere-- instrumental logic. Dewey thought that although instrumental logic takes place randomly, arbitrarily, and everywhere where people think-- it still ought to be logically analyzed and systematically applied in the education of all human beings; since it can be observed, measured, and rationally explained, it ought, to

a certain extent, to be controlled.

The creative potentials that Tolstoy traces in characters such as Andrei, Pierre, Natasha, and Nicholas, parallel this type of "collateral" education (as Dewey calls it). There is also bad educative experience. The Kuragin and the Drubetskoy clans participate in this type of *mis*-education. They learn things, but their knowledge seldom leads to a wholesome participation or interaction with the society. Moreover, there is less interior consciousness to report in them, not only because they are selfish, but because there is less to report. They are more creatures either of pure habit or of pure impulse, less liable to exercise judgment in any given moment when confronted with the multitude of facts in any given environment, or at least, if they are creatures of judgment, their judgment is used to advance their own selfish interests, their animal personality, and not the common good of society.³⁶ In Dewey's terms, these mis-educated families fail to engage in the common task of society, seeking in Tolstoyan terms, only to gratify their individual animal needs. Their penalty is, in the fullest sense, a genuine failure of education as human beings.

There is a remarkable affinity between terms identified by Gary Saul Morson to describe the unique properties of Tolstoy's prose, and Dewey's description of how people think and behave. In this paper I have sought to demonstrate the striking similarities between Dewey's pragmatism and Tolstoy's "prosaics". In a future paper I intend to show specifically how Tolstoy's novels can be read through an application of terms originally developed by Dewey to define instrumentalism. I will demonstrate how Dewey's conceptions of how habit, impulse, experience, judgment, and conduct interact in the educative process of human beings, and how these operations, as defined by Dewey, remarkably coincide with the states of mind, the behavior and development of the characters of Tolstoy's novels, in particular *War and Peace*.

³⁶For example, Boris Drubetskoy, who has exquisite judgment concerning his own advancement in society.

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