Dewey's Metaphysics

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I

IDEALISM
Change and Permanence in Dewey's Idealistic Period

1. INTRODUCTION

John Dewey published his first philosophical article in 1882 when he was twenty-two years old. He spent the next seventy years of his life in active and copiously productive philosophical activity. Because of this lengthy and energetic career, any attempt to investigate a particular topic in Dewey's philosophy is bound to be selective with regard to texts chosen as the foci of attention. This selectivity must avoid two equally dangerous paths. It must be neither too narrow nor too broad. If the selection is too narrowly chosen, then the development and growth of Dewey's thought will be underemphasized, if not ignored outright. Yet so numerous are Dewey's writings that if too wide a selection is made, there will be no opportunity for in-depth textual analysis except in a book of unmanageable length.

In Dewey's case, combining an overview of development with precise textual study is especially important. His sources of inspiration were diverse and often incompatible; nonetheless he sought to mold the fruitful portions of these sources into a unique, novel synthesis. When this fact is combined with the notoriously difficult mode of expression which resulted from this attempted synthesis, it becomes imperative that the successful interpreter be familiar not only with the mature statement of a position, but with its history in Dewey's intellectual growth as well.

Richard Bernstein has accurately characterized Dewey's career as consisting of three periods, each lasting roughly twenty years. The first is the idealistic phase, beginning with the article of 1882 and lasting until 1903. At that time Dewey introduced his new methodology in Studies in Logical Theory. These studies inaugurate the
experimental phase in which Dewey developed a novel methodology for dealing with philosophical issues. The successes of the scientific method, together with the impact of evolutionary thought, made evident, Dewey believed, the need to revise logical theory. The third phase, the naturalistic, is one in which Dewey attempted to present a coherent articulation of a naturalistic ontology. This period was announced in 1925 with the publication of Experience and Nature. Dewey was already sixty-five but his philosophical production remained as energetic as it had been.

If the ontological issue of “form,” as that concept which embodies the permanent aspects of nature, is to be investigated successfully in Dewey’s thought, all three of these periods will have to be studied, with special emphasis on the third one. During this phase, in a variety of important works, including some of his most famous (The Quest for Certainty, Art as Experience, Logic: The Theory of Inquiry), Dewey provided the most detailed development of ontology to be found in his writings. Accordingly, the three phases will not be equally represented here. I shall survey ontological topics as they were articulated during the idealistic and experimental periods in the first three chapters. The following four will be devoted to an examination of the final phase.

2. Dewey’s Idealistic Years

The idealistic period in Dewey’s career, which the present chapter will investigate, can be divided into two sub-periods of unequal duration and importance. This division rests on the two main pillars of German idealistic thought, Kant and Hegel. Dewey’s earliest philosophical orientation was heavily influenced by his exposure to Kant as an undergraduate and in the years of study immediately following his graduation. In this earliest phase, which lasted from his final years as an undergraduate at the University of Vermont to his first years as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins, 1878–1884, Dewey can be considered a Kantian. This is especially true in relation to his interpretation of consciousness in terms of activity rather than passivity.

The second stage, 1884–1903, is dominated by Dewey’s graduate teacher, George Sylvester Morris. Morris was a neo-Hegelian with a deep belief in the superiority of the idealistic tradition over the em-
piricist school of the British Isles. Hegelian philosophy as Morris interpreted it, “a logical and idealistic metaphysics with a realistic epistemology” (LW V 152), proved most congenial to Dewey, and he became a convert. This epoch of Hegelianism is by far the more significant of the two phases of his idealistic period. Most of his publications from this period were composed after his conversion to Hegelianism, and in these works the philosophical synthesis that he promulgated in the final decades of the nineteenth century is to a great degree worked out.

There are, however, a few articles that originated in the earlier period when, as Dewey admits, “I was then ignorant” (LW V 150). I shall begin with these earliest articles. They are significant because the Kantian elements found in them not only describe Dewey’s first philosophical allegiance but also reappear in various guises throughout his career.

2.1. Dewey’s Kantian Phase

I cannot hope to provide a fully detailed account of the idealistic phase as a whole or even of the pre-Hegelian sub-period, which includes a very limited number of articles. What I shall do is examine briefly Dewey’s thinking on topics specifically relating to the questions of change and permanence. These issues will revolve around the dual axes of epistemology and ontology. The ontological discussions will focus on the nature of beings as such; the epistemological discussions, on the manner in which beings are known. In this pre-Hegelian period, Dewey’s analyses tend to emphasize epistemological considerations, whereas the Hegelian period is marked by a decidedly ontological turn.

The Kantian bias of the earliest articles is the obvious source of Dewey’s recognition of the primacy of epistemology. In his first article, “The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism,” despite its deceptive title, the arguments against materialism are based, not on an analysis of being, but on an analysis of knowing. Dewey claims that materialists hold two inconsistent positions. They claim to possess a certain kind of knowledge, but are unable to explain the derivation of that knowledge on a strictly materialistic basis. This general transformation of metaphysical issues into epistemological ones applies equally well to the specific question of form. In this
article, Dewey offers what appears to be an ontological clue with respect to the issue of form when he distinguishes between “substance” and “mere succession of phenomena” (EW I 4). Such a negative description of substance opens the way for a positive characterization of it as formed or structured. But rather than interpret his assertion ontologically, Dewey reverts to epistemological considerations once again, arguing that mind is what provides the continuities, the sense of abiding, which any understanding of substance involves.

This reversion is not yet evident in the statement with which Dewey begins his explanation: “To have real knowledge of real being, there must be something which abides through the successive states” (EW I 5). Such an analysis is open-ended in the sense that the ingredients for a solution are introduced with no indication of the manner in which they are to be continued. The ontological and epistemological elements, “being” and “knowledge,” are introduced immediately and equivalently. No suggestion is provided as to which will be given primacy. The third ingredient, the “something which abides,” so crucial to the analysis of substance, could easily be interpreted in terms of either being or knowing. If Dewey wished to emphasize the sense of abiding in nature, then the solution would be provided in fundamentally ontological terms. If, on the other hand, abiding involves primarily noetic considerations, then substance is justified and explained epistemologically.

Dewey leaves no doubt as to his orientation during this period in his development. He continues the above quotation by arguing that the “something which abides through the successive states” also “perceives their relations to that being and to itself” (EW I 5–6; emphasis added). Dewey’s choice is made. Abiding could have been associated primarily with either knowing or being. He categorically associates it with knowing. What differentiates substance from mere phenomena is not something that is a trait of beings themselves. There is being, as succession of phenomena, but substance requires the sense of permanence, of abiding, which can be attributed only through the mind.

This sort of analysis, which claims, not that being is mind-dependent, but that substance is thus dependent, forces Dewey to admit a radical distinction between mind and being. It is mind that provides the continuities that matter lacks. “To know substance,
matter, is required substance, mind” (EW I 5). This assertion, ad-
mitting, as it does, a dualistic analysis, Dewey will later vehemently
reject. Nonetheless, it remains an accurate representation of his
earliest philosophical outlook. The organization, or sense of abiding
necessary to any account of form, resides, for Dewey at this stage,
within mind. While undertaking this line of argument, Dewey
makes two admissions about the nature of knowing which will stay
with him even after he has rejected the dualistic analysis of his pre-
Hegelian period: the first is his consistent assertion that knowledge
always involves mediation of some sort; the second deals with the
kind of contribution the intellect makes in knowing. Dewey admits
the influence of Kant here, and argues that the primary task of the
intellect is synthesis.

2.11. Knowledge as Mediated and Synthetic - These two closely
related issues directly touch the question of formed entities. Dewey's
distinction between substance and mere phenomena is his version
of the form/matter distinction. But in this case substance is not a
given of existence. It is mind-dependent. Without mediation, which
Dewey interprets in terms of synthesis, substance will neither be
perceived nor be. Mediation and synthesis make the very existence
of structures possible at all. We already know that forms are mind-
dependent, and when we search Dewey's text for an elaboration of
this doctrine, we are led to mediation and synthesis.

Dewey's claim that knowledge must involve mediation can best
be understood through reference to the topic of substance discussed
above. A requisite condition for the knowledge of substance, Dewey
argued, is the necessary existence of “something which abides
through successive states.” Non-mediated apprehension would re-
sult only in the recognition of a perpetual flux of phenomena. Since
Dewey doubts neither that existence in itself is simply this flux of
“mere” phenomena nor that there is knowledge of substance, non-
mediated knowledge cannot provide a full explanation of our actual
noetic experience. The “mere phenomena” must thus be mediated
via the mental substance before the possibility of ascertaining ma-
terial substance can be realized. In his second published work, “The
Pantheism of Spinoza,” Dewey reveals how important he considered
knowledge as mediated to be. According to him, Spinoza's failure to
grasp the fact of mediation is the foundation on which the incon-

sistencies in his system are based; Spinoza's system, he claims, "rests on the basis that the only real knowledge is immediate knowledge" (EW I 17).

Although Dewey's allegiance to idealism was to wane, his rejection of any doctrine that suggests immediate or non-mediated knowledge remains a constant trait of his thought. Mind is not a mere receptacle or mirror that passively reflects the order it finds in existence. Dewey's articulations of this view change, however, in each period of his development. The exact role played by mediation alters as his orientation is modified. The fact that Dewey considers mediation to be of such significance makes it important that it be properly understood. What exactly is the nature of mediation? What is involved in this activity? It is in answering these questions that Dewey's dependence on Kant is most prominently felt.

Dewey's doctoral dissertation at Johns Hopkins had as its subject "Kant's Psychology." That text is lost, but an article published soon afterward, "Kant and Philosophic Method," was, according to Dewey, "'in somewhat the same line [as the dissertation].'" Though the article was written after his immersion in Hegelian philosophy, the text is, in fact, a transitional one, showing both the positive lessons Dewey had learned from Kant and the limitations that led him away from this thinker to Hegel. Dewey's analysis in "Kant and Philosophic Method" brings him back, once again, to the issue of substance. Building on the very schematic, tentative assertions about substance in his first article, he now deals, in more Kantian terms, with the conditions, not for knowing substance, but of "experience" and of "objects." Mediation is still important, and the debt philosophy owes Kant is his recognition of the nature of mediation: the work of synthesizing disconnected sensations.

Consciousness does not simply receive and record these impressions; it acts upon them, and this activity is synthetic. "The material, the manifold, the particulars, are furnished by Sense in perception; the conceptions, the synthetic functions from Reason itself, and the union of these two elements are required, as well for the formation of the object known, as for its knowing" (EW I 37). This is the most concise statement of Dewey's own position regarding form in his pre-Hegelian phase. The synthetic work of the conceptions results not only in knowledge, but, more important, in the formation "of the object known." Consciousness must be inter-
PRETENED AS BOTH PASSIVE AND ACTIVE. PERCEPTIONS AND CONCEPTIONS MUST WORK TOGETHER, BUT THE SYNTHESSES PROVIDED BY CONCEPTIONS ARE THE "SINE QUÆ NON" (EW I 36) IN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION.

FORMED ENTITIES DO HAVE SOME SORT OF OBJECTIVE STATUS, BUT THIS STATUS IS A DERIVATIVE ONE, ONE NOT ORIGINALLY GIVEN IN THE DISCONNECTED SENSATIONS OF PERCEPTION. IN THIS PRE-HEGELIAN PHASE, FORMED BEINGS, AS EITHER SUBSTANCES OR OBJECTS, CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD APART FROM MIND AND ITS INHERENT ACTIVITY. THERE ARE NO STRUCTURES APART FROM MIND. "TO KNOW SUBSTANCE, MATTER, IS REQUIRED SUBSTANCE, MIND" BEST ENCAPSULATES DEWEY'S THINKING AT THIS TIME.

2.12. THE TRANSITION TO HEGELIANISM • THIS SOLUTION, WHICH REQUIRED THAT MIND BE SET OVER AGAINST MATTER, WAS SOON TO BE DRASTICALLY REVISED. THE OCCASION FOR THIS REVISION WAS DEWEY'S DISCOVERY OF HEGEL THROUGH GEORGE SYLVESTER MORRIS, HIS PROFESSOR AT JOHNS HOPKINS. DEWEY'S ALLEGIANCE SO READILY SHIFTED FROM KANT TO HEGEL THAT ONE IS LED TO QUESTION THE DEPTH OF CONVINCION WITH WHICH HE HELD THE POSITIONS DESCRIBED IN HIS FIRST ARTICLES. CERTAINLY, THE FACT THAT HE WAS A VERY YOUNG MAN STILL TRYING TO FORMULATE A DEFENSIBLE SYNTHESIS HAD MUCH TO DO WITH HIS READY CHANGE OF ALLEGIANCE. BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER REASON, ONE ASSOCIATED WITH HIS VERY DECISION TO UNDERTAKE THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY AS A LIFE'S WORK.

DEWEY TELLS US IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY THAT THIS DECISION WAS MADE ON THE BASIS OF THE INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION HE RECEIVED IN A PHYSIOLOGY COURSE IN WHICH THE TEXT WAS THOMAS H. HUXLEY'S LESSONS IN ELEMENTARY PHYSIOLOGY. THIS COURSE SUGGESTED TO DEWEY A VISION OF ORGANIC UNITY WHICH COULD PROVIDE A PARADIGM FOR NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS ALIKE, AND GAVE DIRECTION TO HIS THINKING BY SUPPLYING A "MODEL" TO WHICH "MATERIAL IN ANY FIELD OUGHT TO CONFORM." "SUBCONSCIOUSLY," HE SAID, "I WAS LED TO DESIRE A WORLD AND A LIFE THAT WOULD HAVE THE SAME PROPERTIES AS HAD THE HUMAN ORGANISM IN THE PICTURE OF IT DERIVED FROM STUDY OF HUXLEY'S TREATMENT" (LW V 147-48). THE KANTIAN POSITION DEWEY ELABORATED IN HIS EARLIEST WRITINGS REQUIRED A DUALISTIC ANALYSIS THAT VIOLATED THIS HUXLEYAN VISION. THIS "SUBCONSCIOUS" VISION HAD BEEN EFFECTIVELY HELD IN CHECK BY BOTH THE INFLUENCE OF DEWEY'S TEACHER AT VERMONT, H. A. P. TORREY, AND THE POWER OF KANT'S PHILOSOPHY. BUT ONCE MORRIS INTRODUCED HIS STUDENT TO HEGEL, DEWEY FOUND A PHILOSOPHER Whose POSITION DOVE-TAILED NICELY WITH THE HUXLEYAN MODEL OF ORGANIC UNITY.
2.2. Dewey's Hegelian Phase

The descriptive label "Hegelian," used to characterize this phase of Dewey's career, although accurate, must not be misinterpreted. There is no doubt that Dewey was deeply influenced by the thought of Hegel, but we must not make the mistake of fully identifying his thought with Hegel's. No great thinker appropriates the entire doctrine of a predecessor. Dewey was even less likely than most to engage in the wholesale absorption of Hegel's thought, since the Hegelianism he was taught had already been filtered twice through original and fertile minds. Dewey's immediate link to Hegel was, as we have seen, George Sylvester Morris. He, in turn, had studied in Germany with the Aristotelian scholar Friedrich Adolph Trendelenburg. Both teachers were greatly impressed with Hegelian philosophy, yet each added his own modifications to the master's thought. Some of these innovations are significant, and will help us to understand Dewey's ontological positions in both his idealistic and his later periods.

2.21. The Influence of Trendelenburg. Friedrich Adolph Trendelenburg (1802–1872) is remembered chiefly as the man most responsible for the revival of Aristotelian philosophy in mid-nineteenth-century Germany. He was, in addition, an original thinker and an influential teacher. Besides Morris, his pupils included Kierkegaard and Dilthey, both of whom spoke highly of their mentor.9 Morris thought enough of his German teacher to insert a lengthy discussion of him in his translation of Ueberweg's History of Philosophy.10 The best label for Trendelenburg's philosophy as it had an impact on Morris was fashioned by the French Deweyan scholar Gérard Deledalle: "an Aristotelianized Hegelianism."11 The dominant force in German philosophy during the time of Trendelenburg's studies was, of course, Hegel, but Trendelenburg's considerable skill in philology had led to an interest in Greek thinkers, especially Aristotle.12

Trendelenburg treated the meeting of Hegel and Aristotle, not as a clash, but as an opportunity for synthesis, and in general sought to explain Hegelian insights within an Aristotelian framework. He was reinforced in this by an abiding interest in science which led him to integrate the discoveries of Darwin into his philosophy.13
The overall result was an Hegelianism without the dialectic of Spirit.\(^{14}\) Nature was still viewed as dynamic, but this dynamism was given a fully naturalistic expression. "Subject" and "object," terms inherited from epistemology-centered philosophy, were no longer to be understood in the traditional manner. Instead of a subject as spectator examining the realm of objects, there was now the biological environment which involved the participation of organisms in their surroundings. The environment or situation provided the dynamic unity of interacting entities. No longer was the higher category of Spirit needed to embrace the artificially separated subjects and objects of post-Cartesian philosophy.

On the one hand, then, Trendelenburg left Morris a negative legacy: Hegel without the dialectic. On the other, the absence of the dialectic demanded some positive contributions from Trendelenburg. Specifically, how were the issues of motion and teleology to be construed apart from a dialectical framework? Trendelenburg was equal to the task. His most important contribution is the doctrine of constructive movement, *konstruktive Bewegung*. Thought and being, subject and object, do not stand unalterably opposed to one another. Instead of a barrier between them, there is a mediator, common to both, which is motion. Constructive motion is a basic trait of nature and of thought, and Trendelenburg attempted to erect an alternative to dualism based on this mediating element.\(^{15}\)

The important fact to grasp about this motion is that Trendelenburg interprets it in Aristotelian terms as the transition from potentiality to actuality.\(^{16}\) It is this transition which defines motion in its most fundamental sense. Motion, understood in this manner, Trendelenburg argues, is common to thought and things. The alternative to a dialectical interpretation of motion becomes, then, a revised application of Aristotle's teaching on potentiality and actuality. A similar sort of transformation occurs to the notion of *telos* or end. Cut off from the progressive realization of *Geist* when Trendelenburg jettisoned the dialectic, *telos* nonetheless retained a place of prominence in his analysis.

The full force of Trendelenburg's naturalism is felt here. End (*Zweck*) must be understood in the context of organisms. *Telos* implies, not an outside directing force, but one of the factors necessarily bound together in an organism: "'In the organism, matter, form, efficient causation and purpose are, as it were, with one an-
other and through one another. Purpose as the indwelling principle constructs the body. Matter is assimilated in such a unique fashion so that even chemically it possesses a specific character of its own. Form is not imposed upon matter from without but created from within."

In such a biological context, forms are understood to emerge from, rather than pre-exist, the context in which they are found. At the same time, end ("purpose," Zweck), as the directionality involved in the process of organic development, is closely associated with form. The intersection of this interpretation of teleology with Trendelenburg's doctrine of constructive movement now becomes evident. In an organism the movement from potentiality to actuality is in the direction of an end. This end is the mature form of a particular being. Morris interpreted motion and end as the two guiding principles in Trendelenburg's philosophy, and fastened on the teleological dimension to emphasize Trendelenburg's commitment to idealism. But this may have been a reflection more of his own views than of Trendelenburg's. Whatever the case may be, Trendelenburg's American pupil was a convinced idealist, and he had a direct and lasting impact on Dewey.

2.22. The Influence of George Sylvester Morris • Dewey's expression to describe Morris' thought, "'substantial idealism,'" accurately characterizes his position in two respects: first of all, it places him quite properly within the general framework of the German idealistic tradition; and, secondly, the qualifier "substantial" indicates the uniqueness of his analysis within that tradition. Although Morris owed a great debt to Hegel, and although he was deeply inspired by his classes with Trendelenburg, his own position was an original one.

Unlike many idealists, Morris never felt that questions about the possibility of knowledge or the existence of the external world were burning philosophical issues. Dewey tells us, in fact, that Morris used to ridicule philosophers who considered it their obligation to investigate such questions. Instead of questioning the very existence of the world, Morris sought to explore the meaning of that existence (LW V 152). This quest for meaning appears to be the source for, and to define the extent of, Morris' idealism. When Morris uses ex-
pressions like "‘universal self’" or "‘universal consciousness,’" he does not wish to indicate that matter is unreal or that behind the material appearances there lurks a spiritual reality. Rather, he is emphasizing, by using the philosophical tools available in the nineteenth century, that existence is meaningful.

To understand Morris accurately, we must recall the context in which he did his philosophizing. Two great traditions dominated philosophy, the empiricist and the idealist, and they appeared to exhaust the alternatives. A philosopher had to choose, had to declare his allegiance with, one or the other camp. Morris was familiar with the British empiricist tradition, one that, as Dewey says, is congenital to English-speaking thinkers (EW I 300). But this tradition, with its distinction between primary and secondary qualities, provides us with a world that, in itself, is meaningless, a neutral world of matter in motion. The only possible source of meaning, once such assumptions are accepted, is the individual consciousness of a thinking being. Morris finds this less than satisfactory because it eventually leads, as the British tradition from Hobbes to Berkeley shows, to doubting the very existence of the external world. For Morris, this conclusion is a reductio ad absurdum and points to the need for alternative solutions to those of empiricism.

Since the only viable alternative presenting itself at the time was idealism, it is not surprising to find Morris embracing it as a "‘demonstrated’ truth" (LW V 152) and referring to the empiricist tradition as "superficial." Nonetheless, if we are to understand the kind of idealism taught Dewey at Johns Hopkins, we must not classify Morris according to preconceived ideas of what an idealist is, but understand him instead in the manner just presented. When Morris speaks of a "universal consciousness," he is saying that all existence is meaningful. The alternatives are set down before him by the philosophical tradition. Either existence is radically bifurcated into a meaningless matter and a meaning-endowing mind, or existence is a non-bifurcated, unified network of meanings. Morris, believing that the former led to unacceptable conclusions, chose the latter. In so doing, he employed the only vocabulary at his disposal. Since meanings are associated with consciousness, all existence must be described in terms of consciousness.

Trendelenburg, it is interesting to note, had provided Morris
with the tools to break free from the either/or dilemma of empiricism vs. idealism. By avoiding the extension of either matter or mind to all of existence, and concentrating instead on potentiality and actuality in his doctrine of constructive movement, Trendelenburg had suggested a solution outside the dominant traditions. Morris seems not to have followed him on this point. But Dewey, as we shall see, was to revive this Trendelenburg type of emphasis on potentiality and actuality most prominently in his final "naturalistic" phase.26

In this first period, however, Dewey adheres rather closely to the teachings of his master. Morris was not only his teacher, but also his colleague later at the University of Michigan, and their relationship was the main force in shaping the first fifteen years of Dewey's philosophical career.27 Besides the positive doctrine of "substantial idealism," Morris bequeathed a negative, polemical legacy to his pupil. If Morris was an adherent of the idealistic tradition, he was also, of necessity, an opponent of the empiricist tradition. Morris' opposition to empiricism manifested itself especially in two areas, both of which were to remain with Dewey well after he had grown out of idealism.

The first involved the empiricist theory of mind. In this tradition, subject and object are seen as in a mechanical relationship. Impressions come from an outer world and affect a passive mind. Morris considered this view to be wholly inadequate and, following Trendelenburg, stressed the necessity of recognizing both passivity and activity on the part of mind. The idealist doctrine of innate ideas was fruitful in one outstanding sense: it kept the activity of mind in prominence. Morris considered the expression "innate ideas" unfortunate, but he saw it as serving an important function in emphasizing that the mind not only receives impressions but also acts on them.28

Morris complemented this anti-passive approach to consciousness with a veritable crusade against dualisms. Dualisms, he claimed, had erected impenetrable barriers between the knower and the things to be known, and led philosophy in one direction: the gradual dissolution of the object of knowledge into an "unknowable substrate."29 This in turn led, as the British tradition revealed, either to a form of subjectivism or to a form of skepticism. Morris
believed that such results were unacceptable and, more important, unnecessary. A properly understood idealism could resolve the difficulties.

After his studies with Morris, Dewey did not hesitate to use the term “Hegelianism” to describe his own philosophical allegiance. Nor did he hesitate, many years later, to pay the highest tribute to the genius of Hegel (LW V 152–54). But it must be understood that it was to Hegelianism, the movement, that Dewey attached himself, not to a comprehensive, thorough assimilation of Hegel, the individual philosopher. I have focused on the two men who mediated Hegel for Dewey to indicate the particular brand of Hegelianism to which he was exposed. It was sufficiently different from textbook versions of Hegel’s doctrines for Deledalle to ask whether it was Hegelianism at all. “Trendelenburg had dealt a death-blow to the dialectic. Hegelianism seemed doomed. Aristotle rescued it. Was it still Hegelianism?” Deledalle does not answer his own question. Nor does he pursue the implication that Hegelianism had been transformed into Aristotelianism. The best response to the question “Was it still Hegelianism?” is a less-than-categorical “Yes and no.” In terms of Dewey’s development, the answer differs in each of the three major periods.

During the idealistic phase, while he was still under Morris’ influence, Dewey’s answer is “Yes, it is Hegelianism.” In the experimental phase, which is the result of his “drifting” (LW V 154) from Hegel, he would give a negative response. The positive accomplishments of idealism are assimilated here into an experimental philosophy that rejects idealism outright. In his third phase, having moved beyond Morris and Hegel, Dewey reverts to Trendelenburg and Aristotle. An interpreter who favors eponyms could describe this naturalistic phase as “Aristotelian” with as much warrant as Dewey himself had in labeling his idealist phase “Hegelian.”

Deledalle’s question thus provides the boundaries within which Dewey’s philosophical growth occurs. The elaborations on this schematic outline will have to await later chapters. At this point we are still concerned with the Hegelian period. We have already seen that before his courses with Morris Dewey held a position that was greatly inspired by Kant. We also know something about the teaching lineage that reaches from Trendelenburg through Morris to
Dewey. What is necessary now is an analysis of Dewey’s writings during this period to grasp what his position concerning form and being entails.

2.23. Dewey's Writings During His Hegelian Phase • Between 1884 and 1903, Dewey wrote eight books and more than one hundred articles and reviews. There is, obviously, enough material in this phase of his life to occupy many Dewey scholars. My aim here is a modest one: to provide a representative analysis of Dewey's position with respect to the question of form. Since I believe that he is to be taken literally when he says that he gradually “drifted” from Hegelianism, I have decided to focus on some of these earliest writings. They present a doctrine typical of his Hegelianism.

The main text on which my interpretation will be based is Dewey's second book, Leibniz's New Essays Concerning Human Understanding, published in 1888. Morris had conceived of a series on German philosophy, which would not only introduce German thinkers to Americans, but also serve as a polemical vehicle for illustrating the superiority of the idealistic over the empiricist tradition. Morris wrote some of the first books on the philosophies of Kant and Hegel; Dewey was charged with producing a study on the philosophy of Leibniz. For a variety of reasons, the Leibniz book provides a good opportunity for investigating Dewey's metaphysics in his Hegelian phase. (a) An accurate reflection of his thought during this period, it not only is an early work, but one conceived by, and written under the influence of, Morris, the direct source of Dewey's Hegelianism. (b) Since the subject of the study was an outstanding ontologist, Dewey's interpretation, especially his emphases, will allow some insight into his own ontological position. (c) Finally, because of the polemical nature of the series in which the book appeared, Dewey felt called upon to add his own comments to the exposition of Leibniz' philosophy.

2.24. Dewey on Leibniz • To reconstruct Dewey's ontological doctrine in this period of Hegelianism, we must be clear as to the kind of idealism he professed. Dewey's allegiance to the idealistic tradition cannot be questioned. In an article published in 1886 entitled "The Psychological Standpoint," he asserted that "Absolute Idealism (to which I hardly need say this article has been constantly
pointing) is assumed" (EW 135). What can be questioned is the meaning of the term when Dewey uses it. I have already indicated in my discussion of Morris’ philosophy that idealism, as he understood it, did not stand opposed to a realistic epistemology, but was rather rigidly defined in opposition to the empiricist tradition. Morris had fastened on idealism as the doctrine which rejected (among other things) the ontology of primary and secondary qualities developed by the empiricist school.

The idealism Dewey adopted followed that of his teacher quite closely. In no way, for example, is Bertrand Russell’s claim that idealists are those for whom “matter is an evil dream”34 implied in Dewey’s idealism. Morris and Dewey rejected both the empiricist tradition and the subjectivistic strain within the idealistic movement.35 It is the view that idealism answers the insufficiencies of empiricism that made Leibniz such an attractive figure for the two of them. His New Essays offer the first sustained (and in their eyes accurate) criticism of one magnum opus in the tradition of empiricism, Locke’s Essay Concerning Human Understanding.

When we turn to this book on Leibniz with the aim of extracting a metaphysical analysis, four topics stand out. (a) The most important one, to which all others are subordinated, is the question of relations. The way Dewey treats this issue reveals his shift from the epistemological emphasis of his earlier Kantianism to the ontological emphasis typical of his Hegelianism. (b) The ontological position, fully in line with his idealism, is expressed by generalizing the meaning of intelligence. (c) True to the intellectual heritage of Hegel, Trendelenburg, and Morris, Dewey articulates a dynamic interpretation of existence. (d) Finally, Dewey interprets Leibniz as resembling no philosopher more than Aristotle, and in so doing reveals as much about his position as he does about Leibniz’. In relation to the question of formed existents, three Aristotelian themes, already familiar from our analysis of Trendelenburg, prove to be especially important: potentiality, actuality, and end. No discussion of metaphysics in Dewey’s Hegelian period would be complete without the inclusion of these Aristotelian elements.

2.241. Relations The series of works in which the Leibniz book appeared had, as we have seen, a twofold purpose. It was to be both expository and disputatious. Its aim was, on the one hand,
to introduce German thinkers to an American audience, and, on the other, to demonstrate the superiority of those thinkers over their counterparts in the empiricist tradition. In the book on Leibniz, Dewey addresses a topic which will attain both these ends. By dealing with the issue of relations, he is able to explain Leibniz' position and to expose the insufficient way they are handled in Locke's writings.

Although both aims are carried out, the latter one, the criticism of Locke as a representative of the empiricist tradition, often seems to dominate. It is Locke's inconsistent and incorrect doctrine of relations which is at the root of his philosophical difficulties. "To Locke, as we have seen, knowledge is essentially a matter of relations or connections; but relations are 'superinduced' and 'extraneous' as regards the facts. Every act of knowledge constitutes, therefore, in some way a departure from the reality to be known. Knowledge and fact are, by their very definition, opposed to one another" (EW I 394). Dewey is continuing here a line of criticism, begun by Morris, which sought to show how it is empiricism, not idealism, which loses sight of the external world. Because an unmediated opposition between knowledge and facts is assumed, no opportunity is afforded for preserving the facts in knowledge.

Locke, by his own admission, grasps the necessity of relations in knowledge. Yet what is given to him as a knower is in itself unrelated. He is thus forced to hold that for knowledge to result "extraneous" relations have to be "superinduced" on the contents received by consciousness. The consequence of this position, as Dewey interprets it, is that knowledge (which includes relations), instead of adequately reflecting the facts of existence, actually falsifies them. Dewey extends his criticism by arguing that the Lockean position rests on the mistaken assumption that "reality is mere existence." By "mere existence" Dewey means that which allows of no characterization or determination; "it is something which is, and that is all" (EW I 374). Locke's idea of substance as that which "simply stands inactively, under phenomena" (EW I 374) reveals the unacceptable conclusions to which one is led by the consistent working out of a doctrine based on the assumption of "mere existence."

A similar theme appeared in Dewey's Kantian period, when he distinguished "substance" from "mere succession of phenomena." The different ways these similar distinctions are treated during the
two idealistic phases is indicative of the complete shift in outlook which accompanied his conversion to Hegelianism. In the earlier phase Dewey dealt with the distinction in epistemological terms. Substance was subordinated to, made dependent on, the knowing faculty, which provided the sense of abiding inherent in any notion of substance. In the text now under consideration, Dewey’s arguments have become ontological. The superiority of the idealistic tradition is viewed as based on that tradition’s refusal to take seriously the ontology of “mere existence.” Leibniz, according to Dewey, was a leader in this regard. He clearly saw that “facts” were not “mere facts,” but were instead manifestations, in Leibniz’ own words, of a “‘determining reason and regulative principle’” (EW I 400).

The transition from epistemology to ontology can be exemplified by further exploring this analysis. Does an accurate description of existence in itself exclude relations, as Locke maintains, or must it include them, as Leibniz insists? Of course, Dewey sides with Leibniz. Now we can see how ontological considerations are fundamental in idealism’s response to empiricism. We know that, for Dewey, the difficulty with empiricism is that knowledge and facts are admitted to be distinct and incompatible. This is based on the empiricist’s combination of an ontology which claims that facts are devoid of relations and an epistemology which asserts that knowledge necessarily involves relations.

In response to this an idealist like Leibniz argues that the empiricist has caused his own difficulties by artificially emptying reality of its relations. Relations, Leibniz says, “are . . . not foreign to the material to be known, but are organic to it” (EW I 394). As a result, consciousness grasps the “real nature” of the objects known; it does not proceed by “‘superinducing’ unreal ideas upon them” (EW I 395). The difficulties of the Lockean position are thus avoided. Dewey, true to the polemical intent of the series in which this book stands, complements his interpretation of Leibniz with the following editorial comment:

The difficulty of Locke is the difficulty of every theory of knowledge that does not admit an organic unity of the knowing mind and the known universe. The theory is obliged to admit that all knowledge is in the form of relations which have their source in intelligence. But being tied to the view that reality is distinct from
intelligence, it is obliged to draw the conclusion that these relations are not to be found in actual existence, and hence that all knowledge, whatever else it may be, is unreal in the sense that it does not and cannot conform to actual fact [EW I 395].

The main outline of Dewey's own philosophical views is incorporated into this critical passage: reality and intelligence are not, as in Locke, distinct from one another; there is an "organic unity" of the knowing mind and the known universe.

One of the difficulties with assessing Dewey's position during this phase is ascertaining just what "organic" means in the context of the knower and the known. Organic unity, according to Dewey, always involves the unification of a multiplicity. Yet just how this biological model of unity is to apply to cognitive situations is not really worked out in the book on Leibniz. "Organism" appears to be a term used as a weapon of combat. It signifies a rejection of the dualistic ontology espoused by the empiricist tradition, but the precise reasons why "organic" best expresses the alternative view are not enumerated. In fact, "organic" seems to function as one of those terms (like "logic" in the analytical tradition or "dialectic" in the Marxist tradition) which are so utilized and so familiar to a particular group that they acquire a certain elasticity, along with a conviction that no explanation of them is necessary. We are in a more favorable position with regard to "intelligence." Dewey argues, in the above quotation, that reality is not distinct from intelligence. By examining what is implied in the term "intelligence" we can come to understand Dewey's idealistic ontology.

2.242. Intelligence When Dewey asserts, as opposed to Locke, that reality is intelligence, he is arguing nothing more than that existence can be characterized as a system of interrelated, interconnected entities. Though both he and Locke agree that intelligence involves relations, Dewey differs in attributing relations and, therefore, intelligence to the whole of reality.37

In rejecting the ontology of mere existence, Dewey is declaring his allegiance to some version of a doctrine that interprets reality in terms of formed entities. One difficulty in reconstructing such a doctrine in Dewey's writings of this period is that he never uses the word "form" to describe his own position, though he does use the word in varying senses. Sometimes it refers to an individual being
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( EW I 178); at other times, it is synonymous with “figure” ( EW I 359). Nevertheless, a careful examination of the term “intelligence” will reveal the implications of Dewey’s usage and identify the elements that make up his version of an ontology of formed entities. The progressive unpacking of “intelligence” will lead to (a) structure, (b) unity, and (c) relations.

Dewey’s assertion that intelligence “has a structure” ( EW I 307) provides only the first step in unraveling his idealistic ontology: namely, the substitution of “structured” existence for the “mere” existence of the empiricists. Intelligence, he says elsewhere, is not meant to convey something empty or formal. It has a content, “the organic unity of a system of relations” ( EW I 418). But the unity Dewey is speaking of is not the simple unity without parts of the Neoplatonic tradition. It is always a unity in multiplicity, and as such always involves relations. “Harmony, in short, means relation, means connection, means subordination and co-ordination, means adjustment, means a variety, which yet is one” ( EW I 297).

Relations thus become, not unexpectedly, the pivot on which Dewey’s ontological description of reality revolves. His position may be summarized in the following manner. (a) Reality is most accurately described in idealistic terms as intelligence. (b) This means that existence is structured existence. (c) Structured existence, in turn, implies an organic unity held together by a system of relations. The terms “structure,” “unity,” and “relations,” while providing a fuller idea of what Dewey means when he says that reality and intelligence are not distinct, nonetheless remain a possible source of misinterpretation. For each of those terms may be viewed as indicating a philosophical position that is ultimately static. Interpreted on the model of geometry, for instance, structures, unities, and the relations constituting them, can be viewed as timeless, changeless figures and arrangements in space. But Dewey is quite clear that geometry is not the model through which the fruitful analyses of idealism are to be interpreted. The model on which Leibniz constructed his world view was, according to Dewey, not geometry but biology. “But it is the idea of organism, of life, which is radical to the thought of Leibniz” ( EW I 277).

2.243. The Dynamic Interpretation of Existence Dewey offers this interpretation not only as one which accurately describes
Leibniz' philosophical attitude, but also as one which is commendable. Dewey claims that this biology-inspired approach is what makes Leibniz still a sympathetic figure. He even compliments Leibniz for being the "first of that now long line of modern philosophers to be profoundly influenced by the conception of life and the categories of organic growth" (EW I 276-77).

In so doing Leibniz turned back a formidable adversary in the person of Descartes. According to Dewey, there are "two typical ways of regarding nature." One, the Cartesian, views it as "something essentially rigid and static" (EW I 279). The other, that taken by Leibniz, describes it as "something essentially dynamic and active. Change according to law is its very essence" (EW I 279). This dynamic interpretation of existence adds another dimension to Dewey's idealistic metaphysics. The structures and unities that make up the realm of intelligence are fluid rather than rigid, dynamic rather than static. In fact, Dewey describes as Leibniz' "greatest glory" his conjunction of unity and activity. "The unity, whose discovery constitutes Leibniz's great glory as a philosopher, is a unity of activity, a dynamic process" (EW I 415).

Now Dewey's reluctance to use the word "form" as a descriptive term for his position becomes understandable. In his eyes, "form" stands for the static and the unchanging. The view that opposes a dynamic interpretation of existence is, Dewey believes, dominated by the categories of "formal" logic. "The unity of formal logic is exclusive of any mediation or process, and is essentially rigid and lifeless" (EW I 415). Since the "formal" stands for the schematic, the static, and the lifeless, it can find no place in a system of dynamic idealism. Here, in this opposition between a dynamic idealism and the methodology of formal logic, Dewey finds something to criticize in Leibniz. Leibniz' major failing was that he never reworked the logic he had inherited so that it could be synchronized with his novel philosophical approach (EW I 414). His dynamic ontology offers an exciting breakthrough, according to Dewey, but it is limited by being "fettered by the scholastic method—that is, the method of formal logic" (EW I 417).89

2.244. Potentiality, Actuality, and End Despite Leibniz' adherence to an overly formal methodology, Dewey finds much of
lasting significance in the German thinker: “Such thoughts as that substance is activity; that its process is measured by its end, its idea; that the universe is an inter-related unit; the thoughts of continuity, of uniformity of law,—introduced and treated as Leibniz treated them,—are imperishable” (EW I 435).

Here Dewey adds a new dimension to the dynamic interpretation of existence, the teleological. Thus far we have seen that intelligence is to be understood in terms of structure, which, in turn, is to be interpreted as the harmonization of interrelated processes. Now he says process “is measured by its end.” Including teleological considerations in a proper understanding of structure is an element of Dewey's Hegelian phase that will remain a constant theme as his development progresses. It also introduces the name of Aristotle into the discussion. We have seen how Morris, under the influence of Trendelenburg, had brought back from Germany an appreciation for both Hegel and Aristotle. Dewey had even commented that Morris “had no difficulty in uniting Aristotelianism and Hegelianism” (LW V 153). The same may be said of Dewey in relation to Leibniz with Aristotle.

The single philosopher to whom Dewey most compares Leibniz is Aristotle. Among the many terms Dewey uses to express the active dimension of existence, “change,” “process,” “activity,” “motion,” and “movement” are the most prominent. Through each of these terms, however, there runs a common thread which has its roots in the Greek thinker. By relating Leibniz to Aristotle, Dewey is able to explain more fully his understanding of activity in Leibniz, and in so doing, provide a threefold foundation common to all kinds of processes: potentiality, actuality, and end. In the most generalized sense, then, when Dewey speaks of “activity,” “change,” “motion,” or any of the other synonymous terms he uses, he means to indicate a passage from potentiality to actuality that is guided by an end.

The name of Aristotle suggests the principles which guided Leibniz in his interpretation of the fact of motion. The thought of Aristotle moves about the two poles of potentiality and actuality. . . . Now, movement, or change in its most general sense, is that by which the potential comes to the realization of its nature, and functions as an activity. Motion, then, is not an ultimate fact, but is subordinate. It exists for an end [EW I 280].
Dewey's own organicism, as well as his sympathetic interpretation of Leibniz' philosophy, are obvious here. The implications for the issue of form are direct. The most important sentence in this respect is the one asserting that motion is "subordinate." Dewey is arguing against any philosophy which would view motion or change as an end in itself, as purely blind activity. When he denies that motion is an "ultimate fact," he is not intimating that motion is unreal. He is saying that motion is never merely motion; it is always motion from and motion toward. It is always motion within certain boundaries. This is precisely where the greatness of Aristotle and Leibniz can be found. The first set down the boundaries of potentiality, actuality, and end; the latter revived his approach some two thousand years later.

Form enters into consideration when Dewey clarifies what he means by saying that motion is subordinate to an end. That end, as Leibniz saw, involves existence realizing its "idea; that is, its proper type of action" (EW I 280). In the words "idea" and "type," we are presented with alternatives to the discredited term "form." Motion is the transition in existence from potentiality to actuality. This actuality involves the activity proper to a certain kind of existence. Such a "proper type of action" then becomes a dynamic philosophy's version of "form," a term which Dewey associated with a prescientific and thus a static world-view. Dewey's alternative expressions for "form" are not limited to "type" or "idea," both of which are derived from Leibniz; he also uses "structure" and the one which is perhaps his favorite since it is biologically inspired, "organism." Once these terms are seen as occupying in a philosophy of process the place of form in a static philosophy, Dewey's reworking of that doctrine as an idealist can be appreciated. There is, in the Dewey of this period, strictly speaking, no "problem" of form. Structure and organism are pervasive and evident. The entire universe, in fact, "is an organism" (EW I 296).

3. Summary

Perhaps the most significant point about this phase of idealism is its dual character. Dewey's allegiance went first to Kant and then to Hegel. Although the Hegelian period was more prominent in terms
of duration and quantity of publications, the pre-Hegelian phase is important as well because of its lasting impact on Dewey. This was not made fully clear in the body of the chapter, and a few words of explanation are in order.

This earliest phase still haunted Dewey some forty-six years later when he wrote his autobiography. He admits there that his first articles were "highly schematic and formal" (LW V 150), terms we know to be pejorative. However, he claims after four and a half decades to suffer still from a "native inclination toward the schematic" (LW V 150), and because of it, he says, much of his later emphasis ("over-weighting" is the term he uses at one point) on the "concrete" and the "practical" was a reaction to "what was more natural" (LW V 151). It was actually, he claims, a "protection against something in myself which, in the pressure of the weight of actual experiences, I knew to be a weakness" (LW V 151). Many of Dewey's critics, as we shall see in the next chapter, were to argue that he did not protect himself enough from this tendency. At any rate, this kind of testimony indicates the importance of this phase, which in terms of duration and publications would appear to be insignificant.

The two phases of idealism can, as we have seen, be roughly distinguished in the following manner. In the first, Dewey's thinking somewhat echoes Kant's. As a result, epistemological considerations are the most important, and he is forced to admit a dualistic interpretation of matter and mind. The second phase is dominated by the influence of Hegel. The primary concerns at this time become ontological, with mind and matter described as existing in an "organic unity." Both periods share the belief that knowledge necessarily involves mediation.

As far as the ontological analysis of form is concerned, in the first phase it is considered as mind-dependent, but it is a trait of existence in the second. In both, intelligence and structure are closely related. The innovation of the Hegelian phase is the generalizing of the meaning of intelligence. It now applies not only to a knowing being, but also to the universe at large. A detailed analysis of form or structure is provided only in the writings of the Hegelian phase. There, the following elucidations are provided. (a) Relations provide the key for understanding structure. (b) Structure, far from being op-
posed to process, actually involves motion or activity. (c) This motion must be interpreted as the transition from potentiality to actuality in light of an end.

NOTES

1. Dewey expresses the point this way in his autobiography. “I envy, up to a certain point, those who can write their intellectual biography in a unified pattern, woven out of a few distinctly discernible strands of interest and influence. By contrast, I seem to be unstable, chameleon-like, yielding one after another to many diverse and even incompatible influences; struggling to assimilate something from each and yet striving to carry it forward in a way that is logically consistent with what has been learned from its predecessors” (LW V 155).


4. Bernstein labels this period the “formative” years. While such a description has the virtue of emphasizing the continuous development of Dewey's thought, it does not provide any indication as to the position taken by Dewey during this time. At this point, Dewey held a coherent and well worked-out idealistic view. Because of this, I prefer the descriptive label “idealistic” to the chronologically-oriented “formative.” Actually, while I am following Bernstein's threefold division in outline, the labels for the different periods and their characterizations are my own.

5. See, on this point, the discussion by Gérard Deledalle in L’Idée d’expérience dans la philosophie de John Dewey (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), p. 22. George Dykhuizen's biography of Dewey also attests his early interest in Kant: “Henry Torrey's [Dewey's teacher] own deep interest in Kant, on whose Critique of Pure Reason he had cut his philosophical teeth, kept the author of the Critiques constantly in the foreground of his classroom discussions. Dewey acknowledges the influence on him of Torrey's lectures on Kant. "Thanks to my intro-
duction under your auspices to Kant at the beginning of my studies,' he wrote to Torrey, 'I think I have had a much better introduction into phil. than I could have had any other way. . . . It certainly introduced a revolution into all my thought, and at the same time gave me a basis for my other reading and thinking'" (The Life and Mind of John Dewey [Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973], pp. 15-16; the letter from Dewey is dated November 17, 1883).

6. Only four articles are included in this pre-Hegelian phase: (a) "The Materialistic Assumptions of Materialism," published in 1882; (b) "The Pantheism of Spinoza," also in 1882; (c) "Knowledge and the Relativity of Feeling," 1883; and (d) "Kant and Philosphic Method," 1884. Each of these articles, originally published in the Journal of Speculative Philosophy, has been reprinted in EW I.


8. Ibid.


10. Morris added six pages of text explicating Trendelenburg's philosophy. This addition was occasioned by Ueberweg's failure to include any discussion of Trendelenburg in the first two editions of his work. The third edition did contain a short (one-page) summation, but Morris did not consider that brief analysis to be satisfactory. See Friedrich Ueberweg, History of Philosophy. II. History of Modern Philosophy, trans. George S. Morris (New York: Scribner's, 1873), pp. 324-30.

11. L'Ideé d'expérience, p. 39. The expression does not sound nearly so stilted in French: "l'hégélianisme aristotelisé de Trendelenburg."

12. His doctoral dissertation was entitled Platonis de ideis et numeris doctrina ex Aristotele illustrata. See Rosenstock, Trendelenburg, p. 6.

13. Ibid., pp. 5, 78. See also Deledalle, L'Ideé d'expérience, p. 37.


15. Ibid., pp. 46-47.


17. Quoted in Rosenstock, Trendelenburg, p. 59.

18. "'Inherent end'" is the way Morris expressed his teacher's position. See the article entitled "Friedrich Adolph Trendelenburg" which originally appeared in The New Englander in April 1874, and was reprinted in Marc Edmund Jones, George Sylvester Morris: His Philosophical Career and Theistic Idealism (Philadelphia: McKay, 1948), pp. 335-84. The discussion of "inherent end" is on p. 372.

19. Morris describes Trendelenburg's teaching that forms are results
in the following manner. "Looking now at the world of things, we find all activity connected with motion. All processes, mechanical, chemical, organic, are inconceivable without the idea of motion in space. All forms are the results of motion controlling matter" (Ueberweg, History of Modern Philosophy, trans. Morris, p. 326).


26. "When men ceased to interpret and explain facts in terms of potentiality and actuality, and resorted to that of causality, mind and matter stood over against one another in stark unlikeness; there were no intermediates to shade gradually the black of body into the white of spirit" (EN 193).


30. L'Idée d'expérience, p. 39.

31. Joseph Ratner has described Dewey's changing focus of attention in the following manner. "Forty and thirty years ago the Hegelian and Kantian philosophies and their derivatives were the main objects of his critical attention; thirty and twenty years ago, it was the then contemporary realisms of all varieties, American and English. But with Experience and Nature (1925), a great, though not unheralded, change took place: the foregoing receded into the background while into the focus of critical examination were placed the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle; and this interchange of position between modern and ancient philosophies has become more and not less marked with each succeeding volume" ("Introduction to John Dewey's Philosophy," p. 15).

33. Morton White also thinks that Dewey's book on Leibniz typifies his philosophical position at this time: "Because of its more general character, Dewey's work on Leibniz is an even better index of his position at that time than his Psychology" (ibid., p. 60).


35. Dewey criticizes subjective idealism in "The Psychological Standpoint" (EW I 135). Both Hume and Kant are judged as presenting inadequate analyses in "Kant and Philosophic Method" (EW I 34).

36. See above, sect. 2.1.

37. Dewey's position (as well as Leibniz' on his view) does not therefore assert that only consciousness exists and that all else is shadow or appearance. Bertrand Russell has characterized the German idealistic tradition as putting "an emphasis upon mind as opposed to matter, which leads in the end to the assertion that only mind exists." In the sense in which Russell means this—namely, that the extra-mental is unreal—the description has nothing in common with the type of idealism espoused by Dewey. Russell's comment is from A History of Western Philosophy (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1945), p. 704.

38. See also PSY 142.

39. We now know that Dewey could not have been more mistaken in his estimation of Leibniz' logical method. Far from being simply a follower of scholastic logic, Leibniz was "one of the greatest logicians of all time." He was an innovative logician who not only originated mathematical logic, centuries before its introduction by other thinkers, but also "introduced many new, or newly developed features" to the standard Aristotelian syllogistic. See I. M. Bochenski, A History of Formal Logic, trans. and ed. Ivo Thomas (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), p. 258. In fairness to Dewey, it must be noted that, apart from manuscript sources, he had no way of knowing about Leibniz' logical discoveries. The first publication of those sources by Couturat came in 1901, thirteen years after the publication of Dewey's book.

40. Describing the origins of Leibniz' philosophy, Dewey writes: "Two causes above all others stand out with prominence,—one, the discoveries and principles of modern physical science; the other, that interpretation of experience which centuries before had been formulated by Aristotle" (EW I 270–71).