Values as consequences of transaction: commentary on 'Reconciling *homo economicus* and John Dewey's ethics'

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Abstract Mark White hopes to incorporate John Dewey's appeal to deliberation in preference formation into the neoclassical model of choice. White finds affinities between Dewey and neoclassicism: both reject preordained goals, value consequences above motives, and promote 'scientific ethics.' I claim Dewey's actual theory of value and choice is more radically divergent, and may not simply be integrated with neoclassical model. Specifically, I claim: 1) White's interactional view of agents acting in an environment falls short of Dewey's transactional notion of their reciprocal determination within problem-solving activity; 2) beyond both preference and deliberation, the consequence of valuation activity is the final determinant of a good; 3) Dewey did not advocate relinquishing ethics to the natural and social sciences, but rather viewed moral behavior as the cultivation of a unique 'art.'

Keywords: neoclassical model of choice, problem-solving activity, interaction vs. transaction, consequences of deliberation, value as valuation activity, fact–value dichotomy, ethics and science

1 INTRODUCTION

Ever since the eighteenth century, philosophers and social scientists have been forced to relinquish, in slow and painful steps, the comforting notion that human nature can be summarized by one or more 'essential properties.' To be human is to be more than the acquisitive creature of Hobbes, Hume's bundle of sensations and sympathies, Kant's duty-bound practical reasoner, the agency of will of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, or Mill's utility calculator. It overflows the twentieth-century containments of emotivism, prescriptivism, and descriptivism.

Though it shies away from philosophical disputes about essence, mainstream neoclassical economics preserves a theory of value derived from the hedonistic psychology of Bentham and the early utilitarians. Its conquering hero, *homo economicus*, remains isolated and unaltered in its relentless quest for suitable means to pre-determined ends. Despite an
alluring simplicity that avoids worries about preference formation and is readily quantifiable, the shortcomings of Homo economicus are now acknowledged even by those who remain loyal to the neoclassical framework. Some have replaced the ideal of pure or substantive rationality with a conception of rational behavior 'bounded,' in Herbert Simon's phrase, by the psychology of deliberation (Simon 1979: 130). Others more radically admit Hayek's 'tacit knowledge' in the organization of information (Hayek 1982), or Veblen's system of malleable dispositions which remold the individual in dynamic activity (Veblen 1898: 390).

Though neglected for more than 60 years, John Dewey's behavioral account of valuation is even more expansive than the theories of Hayek and Veblen, and in fact combines the strengths of both. In 'Reconciling Homo economicus and John Dewey's ethics,' Mark D. White hopes to incorporate Dewey's insights 'into the neoclassical model of choice, rendering it a much-enriched ethical framework' (p. 226) White admits that 'difficult issues' remain between Dewey and neoclassicism about the nature of rationality and the self, but he believes this is ameliorated by the fact that both reject preordained goals, value consequences above motives, and promote the extension of scientific methods to morals.

White's thought-provoking thesis admirably opens a dialogue between apparently hostile camps. Ultimately, however, the reconciliation of Homo economicus with Dewey's ethics seems less than convincing. That White is persuaded otherwise may be due to an interpretation of Dewey still tinged with the presuppositions of traditional empiricism. Specifically, I'll argue for the following:

1) White retains a conception of self and world that is essentially interactional—agents as active participants in a given environment; Dewey's evolved view, to the contrary, is transactional—agents and environments are first and foremost discriminated phases of problem-solving activity.

2) The overly robust sense of agency retained by White misleads him to suppose that the mere product of deliberation is a genuine value. For Dewey, however, this is merely an 'end-in-view' or 'preference.' Genuine value is a process of valuation where something desired proves its desirability by being tested in the encountered world. The interdependence of factual preference and normative deliberation, in turn, offers a far more satisfying solution to the 'is-ought' dilemma than White's assertion that Dewey simply avoids 'oughts.'

3) White's view of Dewey's 'scientific ethics' is seriously askew if, with Jennifer Welchman, he supposes it is the business of moral philosophers to ascertain moral rules 'worth serious scientific consideration' to be subsequently turned over to natural and social scientists. Dewey, instead, advocated theoretical inquiry into
methods of promoting growth rather than scrutiny of specific rules, and viewed moral behavior as the cultivation of a unique 'art' not merely to be appropriated by natural and social scientists.

Dewey's philosophy far surpasses homo economicus by accounting for the integral role of deliberation and consequences in determinations of value. Instead of incorporating Dewey's insights into the neoclassical model of choice, it would be more illuminating to show how Homo economicus might be situated within Dewey's encompassing theory of transaction.

2 DEWEY'S CHALLENGE TO TRADITIONAL EMPIRICISM

Based on both the science and common sense of its day, modern empiricism arose from three basic presuppositions: 1) conclusions about the world or reality are grounded in the testimony of experience, of what we actually see, feel, hear, smell, and touch, rather than on imagination, wishful thinking, or abstract concepts; 2) mind conforms to its object: i.e. a mind or brain does not experience a physical object directly, but indirectly via sense-data – the manifestation of the object in the mind; 3) reason is inert – it can calculate the comparative strength of conflicting desires and suggest options for their fulfillment, but reason plays no constitutive role in the creation of value. While 1) promoted the worthy goal of grounding ideas in evidence, thus doing away with idle cosmological and theologico speculate, the other presuppositions generated intractable problems. Respectively, 2) if all knowledge is indirect, via sense-data, then nothing can be known about the way an object is in-itself; in Hume's striking analogy, the mind is forever confined to a parade of images in its private 'theater.' And 3) if reason is restricted to the analysis of facts, it is useless to the ascertainment of values; in other words, no 'ought' is derivable from the statement of what 'is.'

Where most philosophers were busy choosing up sides between the subjective and the objective, Dewey's novel response was to challenge the consistency of the premises of empiricism. He pointed out that 2) and 3) are inconsistent with 1). For example, since 2) there is no possible experience of the 'thing-in-itself,' it has no place in empirical accounts of reality; and since 3) facts (objects, tools, and data) are obviously intelligently guided means to the acquisition of value, experience also undermines the purported dualism of fact and value. Like William James before him, Dewey aspired to a genuinely radical empiricism that does not restrict the 'lived' experience of things, events, and relations to the intellectual straightjackets of 'mind' versus 'matter,' 'self' versus 'world,' or 'value' versus 'fact.'

Unlike things-in-themselves and free floating values, a ubiquitous cycle of problem-solving activity is integral to the possibility of human
experience. Dewey embraced the Darwinian thesis that perception and
cognition are evolved instruments of survival that, with the development
of social contexts, permit the possibility of genuine flourishing as well.
'Self' and 'object,' 'organism' and 'environment,' are not pre-given isolable
realities, but first and foremost phases of problem-solving activity: I experience
myself as myself when something goes wrong and I must do something
about it—in Dewey's words, a self is 'an agent of novel reconstruction of
a pre-existing order' (Dewey 1981, vol. 1: 162). Only secondarily, and
when a different kind of problem demands a biography, interpersonal
relationship, or locus of responsibility, do I have reason to think of myself
as a discrete individual. Similarly, an object is primarily an attained
efforts alone we progressively learn about our world: the mere 'stick' of
the child becomes the child's 'pencil,' which a trained scientist recognizes
as 'carbon' with a determinate molecular structure. No single disclosure
is the 'real' object—each is simply one of a potentially unlimited number
of 'reals' suitable to different needs and contexts of use.

Even though this 'organic unity' of self and object, organism and
environment, permeates Dewey's entire corpus, at length he articulates
his divergence from traditional views by differentiating transaction from
self-action and interaction.5

Self-action views things as 'acting under their own powers' (1981, vol.
16: 101). Aristotle's unmoved movers, Spinoza's conatus, and Bergson's
élan vital all explain behavior in terms of internal powers or forces. In
classical economics, the detached rationality and a priori goals of homo
economicus are mainly self-actional.

Interaction is 'thing is balanced against thing in causal interaction'
(Ibid.). Though Newtonian mechanics is the paradigm example, in fact
this holds for any interface of two given entities. Thus the notion of a
'dynamic self' who strives for 'personal goals' by acting in a world is
interactional, and where the boundary between interaction and self-action
is blurred the sense of agency is robust. For the most part, mainstream
economics remains yoked to interactional accounts of behavior, expressed
in 'market forces' and the notion of rationality 'bounded' by contexts.

Transaction, as we might expect from our overview of Dewey's philosophy,
is 'the right to see together' what other methodologies see as 'separates'
(Ibid.: 101–2). A transactional perspective rejects the traditional empiricist's
presumption of 1) humans, 2) things, and 3) an interpretative activity
whereby the former come to know the latter (Ibid.: 9). Instead, as we have
seen, problem-solving situations are fundamental, and knowers and
known not merely 'interact' but reciprocally constitute each other.41
From the standpoint of an economic theory of value, this would mean
that the satisfactory resolution of an entire problematic situation, including
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all parties affected, and not the mere satisficing of a desire or the attainment of a personal goal.\textsuperscript{5}

No adequate articulation, let alone a defense, of Dewey’s transactional philosophy is possible here. My aim, instead, is to offer enough background to support the claim that White’s approach is too interactional to fully express Dewey’s views on morality and value. He states, for example, that ‘Dewey held to a biological conception of man and his interaction with the environment’ (p. 230). And even though he speaks promisingly of the individual ‘embedded in’ and even ‘defined by’ ‘social interactions,’ he cashes this out in the boldly interactional notion that ‘Dewey’s agent must be cognizant not only of the effects of society on her, but also the effects of her actions on society’ (p. 237)\textsuperscript{6} As we shall see, this interactional framework also cultivates a sense of personal agency that borders on egoism, for ‘as active participants in their environment,’ White would have agents focus on ‘growth and self-development’ assisted by moral philosophers who ‘advise people on how best to achieve their own moral goals’ (p. 227).

I cannot imagine Dewey tendering such advice. In the first place, Dewey held that morality was an art, or a practice, and not a goal: ‘to make self-realization a conscious aim might and probably would prevent full attention to those very relationships which bring about the wider development of self.’\textsuperscript{7} But secondly, and more significantly, for Dewey agency is a means of bring a satisfactory conclusion to a problematic situation. My interests, obviously, are part of such situations, but 1) they are never the whole or exclusive end of the situation, and 2) they themselves are very likely to become altered or modified in the process of testing an end in view. The ‘art’ of morality, as we shall see, is the ability to achieve a satisfactory balance between desires, duties, and the expectations of others.

3 IMPULSE, PREFERENCE, AND VALUE

_Homo economicus_ measures value at the level of personal impulses, desires and preferences. White, quite justifiably, points out that these are not tantamount to moral choices.\textsuperscript{8} Following Dewey, he notes that a conflict of impulses requires deliberation that may ultimately achieve a new ‘unified preference.’ He further suggests that deliberation ‘may resolve’ incommensurate preferences, and that each resulting decision is an ‘end’ the agent must be willing to submit to reflection and revise if necessary.

What White does not sufficiently elucidate, however, is the crucial role consequences play in the ascertainment of value.\textsuperscript{9} In fact, Dewey’s theory of value involves the subtle interplay of habits, impulses, preferences, and consequences best expressed as the dispositional activity of valuation.

A brief sketch of Dewey’s notion of valuation will have to suffice. Successful organism–environment engagements establish dispositions to
act in determinate ways Dewey calls habits. Habits are 'working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces' that are both physical and social. Contrary to empiricism's view that habits are merely passive or reactive, Dewey finds them dynamic and projective as well. Habits are animated by impulses, which by themselves are but a 'hopelessly tangled' web of attractions and aversions (Dewey 1976, vol. 14: 16, 31).

More specifically, the animation of habit by impulse is the genesis of desire for a resolution and interest in possible ways of bringing this about. When habit is regressive, interest extends only to identifying means that have worked in the past or are sanctioned by tradition or custom. Constructive habit, on the other hand, engenders genuine thought, where means and ends are held in 'imaginative suspension' (Ibid.: 118). In this hypothetical interplay, Dewey tells us, desired ends are not merely prized, but appraised (1981, vol. 13: 216–8).

While wisely points out that Dewey departs from the neoclassical notion of pre-cast desires and ends on just this point. Deliberation directed toward 'appraisal' is a crucial step in valuation activity. Dewey does not deny that desired ends are prized, but for him this marks only an initial phase of inquiry. The desired end is not yet a genuine value, but a value candidate subject to modification in the hypothetical interplay of means and ends (1981, vol. 4: 208). But the crucial addendum to White's account is this: valuation activity cannot be regarded as complete until a hypothesis is actually tested in the encountered world. As succinctly summarized by Edwin A. Burtt, Dewey's philosophy is not just about the application of moral intelligence to the selection of consequences, but about 'responsibility for those consequences' (Burtt 1960: 406).

Approached from a transactional perspective, we find a reciprocal relationship between preferences and consequences: preferences set up means to desired consequences, of course, but consequences also affect the determination of preferences. A successfully achieved end embeds the content of the hypothesis within the noncognitive dispositional structure of habit, enlarging and enriching it in the process. As such, consequences inform habits, which in conjunction with new impulses modify what is to count as a desire or preference. An unsuccessful hypothesis must be refined or rejected, but here too a new 'dramatic rehearsal' signals a new configuration of desires, envisioned ends, and the means to their fulfillment. A genuine value, therefore, is not merely desired, but something that has proven itself desirable; or again, not merely prized but apprized.

4 FACT AND VALUE

Dewey's account of valuation behavior opens up a more satisfactory solution to the fact–value (or 'is–ought') dichotomy than White's claim that 'Dewey wasn't attempting to formulate "ought" statements at all' (p. 227).
Of course Dewey wasn’t interested in prescribing a pat list of moral dos and don’ts. But he was trying to demonstrate the integral connection between factual preferences and normative acts of appraisal. Dewey agrees that a mere desire or prizing is simply a de facto quality that makes no claim and commands no response. But as we’ve seen, however, its very givenness is an impetus to the framing of a normative appraisal that, when successfully put to the test, provides evidence that the quality is an authentic value—not just desired, but desirable. In Dewey’s words, an immediate prizing subjected to intelligent deliberation and successful testing comes to possess a ‘de jure and not merely de facto quality’ (1981, vol. 4: 210). It is a former end-in-view now capable of defending its worth, not merely an ‘is’ but an ‘ought’.

And as surely as values depend upon facts, facts depend upon values. Transactionally speaking, the factual world is what it is for is because of previous deliberations—de jure evaluations that have been incorporated into the de facto prizings of everyday experience. These prizings, in turn, comprise the raw material or data new appraisals will use to formulate and test hypotheses in problem-solving activity. Like the subject–object relation, the philosophical problem of accounting for values in a factual world is resolved when we see these as divisions of labor in progressive circles of inquiry.\(^{11}\)

5 THE ‘MORAL END’

To his credit, White goes straight to the heart of Dewey’s moral touchstone—the ursprung of growth:

Not perfection as a final goal, but the ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining is the aim of living . . . . Growth itself is the only moral ‘end.’


In characterizing Dewey’s intrinsic good, White places ‘personal’ before ‘growth.’ But Dewey does not say ‘personal growth,’ and I suspect he would not be pleased with this gratuitous insertion. When asked why he wrote, e.g., of ‘perfecting,’ ‘maturing,’ and ‘growing’ without the ‘common sense’ acknowledgment of the agent who perfects, matures, or grows, Dewey’s standard reply is that he did not want to perpetuate the common error of a presupposed person who cultivates these virtues. As we have seen, discrete ‘personhood’ is first and foremost a phase of problem-solving activity, and only secondarily denotes an enduring and active agent in the world.\(^{12}\)

For this reason the same caveat offered earlier about the self may now be extended to the moral self—the self engaged in a Lebenswerk of overcoming obstacles and embracing opportunities with increasing assurance and
effectiveness. The moral self is not, according to Dewey, constituted either by preferences or deliberations alone, but by actions that bring consequences to bear on one’s plans and expectations (1981, vol. 7: 188). Again, the encountered ‘bio-cultural’ world is constitutive of the moral self, just as the engagements of the moral self engage and reshape the world. Consequently, it is insufficient to say, with White, that agents should focus on growth, or that homo economicus could simply ‘adopt a goal of growth, and structure his preferences accordingly’ (p. 233). For:

1) ‘I pursue my goal of growth’

is conditioned by, and reciprocally engaged with:

2) ‘My goal of growth is determined by my pursuits.’

Thus while White is correct in pointing out that Dewey goes beyond homo economicus in requiring an account of preference formation, we must go further than deliberation alone: the moral self cannot truly grow without reflection upon the objective consequences of our pursuits. This, for Dewey, is the true significance of Kant’s moral philosophy. Once stripped of its excessive formalism, the genius of the categorical imperative is not that it places motives above consequences, but that it seeks impartial consequences – consequences where my welfare and the welfare of others are considered together in the optimal resolution of an entire problematic situation. So, says Dewey, when I consider my prospective act as universal law, the categorical imperative:

\[\text{does not say: ignore consequences and do your duty because moral law, through the voice of reason, commands it. It says: consider as widely as possible the consequences of acting in this way; imagine the results if you and others always acted upon [that which] you are tempted to make your end, and see whether you would then be willing to stand by it.}\]

(1981, vol. 7: 223)

Dewey’s moral end of growth is directly relevant here, for my recognized duty to accommodate the well-being of others with my well-being requires greater attention to imaginative deliberation than would be the case were I to pursue narrow self-interests. Hence rightful acts that arise from respect for duty ultimately

\[\text{lead the individual to broaden his conception of the Good; they operate to induce the individual to feel that nothing is good for himself which is not also a good to others. They are stimuli to a widening of the arena of consequences to be taken into account forming ends and deciding what is good.}\]

(Ibid.: 225)
6 SCIENCE AND ETHICS

Finally, here's a word about 'scientific ethics.' Dewey often sounds as though 'moral progress' will be impossible unless ethics is made 'scientific.' He says, for example, we should 'ally ethics with physics and biology,' (1976, vol. 14: 11) thus extending the 'experimental method' to 'the concerns of man in his characteristic social relations' (1981, vol. 4: 216). Such remarks have convinced some that Dewey regards moral philosophy as a 'clearing house' for pursuits more appropriate to the natural and social sciences. White, quoting Welchman (1993), claims the moral philosopher's proper role is 'to review critically the manifold moral rules that human beings have constructed to determine which are worth serious scientific consideration and testing,' which then would be conducted by natural and social scientists (p. 231).

I do not think this represents Dewey's view, for several reasons. First of all, Dewey, like Peirce before him, has scant regard for purely 'philosophical' or 'paper' problems. History is at great pains to inform us that social conflicts and upheavals, and not a clique of moral philosophers, expose rules or mores which may have become dangerous or obsolete, and thus candidates for revision. Second, Dewey's conception of 'the social' is decidedly of the grassroots variety. His notion of social intelligence was best suited to the New England town hall, and he decried 'officious meddling' that hobbled individual initiative (1981, vol. 7: 251).

He was especially irked by the bureaucratic 'social scientists' of his day, who relished the mere accumulation of facts with no intention of acting upon them (1981, vol. 13: 487–91).

Such criticisms, however, merely point to the need to clarify Dewey's conception of 'scientific method' in moral growth. Dewey did not view scientific method as something confined to the natural sciences. Of course, science is concerned with the refinement of specialized techniques, but the scientific method itself is the 'quality of an attitude' embodied in habitual will to employ certain methods of observation, reflection, and test rather than others (Ibid.: 165). This attitude, the embodiment of objectivity, impartiality, and the desideratum of verification, is a refinement of general human endeavors that first proliferated among the natural sciences because of the comparative straightforwardness of their subjectmatters. The human sciences are incredibly more complex, and only now are we beginning to imagine what this attitude of flexibility and experimentation could mean to the development of an authentic moral science. Clearly the natural sciences may assist in such development, but Dewey argues that morality possesses a unique qualitative characteristic that neither can nor should be reduced to 'hard' science. In the interplay of deliberation and consequences, we've learned that valuation is an art requiring an openness to possibilities and a facility for balacing ratiocination with horse sense. Any
society blindly bound to a single sumnum bonum, be it a ‘pleasure calculus,’ ‘dialectical materialism,’ or ‘scientism,’ is at risk to itself and others.

7 RECONSTRUCTION IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Dewey’s moral philosophy resists the convenient pigeon-holes of idealism vs. empiricism, deontology vs. consequentialism, absolutism vs. relativism. Human beings are complex, and most of us experience a variety of conflicting impulses and desires. Traditional views either minimize such conflicts or prefabricate lists of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ desires. Dewey, to the contrary, views such conflicts as stimuli to deliberation, and progressive proficiency in deliberation and the weighing of consequences is the chief good of moral growth.

And though I believe Dewey’s successors will find little profit determining which moral rules are sufficiently ‘scientific’ to turn over to specialists, we assuredly have a broad and invigorating frontier to explore. Unlike Kant, who radically distinguishes moral philosophy from a philosophy of nature, and unlike modern positivists who try to dispense with metaphysics altogether, Dewey does not disassociate ethics from ‘general’ philosophical questions about reality, knowledge, and the self: as we’ve indicated, though not defended here, a transactional approach offers an entrée to both metaphysical issues and the foundations of moral agency.

Dewey’s reconstruction of moral philosophy envisions a brokerage of three apparently incompatible traditions; 1) a utilitarian provision for personal preferences and socially constructed goods; 2) a Kantian recognition of duties to others in the amelioration of problematic situations; and 3) the directive of social approbation similar, perhaps, to Habermas’s discourse ethics.13 His aim is not to force them into a seamless unity, but to let emerging tensions and conflicts remind us that open discourse and arbitration, and not moral absolutes, have cash value in an unpredictable world. But Dewey was famous for declaring that the ‘problems of men’ are more important than the ‘problems of philosophers,’ and he indeed wanted to provide a theoretical justification for a program of energetic social progress. For:

reconstruction can be nothing less than the work of developing . . . the intellectual instrumentalities which will progressively direct inquiry into the deeply human—that is to say—moral facts of the present scene and situation.

(1976, vol. 12: 269)

8 CONCLUSION: DEWEY AND HOMO ECONOMICUS

Even this cursory look at Dewey’s views on value and ethics is sufficient, I hope, to show that he cannot be ‘incorporated’ within the neoclassical
model. I do not, however, share the view of Mousavi and Garrison, who hold that the teleological connection between means and fixed ends must be 'fully exorcised from basic economic theory' (this issue, p. 154). Despite the capacity of the transactional view for synthesis, even Dewey and Bentley were loath to prescribe a transactional solution to all encountered problems, for many topics remain well suited to interactional treatment (Dewey 1981, vol. 16: 103). So despite its neglect for preference formation, deliberation, or consequences, neoclassical models focusing on desires, fixed ends, and serviceable utilities may still be optimal for inquiries where the universe of discourse is relatively homogenous and the results sought are limited, cheap, and focused. But where the elements of study are far-ranging, multifaceted, or initially incommensurate - or where we seek the satisfactory resolution of an entire problematic situation, including all parties affected - a transactional approach is advisable. At this juncture we have yet to determine how the restricted pursuits of homo economicus might fit within a comprehensive transactional framework. But the efforts of White, and other contributors to this discussion, show it is now well within the realm of imagination.

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NOTES

1 Discussions with Mark White, Elias Khalil, Shabnam Mousavi, Jim Garrison, Michael Lawlor, and Larry Hickman contributed to the development of these ideas. I am responsible, of course, for unresolved problematic situations.

2 For Dewey, the essence of James' radical empiricism was in 'not forcing system' on the unlimited bounty of experienced facts (1976, vol. 12: 97).

3 In the words of Dewey and Bentley, 'a “real world” that has no knower to know it, has, so far as human inquiry is concerned ... just about the same “reality” that has the palace that in Xanadu Kubla Kahn decreed .... A knower without anything to know has perhaps even less claim to reality than that' (Dewey 1981, vol. 16: 128).

4 Shabnam Mousavi and Jim Garrison note this difference in distinguishing Dewey's theory of creative rationality from Simon's (see this issue: 131–56). White, on the other hand, believes Dewey's theory of intelligence has 'echoes' in Simon's bounded rationality.

5 See also p. 232, where White speaks of social activity as a 'backdrop' to deliberation.

6 To his credit, White recognizes Dewey's opposition to self-realization as a 'constant, conscious goal,' and even cites the quoted passage in a footnote. It is important, however, to see why Dewey rejects egoism on transactional grounds.
More specifically, White says we should not use such preferences in making moral choices. Dewey's actual view, as we shall see, is that such impulses should be re-channeled.

Earlier in the discussion, White does point out that Dewey's ethics is consequentialist to show a point of contact with neoclassical theories. He also notes that 'dramatic rehearsal' allows 'the agent to play out the consequences of each plan of action.' But these are imagined consequences, and I can find no instance where he links deliberation to actual consequences.

Social ecologist John Shotter has advanced empirical support for this view. Numerous studies testify to the position that human action is both embedded in the world in which it has being and is directed in some way. This embedded-directedness, which succinctly captures Dewey's sense of habit, is for Shotter a 'third kind' of knowing beyond theoretical knowledge and mere mastery of practical skills—a 'knowing from' that proceeds from the remaking or restructuring of a context (Shotter 1986: 213ff).

Hilary Putnam reaches a similar conclusion in Reason, Truth, and History. He argues that the fact-value dualism becomes untenable once the paradigm of truth as correspondence to a 'ready-made' world is replaced by a criterion of 'human cognitive flourishing' (1981: 129, 134). With Ruth Anna Putnam, he later restates this conclusion with specific acknowledgment to Dewey, for whom 'factual judgments are the result of selective attention,' and thus 'inextricably intertwined with value judgments' (1990: 416–7).

And this second sense, we recall, is itself a discrimination made for specific needs and purposes.

For the genesis of this approach, see Dewey's 'Three independent factors in morals' (1981, vol. 5: 279–88).

No doubt one reason for the success of the neoclassical view is the fact that the ends of deliberation become reintegrated into the habituated structure of desires. As 'signatures' of such ends, they resist reduction to a single characteristic such as pleasure. Without even realizing it, then, homo economicus is privy to some of the fruits of deliberation.

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