THE “PERMANENT HEGELIAN DEPOSIT” IN JOHN DEWEY’S THEORY OF INQUIRY

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Dahlia Guzman

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In addition to addressing the questions of what knowledge is and how it is acquired, epistemology is concerned with investigating the quality and structure of knowledge and the related concept of truth. In general, the debate has centered on the obstinate problem that has plagued any epistemology’s claims to objectivity and truth. This is the problem of skepticism that results from the disconnect between a theory of knowledge that claims objectivity and experience. The answers provided by rationalism and empiricism have not resolved this long-standing problem. It appears that it would be fruitful to examine theories that attempt to make a path between rationalism and empiricism. Making a middle way between these two camps was begun by Kant, who was attempting to resolve the aforementioned obstacle by turning on its head the traditional approach to the problem of objectivity. Kant attempts to resolve the problem by articulating a theory that has both rationalist and empiricist principles. In order to rescue knowledge from skepticism, Kant posited knowledge should be grounded on that which did not rely on confirmation outside of itself, but instead relies on the Transcendental Unity of Apperception, which was the frame within which the a priori conditions of intellectual and sense intuitions could work. To mend the breach between his theory and experience, Kant emphasized the universality of human faculty and reason.
He anticipated that this universality would not only support his claims to objectivity, but ultimately, that a thorough understanding of knowledge, its nature and its limits, could make manifest the overall ambition of the Enlightenment- which was to make reason the source of authority.

In John Dewey's essay "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," Dewey explains how he came to Kant's theory through Hegel, whose philosophy was tremendously influential during the time of Dewey's academic training. According to Dewey, the source of his own "Hegelianism" was fueled by several things. One was the nature of philosophic discourse during the time of his studies. There was, at the time, a backlash on "atomic individualism and sensational empiricism," as well as strong interest in Hegelian theory as a response to that individualism and empiricism. (see Dewey, Ch3) Another source was the influence of his mentor, Professor G.S. Morris, who had what Dewey characterizes as a common-sense approach to philosophy in general that was displayed in Morris' concerns with the question of how to make philosophy meaningful in life as well as his "realistic epistemology" that assumed "the existence of the external world was not a topic of investigation for philosophy."¹ A third source is found in Dewey's description of the appeal of Hegelian thought. It "supplied a demand of unification" Dewey sought, which he found in Hegel's "dissolution of hard-and-fast dividing walls" between all manner of human institutions and endeavors and "Hegel's synthesis of subject and object,

matter and spirit, the divine and the human."² Finally, Dewey was also greatly influenced by the notion that "science...should be a regulative method of an organized social life."

These influences can be seen in Dewey's philosophical theory. And even as Dewey admits to "drifting away from Hegelianism," yet "that acquaintance with Hegel …left a permanent deposit in my thinking."³ While these are Dewey’s own words, it should be remarked that the use of the word “permanent” in his phrasing does not indicate the notion of permanence or intransience. Dewey’s general approach to philosophy is indicated by his notion of knowledge as open-ended. The concept of permanence is therefore not indicative of his ideas. In Dewey’s theory, the “permanent deposit” he refers to is more tangibly expressed as a Hegelian approach to the relation of subject and object that has been consistently affirmed in both theory and practice.

I hope to show in this thesis is that Hegel’s influence can be seen in their similar answer to the objectivity problem: that a foundational and dynamic unity of subject and world provides the conditions under which knowledge occurs. Specifically, I argue that there are several elements of their respective circuits that are analogous to one another in terms of their function within each system. I draw out the theoretical similarities, the structural similarities of Hegelian sublation and Dewey’s instrumentalism, as well as the repetitive, interactive activity of a subject with the world in which knowledge unfolds.

² Ibid., 10.
³ Ibid., 12.
for knowledge. Hegel's appropriation of the Kantian postulation of the apperceptive self advanced the notion of that foundational unity. For Dewey, the part of Kant’s model that would be more successful at resolving the issue was the activity of the apperceptive self. Dewey's method emphasizes experience as the basis for knowledge. This emphasis on method stresses an approach to knowledge by which objects, and the manner in which they come to be known, are constantly modified and interpreted by and within experience. The method would be informed by the subject matter and experience, but does not imply a fully developed system or a specific template by which to guide inquiry. Expanded in Dewey's theory, experience is redefined in a way that moves it out of the subjective. Experience is the way we begin our quest for knowledge as well as how we test and affirm our claims.

In the effort to illuminate the similarity of response, it will be necessary to make connections between Dewey's and Hegel's approaches and theories that I believe are found in their attempt to tackle the problem of objectivity that Kant sought to resolve. Part of the way this will be done is by making use of a particular interpretation of Hegel as neither a metaphysician nor a theologian but rather a philosopher attempting to complete Kant’s epistemological project. This thesis relies on a particular interpretation of Hegel put forth by Robert Pippin in his book *Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*. Pippin endeavors to discuss Hegel’s theory specifically in terms of the epistemological claims within the context of Hegel’s association with Kant’s project. Pippin asserts that Hegel’s system attempts to eliminate the dilemma of skepticism and the Thing-In-Itself that has plagued epistemological models and he does this by moving away
from the Kantian concept of “Pure” Intuitions. In arguing for a more organic and historical definition of intuitions and the expanded role of the self, Hegel means to supply the answer for how it is that knowledge claims can be objective. This broader interpretation of Hegel’s overall project allows for a more straightforward assessment of his project as it pertains specifically to epistemological theory. My use of this text is to make use specifically of Pippin’s reading of Hegel in order to shed light on Dewey’s theory, which is the main focus of this thesis. Further, by acknowledging the part Kant’s project plays both in Hegel’s and Dewey’s thought supports the comparison between Hegel and Dewey.

The outline of the chapter contents are as follows.

Chapter II is an exposition of Hegel's project that begins with a brief explanation of the problem of objectivity as Kant articulated it as well as his attempt to resolve it. This will be followed by a discussion of the elements of Kant’s model that Hegel incorporates as part of his own theory. My goal in this chapter to draw the Kantian thread that I believe connects Hegel and Dewey in terms of their place within the same overall Kantian project.

Chapter III is an outline of Dewey's project in terms of Dewey's scholarly development and the influence of Hegelianism in the United States at that time. I will

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4 Robert B. Pippin, Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press 1989. 3-8. This is but a brief sketch of Pippin’s overall reading of Hegel.
delineate the interrelated themes of organicism, historicism and the role of the self in the pursuit of knowledge that were informed by that Hegelianism. The Kantian thread will be taken up once more with a more detailed discussion of the connections between Kant, Hegel and Dewey. I draw these connections in order to argue that Dewey could be rightly placed in the Kantian tradition. Finally, I discuss two specific elements of Dewey’s epistemology, namely, his claim that experience is the ground of knowledge, and the notion of what Dewey early on referred to as the unanalyzed totality.

Chapter IV is a consideration of the common theoretical aspects of Hegel’s and Dewey’s work. This will be explained in terms of their common rejection of empiricist principles including the foundational separation of subject and object, and the dualistic assumptions and categories that result. Both Hegel and Dewey have similar ways of approaching these empirical principles. The limitations of the correspondence theory of truth and the negative characterization of skeptical dilemmas will be taken into account.

Chapter V is where the parallels will be drawn between their constructive mechanisms of objectivity: Hegel’s Dialectic and Dewey’s Theory of Inquiry. First, there is a restatement of the three interrelated themes common to both projects, followed by a comparison of the two circuits. Each circuit is set up by a concept that makes its respective work distinctive, For Hegel it is sublation and for Dewey it is experimentalism. Lastly, I provide a summary discussion that highlights and defends my position that the “Hegelian Deposit” in Dewey’s thought is significant because it
highlights the strong connection between Dewey and Kant that Hegel provides and thus places Dewey within the Enlightenment project begun by Kant.
CHAPTER II

HEGEL’S EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROJECT

Traditionally, Hegel has been interpreted as a metaphysician or theologian who claims reality is reduced to a monistic, self-actualizing Absolute. My intention here is to rely upon an interpretation of Hegel as an epistemologist who aligns himself with Kant and his new epistemological model which posits that objects conform to mind. I will begin with a brief summary of Kant’s epistemological model, with close attention to those points that were of most interest to Hegel, namely, the Transcendental Deduction which describes the constitutive role of the individual in the activity of the Transcendental Unity of Apperception as well the conditions for experience that are not “empirically grounded.”¹ This will be followed by a discussion of portions of the model that Hegel appropriates and incorporates as part of his own theory.

Kant’s Transcendental Philosophy is an attempt to resolve the problem presented by skepticism, namely, that there is no justification for the possibility of knowledge. Transcendental philosophy begins by establishing what a priori conditions are necessary for any possibility of experience, and therefore necessary for knowledge. There exists a

¹ Pippin, 23.
dispute between the empiricists and the rationalists in which each makes certain assumptions about the robustness of that which they take to be objectively true about sense and intellect respectively. This results in the inability to get outside of the mind to see what objects actually exist outside the self; so in essence we are “locked in” and consequently, have no access to the real world, thus there is no guarantee of objectivity. To the rationalists, all objects of experience are ideas in the mind and these ideas are, in fact, the only reality. Reality and any inferences we make from experience are as they appear. As with the empiricists, the outcome is the same-- they are unable to justify how it is that appearance and reality correspond as universal concepts. They cannot justify the movement from “my” mind to the “cosmic mind.” In both cases, the general picture is that the mind conforms to the objects it perceives; therefore, knowledge that relies in any way on the experience of objects outside of ourselves cannot be objective. Kant attempts to forge a course between these two groups by bringing elements of empiricism and rationalism together into his theory. Kant’s answer is the Transcendental Deduction.

The Transcendental Deduction is Kant’s response to traditional epistemology’s preoccupation with objects of knowledge. Kant is not concerned with describing or cataloguing the objects of knowledge but how it is that we can have experience of objects at all. The how question has been answered by establishing a priori conditions that allow us to experience objects. The foundational a priori condition is the Transcendental Unity of Apperception (TUA) that is the hub of the “reflexive or apperceptive nature...of
experience. 6 This apperceptive self is defined as a function within a structure of
intellectual concepts and sense intuitions that produce a “meaningful organization within
consciousness of individual objects of perception.” 7 In Kant’s model, the Intellect, which
functions as a set of concepts that are objective categories of understanding, and the sense
intuitions of time and space are present a priori. The experience of an object is taken in
and “worked over” in the TUA. This then produces an object through the activities of
identity and unity that is a synthesis of the intellect and sense intuitions, what Kant calls
“determinate judgments” that are objective and universal. Experience is “implicitly
reflexive” because of the relationship between the subject and the object of experience.
The subject not only actively unifies all experiences of that object but is aware that she is
unifying experiences. 8 This is expressed in the concept that a subject spontaneously does
two things: it separates itself from all other objects and it relates to all other objects.
Apperception as a self-consciousness that is, by its very nature, a unifying structure is the
most crucial aspect of Kant’s TUA which Hegel appropriates for important, interrelated
reasons: 1) the TUA confirms the essential role of the subject in experience and asserts
that this subject has the capacity to make some basic discriminations prior to experience
in order for experience to occur, and 2) the TUA asserts the claim of its essential role in
the possibility of the experience of objects, which is a rejection of the notion that

knowledge can be acquired through immediate or spontaneous experience.

6 Ibid., 8.
7 Ibid., 19.
8 Ibid., 21.
These reasons are best understood by a more detailed account of the apperceptive self as the outcome of the related functions of the self necessary for the possibility of experience. These are the functions of identity and unity. Identity refers to the idea of the subject being identical through time—a particular “I” having experiences, which in turn allows this “I” to recognize that the experiences belong to it. The experiences as well as the synthesis of those experiences could not occur without identity. Unity refers to the task of the subject to “actively” unify all the representations of any single object of experience. Finally, self-consciousness plays an essential role in identity and unity because there needs to be a self that is conscious of these unifying actions.\(^9\) The \textit{a priori} status of this apperceptive self implies the rejection of any characterization of immediate, empirical experience as knowledge. This is because an apperceptive self is an \textit{activity} of synthesizing experience and concepts and cannot be described in the same manner as previous models of self have been described. In previous empirical descriptions, the self is a structure that is empty, static and receptive—taking in sensory information from the external world. Hegel’s apperceptive self is not a structure at all. It is not empty; there is activity by which the self identifies itself apart from all the rest of the things in the world and relates to it. It is not static because there would be constant change, as the self begins to appropriate certain concepts about what it experiences and adjusts those concepts when necessary. Finally, this apperceptive self is not passively waiting for information—it is actively attending to experience. It also means that this apperceptive self cannot be

\(^{9}\) Ibid., 19.
derived nor refuted by empirical experience. As a Kantian construct, the TUA is the place where sense and intellect synthesize and make experience possible. However, by maintaining these separate sources of knowledge, self and object are still separated. This becomes the basis for Hegel’s break with Kant’s model. While Hegel breaks with Kant’s theory, he is in firm agreement with Kant’s project in general, which is to reject both the empiricist and rationalist positions with regard to knowledge and what had traditionally been defined as objectivity, as well as Kant’s acknowledgement of the foundational, reflexive relationship between the individual and objects of experience.

A Speculative Philosophy

Hegel refers to his systematic philosophy as Speculative Philosophy as a way to distinguish it from other epistemologies. His Speculative Philosophy emphasizes the principle of identity that encompasses both subject and object and not just the subject in three discrete features: (1) the functional aspect of the TUA by which Hegel means to argue that theapperceptive self is not a formal structure of any kind separated from experience, nor is it a part of a transcendent, cosmic mind; (2) his emphasis on the historical dimension of the development of human consciousness and by extension, human knowledge, and finally, (3) his embrace of organicism; thus creating a system in which knowledge is discovered in and informed by the history of human activity of which individuals are organic parts of a whole. While there will be an account of all three features, the current discussion will be about the first feature of Hegel’s theory.
The first feature under discussion here is the functional aspect of the theory. As it has been discussed, Hegel preserves the Kantian notion of the apperceptive self characterized by its dynamic and synthesizing activity; however, the intuitions and the intellectual concepts are not separated from objects of experience as they are in Cartesian epistemologies which define the intellect as one realm and experience as another realm. Hegel means to say that they are in fact elements of a dynamic function that confirms the interrelation of subject/object, particular/universal as a feature of our judgments and the knowledge that results. This apperceptive self is a consciousness that is typified by an acknowledgement of other in which a subject first distinguishes itself from the object it perceives and then relates to it. This results from Hegel’s particular model of a self that functions in three ways: (i) it maintains an identity for itself through time; (ii) it identifies itself in terms of that which is not itself and (iii) it maintains its primacy as both an action and an objective fact. Essentially, the first and second functions occur together and at all times-- which makes this activity the foundation of all consciousness and why it has primacy.

Hegel first considers the phenomenon of experience from the point of view of commonsense realism, which argues that sense experience is a sufficient condition for knowledge. “This simple immediacy [of sense intuitions] is its truth.” We experience an object as a “this”—a real, determinate object which assumes a “certainty as a connection” which is immediate and pure. This particular description assumes two things: “consciousness is a pure ‘this’ and this consciousness knows a pure ‘this’ or the single
Hegel asks what “this” really is. Sense certainty would tell us this is an experience of an object in terms of sense intuitions of space and time: This is “here” and “now;” and to test it, we verify with experience. The problem is however, that “here” and “now” are not certain at all but shift in meaning as the subject’s experience shifts. Here and now could be answered: “I am seated in front of my desk at 3:06 pm,” but this answer changes all the time. Mere sense experience really cannot tell us anything because what we mean when we say “here” and “now” is indeterminate. The “this” (as well as the “here” and “now”) “that is meant cannot be reached by language, which belongs to consciousness … [and] in the actual attempt to say it, it would therefore crumble away.”

Hegel then ponders how it is that we experience qualities as properties of an object, a particular “this.” Hegel claims that in apprehending any properties, we have already apprehended them in a particular way—as properties of a certain thing. Essentially, it is perceived either as a unity or a diversity of primary/secondary or essential /unessential properties but this activity does not fully explain the complexity of our experience of objects either. Experience would be a distorted “manifold” of sensations but for the apperceptive self that determines which set of primary and secondary properties it selects. Hegel concludes no immediate truth could come from sense intuition because the object is not what it was “supposed to be for sense-certainty,”

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11 Ibid., §110;66 & §102; 82.
a particular “this” a subject could know fully upon perceiving.\textsuperscript{12} What happens instead is that a “this” is experienced in terms of its particular properties but in attempting to express that particular, “we utter the universal.”\textsuperscript{13} Hegel wants to move away from the conception of experience as essentially the apprehension of objects and properties towards a view of experience as the application of concepts of which the subject, as an apperceptive consciousness, is a part. This application of concepts is the product of what Hegel calls an “unconditioned universal” that is the ground of consciousness, which cannot be affirmed or denied from either the sense intuitions or intellectual intuitions.\textsuperscript{14}

In a reiteration of what he considers absolutely necessary for experience at all, this unconditioned universal is the apperceptive self that spontaneously unifies qualities of objects and is consciously aware that it is doing so for itself. Unless we were implicitly aware we were doing so, we could not in fact determine an object, nor represent its qualities. Thus, sense experience could not be sufficient for knowledge because it fails to adequately describe the complexity of our relations in apprehending objects. Hegel concludes that sense certainty cannot be rejected outright, but rather must be preserved in the ideas of perception and understanding as elements of a more complex description of objectivity. Furthermore, any attempt with language to adequately describe what we know objectively, solely in terms of either sense experience or intellectual understanding,

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., §100; 81.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., §97; 81.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., §42; 155.
is thwarted by a partial and inadequate picture of our experience. Essentially, we cannot
“fully say what we mean,” because there must be something that renders coherent
anything we might “say.”

Whereas Kant argues that a priori categories are the non-empirical foundation of
the unifying activity, Hegel disagrees because a priori categories still must rely on sense
experience to get the process going, and thus is not the unconditional universal that is
responsible for the unifying activity of the apperceptive self. For Hegel, this
unconditional universal is thought itself. Thought is the activity of the apperceptive self
and Hegel argues that both perception and understanding are mediated by a subject’s
involvements with the world and other subjects as well as being mediated by its attempts
to satisfy its desires. It is for this reason that Hegel refers to thought as the unconditional
universal as Begriff. It is traditionally translated as “Notion,” but this translation ignores
the homonomous relation Begriff has with the verb greifen which means to grasp or
seize. However, aside from meaning to grasp or seize, it also means “to understand,”
and can be used to indicate a concept or the verb “to conceptualize.” Hegel’s choice of
this word would indicate his goal of characterizing this unconditional universal as an
activity, and this activity is about a self that creates concepts. The relationship between

15 Pippin, Hegel’s Idealism. 132.
perception and understanding and its movement can be expressed in terms of language that highlights the interrelation between subject/object or particular/universal as an essential feature of the reflexive and dynamic interrelation of judgment, knowledge and the structure of the self. These are characterized by tension in which the particular and the universal must be defined in terms of the other. Traditionally, knowledge is judged accurate if it corresponds with reality. Ironically, this notion relies on the assumption that permeates modern epistemologies: the Cartesian distinction between mind and matter. Skepticism is hard to avoid if one assumes that there are two different realities—the reality of mind (consciousness) and the reality of matter (outside of consciousness)—with no way of bridging the gap between. But Hegel defines consciousness as an “object-referring” activity that is necessary to have experience. As such, the intentionality of consciousness suggests that all that is perceived by consciousness is reality. Judgments are not separate from consciousness and any skepticism about those judgments is not separate either. Skeptical dilemmas are not to be avoided but become a necessary aspect of what a subject does to work or resolve the dilemma. Hegel’s goal is to demonstrate that objectivity should be understood as a subject’s experience of self-opposition that leads, in a succession of moments, to Absolute Knowing—a subject who consciously and implicitly apprehends objects for itself.

Substance as Subject

In the dispute between the empiricists and the rationalists, certain assumptions are made concerning the foundations of knowledge, which each takes to be objectively true about intellect and sense respectively. For the empiricists, knowledge is based on the fact that we experience objects through direct sense impressions of the “real” world. These sense impressions become the foundation of what subjects can say is known. However, a distinction is made between the real world and the sense impressions of the subject. The world is given status as the ultimate reality and this undermines the value of sense impressions and any knowledge we might derive from them. What results is the inability to get outside of the mind to see what objects really are out there. This further implies a similar distinction between the subject’s sense impressions and the subject herself. Subjects are essentially “locked in” and consequently have no access to the real world and thus have no guarantee of objectivity.

Hegel argues how it is that relying solely on either sense intuition or intellectual intuition will lead to static isolation. In the conventional understanding of S (subject) and P(predicate), the subject represents what is taken from sense intuition (the perception of objects) and the predicate represents what is taken from the intellect (the cognitive work to determine objects by their place in intellectual concepts) and their roles in the proposition “S is P” is static. In Hegel’s reconfiguration of this, the subject is what Hegel calls “the fixed point to which…the predicates are affixed by a movement belonging to the knower of this Subject, and which is not regarded as belonging to the fixed point
itself; yet it is only through this movement that the content could be represented as
Subject…”19 Substance, as subject, is this “fixed point” that is the “unconditional
universal,” the foundation of the activity and movement of the subject from mere
experience to knowledge. As Hegel explains, experience is immediate but cannot provide
knowledge. Understanding is the beginning of the activity of the subject in its quest for
knowledge and as such provides conceptual understanding of the experience at hand,
making distinctions between the parts that draw a subject’s attention away from the
whole of experience. Reason is another moment—the first negation in the dialectic—
which allows the subject to see the aforementioned gap between consciousness and
reality in terms of contradictions or antinomies that must be resolved. The gap however,
is not between the Cartesian realities of mind and matter, but between the subject’s
theoretical understanding of ‘what is’ (or the ‘what is’ the subject desires) versus the
sensible ‘what is’.

The second and third features of Hegel’s theory—the emphasis on the historical
and organic development of knowledge and human consciousness—are recognized in the
organization and subject matter of the Phenomenology of Spirit. The dialectical method
illuminates his conception of philosophy as a practical activity that helps achieve the
unity of self-consciousness with itself. The dialectic – in terms of both its movement and
its results—brings out interrelated ideas that can be seen working throughout all his
thought. The first idea is that knowledge and theory are concepts that are subject to

19 Hegel, Phenomenology, 23.
change. This places them in the context of historical and cultural situations that results in a developing knowledge and theory that arise organically from within a particular historical and cultural context. Thus there is no absolute “god’s eye view” of any subject or experience. Hegel argues that while we do have access to reality and the objects that compose it, reality and its objects, as well as our experience of the world and ventures out into the world, mediate and are mediated by self-consciousness. This interrelated model of self-consciousness and reality and its dialectical movement occur at every level of experience and knowledge. Subject and object are no longer separated but are part of a dynamic that sees knowledge develop as an organic result of the subject-object relation. The authority of that development extends far beyond the span of any one person or culture and thus the historical dimension of this unity is hard to ignore. This process is not static but changes to become a more progressive and comprehensive expression of the unity of subject and object.

Hegel’s definitions of objectivity and knowledge are founded on the essential role the self plays in this ongoing progression and development toward ‘Spirit’ and the comprehensive expression of it in knowledge. Hegel uses the term Spirit in broad and narrow senses. One sense is the overall goal of the dialectic, which is Spirit as it refers to the unity achieved when a self-conscious subject realizes its conscious, active relation to objects in the world. The other sense is Spirit that describes “individual psychological life” which would include all mental activity, including thought and experience of objects. As previously discussed these are shaped by the mind in terms of experience
mediated by a subject’s consciousness, a constant readjustment of the relationship between self and other, and the subject is shaped by consciousness in the selfsame manner. The subject matter of this science is the “actualization” of ideas as products of this dialectic. Thought, which Hegel refers to as Notion is realized in external existence in logical structures, scientific knowledge and language (among other things). In his system, all knowledge is preserved in knowledge that supplants it. “It is in this way that the content shows that its determinateness is not received from something else, nor externally attached to it, but that it determines itself.”20 This progression is articulated in terms of a recurrent threefold development of Being, Essence and Notion that Hegel reiterates throughout his systematic philosophy and the epistemological structure he illustrates in the *Phenomenology*.

Hegel sees the interrelation between subject-object or particular-universal as an essential feature of judgment and knowledge. This interrelation is a reflexive and dynamic association in which the particular and the universal are each defined in terms of the other. Knowledge is possible only when that tension is worked through and resolved. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel critiques the empiricists who claim that the only true source of knowledge is sense experience and our empirical observations. However, in trying to express knowledge claims, the empiricist claims of knowledge become “inverted.” Inverted means the claims being made are basically empty because what is being expressed describes the opposite of what they mean. Hegel describes the

20 Ibid., §53, 34.
empiricists’ attempt in terms of the two concepts of sense experience—time and space—or as he discusses them, the “here and now” of experience. Hegel contends that the attempt to make any claim based solely on the here and now, as explicit particularity, becomes so abstract that any claim of a particular here or now loses its meaning because it becomes an abstraction. And since the claim can mean many and different “heres” or “nows,” it turns out to be no “heres” and “nows.” The result is that one loses the ability to “say what one means” if any attempt is made to make any claims about the world based solely on sense intuitions. The activity of the apperceptive self, as well as its response to objects in the world, would be reflected in the language used to express what we know about the world but also what we want to see and/or do in the world. This activity is essential to the possibility of knowledge and therefore, intimately connected to our experience. Skepticism is no longer about whether or not we can really know anything; it is about the gap that exists between what we know and what we want.

21 Pippin, Hegel’s Idealism, 132.
DEWEY’S EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROJECT

Dewey’s Epistemological Project

The threads of Dewey’s epistemology are no less intricately interlaced than Hegel’s. At the time of Dewey’s maturation as a philosopher in the late 1800s, philosophical debate was dominated by the St. Louis Hegelians who had seen the increasing secularization of philosophical dispute in general, along with the interaction between American and German intellectuals that informed the way in which Hegel’s ideas were received. The St. Louis Hegelians took Hegel’s philosophy to be the most apt expression of what they thought philosophy should be: “a philosophy of cultural criticism and social activism.”¹ For the St. Louis Hegelians, philosophy should not only deal with philosophical problems but the practical concerns of promoting the improvement and the flourishing of both the individual and society. The St. Louis Hegelians were convinced that one of Hegel’s most insightful ideas was that “the individual could overcome the opposition between subject and object, rendering knowledge as a relation

¹ Good, 62.
of the two rather than the power of one over the other.”

Additionally, the historicism and organicism of Hegel’s thought found expression in the concept of Bildung, a word that is used to describe the concept of education as development or “self-formation.”

Thus the emphasis on the formation and development of individual consciousness through education and activism were the necessary conditions under which the formation and development of the community as a whole could likewise develop. This Bildung was a movement through stages or moments in which knowledge, as a product of experience and consciousness, was expressed in the community as shared knowledge as well as infused in the structures of social, cultural and political institutions. The group promoted these Hegelian notions in their scholarly work as well as their social and political activism. In the scholarly milieu in which Dewey found himself, Dewey’s response to the materialism that dominated philosophical thought was shaped by both the liberalist interpretation of Hegel by the St. Louis group as well as the evolutionary theory that began to exert its influence in the late 1800s. The interpretation of Hegel revolved chiefly around three interrelated themes: organicism, historicism and the role of the self in acquisition of knowledge. These themes emphasized the development of the individual and the acquisition of knowledge in terms of an analysis of consciousness and its products as functional.

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23 Ibid., 74.
24 Ibid., xx.
The first theme is organicism—the concept that each individual is an organic part of society and that the condition of any one individual affects the condition of all. Through the influence of W.T. Harris and other American Hegelians, Dewey embraced the idea of reality as an organic whole and that the role of philosophy was in tune with Hegel’s own view of it: philosophy as Bildung. The activism and scholarly work by which the St. Louis Hegelians defined themselves and their movement saw philosophy as a practical activity that labored to affect the individual as well as the community.²⁵ When defined in terms of its function, knowledge and the activity of acquiring knowledge become something that happens immanently within the process of bildung.²⁶ Knowledge is no longer a fixed notion that stands outside of human activity or thought, nor does it become an abstract standard by which human thought is compared or evaluated. Instead, the self and the activity of acquiring knowledge are part of a give and take relationship between a self and her surroundings and thus knowledge becomes both a product of human inquiry and a tool for further inquiry. The idea that the individual overcomes opposition between itself and the world implies experience is a part of judgments in a way that previous epistemologies had either disparaged or extolled.

²⁵ Ibid., 62.
²⁶ Ibid., 74.
Another closely related theme is historicism, which reiterates the relationship between history and knowledge as it is described in the organic relationship between the individual and culture. This means the correlation between human understanding and knowledge is understood in terms of the continuity between the historical development of human endeavor and the store of accumulated knowledge. The historicism of Hegel’s system affirms the influence upon, as well as the deep connection between, every era’s accumulation of knowledge. This concept of continuity linked ideas from the past to ideas in the present, which would then link them to the future. The endeavors of the St. Louis Hegelians were expected to have consequences far beyond their own time. In other words, whether superseded by other knowledge or not, knowledge has a connection with previous knowledge and will share in future knowledge. This continuity provides the trail that documents the movements in self-formation that ultimately become a model of rationality/objectivity.

The Apperceptive Self

The third, and in many ways, the most important Hegelian theme seen in Dewey’s work is the connection between the epistemological theories of these two thinkers: the foundational role the self plays in the experience and acquisition of knowledge and the pursuit of objectivity and truth. The apperceptive self is the center of thought and knowledge which frames the activity toward what becomes an object for an individual because of his experience. As previously asserted, the Kantian construct of the TUA is the place where sense and intellect synthesize and make experience possible. However,
by maintaining these separate sources of knowledge, self and object are still separated. In Hegel’s appropriation, the apperceptive self loses both its formal structure and its passivity; instead of being a place where sense and intellect bring intuitions to the fore to produce judgments, the apperceptive self actively attends to experience. This Hegelian move was an attempt to integrate self and object which would then inform the way in which the self takes in information about the world and how the self responds and makes judgments. These ideas were, for Dewey and the St. Louis Hegelians, a critique of what he called the “disintegrative individualism” of modern Western culture.27 In James A. Good’s A Search for Unity in Diversity: The “Permanent Hegelian Deposit” in the Philosophy of John Dewey, the author contents that this individualism was one of the results of “the Cartesian notion that knowledge was gained by reducing complex wholes to their constituent parts.” So in part, the acceptance of the strong support for Bildung was to preserve the idea that knowledge was “related to other parts and how it functioned within the whole.”28 And while there is no doubt that Dewey “drifted away from Hegelianism,”29 within the context of the epistemological tradition discussed previously, Dewey’s project is steeped in these idealist tenets. By his own admission, Dewey, like Hegel and Kant before him, is concerned with the consequences of traditional dualism that resulted in what he saw as a wide gap between “effective inquiry” and the everyday.

27 Good, Unity in Diversity, 103.
28 Ibid. xx.
29 Dewey, “From Absolutism to Experimentalism,” 12.
practical concerns of human activity and life. In the most profound sense, subject-object, or individual – nature are fully integrated into a functional unity in which each is equally “inside” the other and components of what he described was an unanalyzed totality.” This unanalyzed totality, to be discussed in the next few pages, integrates the subject with nature, and this integration thwarts skepticism’s assault on knowledge and objectivity. This has been the motivation that lies beneath the epistemological project begun by Kant: to diffuse the skepticism that had gripped traditional conceptions of knowledge and truth. Because sense and intellect remained “separate wellsprings” behind which Pure Ideals and things-in-themselves might lurk, Kant’s attempt at eliminating skepticism proved less than successful. The stronger response to this problem was Hegel’s appropriation of skepticism. In Hegel’s system, doubt is the function of negation that drives the circuit of opposition to unity of the subject and predicate, particular and concept, self and other. In this way, doubt is the grist necessary for through the dialectic and movement forward toward knowledge. Dewey builds upon this Hegelian notion by explaining philosophical skepticism with mere doubt that is a natural and necessary step in the movement toward knowledge, and he does this by incorporating doubt into the method of inquiry. Dewey accomplishes this by setting up his epistemological model, with experience as the guiding principle serving as the ground of knowledge. The notion that experience is unconditional is strikingly similar to Hegel’s conception. It is

unconditional because it is necessary for the possibility of knowledge. At the same time though, experience casts the objects of knowledge as attained objectives.

**Continuity of Project**

The question that guided the efforts of Kant and Hegel is the same one that guides Dewey: How is it that objectivity can be achieved and what conditions are necessary in order to achieve it? Hegel’s answer was to ground epistemological objectivity in a self-consciousness that is defined by the process of negation linking self and other, which includes all that is not the self. Dewey’s goal is to take this notion of an apperceptive self that plays a pivotal role in the acquisition of knowledge at its most elemental level – at the level of experience—and makes experience the ground of objectivity, of which the self and what it attends to are necessary phases in dynamic problem-solving activity. The functions of both the self and experience bring together the themes given voice in this essay, namely they give objectivity and knowledge historical places within the realm of the entirety of human activity and reinstate the self as a component of the totality of the world as it is experienced. When perceived in this manner, any move to get knowledge in addition to the store of existing knowledge grows with ongoing problem-solving activity. For Dewey, objective knowledge can be achieved; however, objectivity has a different meaning because knowledge is an attained objective. Dewey characterizes knowledge as objective when there is a triangulation between a subject, the hypothetical goal that guides inquiry, and the affirmed goal that is the known object. The conditions necessary for that are articulated in a more detailed discussion of Dewey’s positing of
experience as the ground for knowledge, in his new conception of naturalism, as well as the significance of the scientific method to his theory.

Dewey’s Response: Experience as Ground

By rejecting the rift between subject and nature, and integrating them into a functional unity, what results is a broader definition of experience. This distinction is founded upon the notion of double-barreled words, a term borrowed from William James. A double-barreled word is one that “recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object but contains them both in an unanalyzed totality.” The unanalyzed totality will be discussed in the next section, but briefly this is a non-reflective state whereby subject and object are in the other. Dewey’s formulation of experience is in this double-barreled sense because it is both how we experience things and aids in the discrimination of what those things are. Experience becomes both the act of a subject accessing nature and the means by which a subject makes sense of the activity and things experienced. As Dewey notes in his “Postulate of Immediate Empiricism,” in order to give experience and nature equal status, any presuppositions about what the term “experience” means must be acknowledged, but rejected in favor of a new explanation. As a result of the separation between subject and nature, experience had been too subjective and fragmented to be reliable. Dewey’s new definition of

experience is contained in this postulate: “Immediate empiricism postulates that things—anything, everything, in the ordinary or non-technical use of the term “thing” are what they are experienced as.” Dewey argues that each experience has its own quality, and that “to describe anything truly” is to describe the experience of it. 32 There are two reasons for this: one is a matter of rejecting the notion that experiences are to be evaluated as “approximations of reality,” and the other, in relation to the first, is acknowledgment that reality is experienced as that.33

No account of experience is “more real” than another; they are experiences. One’s task is to determine “what sort of experience is denoted or indicated.” In Dewey’s view, whether the experience is clear or vague, useful or detrimental is an indication of the different “reals of experience,” and not an indication of a gap between an account and an absolute reality that is independent of our experience. His intention is to remove this gap because it sweeps away any chance at knowledge. 34 For past epistemologies, the concept of an absolute “Reality” has been privileged and used as the yardstick by which all experience is measured. However, in Dewey’s account, since every experience is as real as all other experiences, “Reality” as some singular, static stock of truth is no longer privileged.

33 Ibid., 150.
34 Ibid.
Dewey’s example of the non-reflective unity of subject and object is of being disturbed by a sudden and alarming noise. The experience of the noise is what it is experienced as; the noise really is alarming and real. One might hypothesize that someone is attempting to gain entrance into the house. Turning every light on, a person will begin looking for the exact source of the noise. The investigation reveals that the noise is the result of wind coming from an open window which has caused the window shade to flap violently against the pane. The noise is no longer experienced as alarming. One now knows the noise to be the sound of a shade flapping in the wind. The noise has become habituated, and is now part of the reconstituted unity of subject and object. Upon hearing that noise again, it will no longer be experienced as alarming. To reiterate: the noise was first experienced as alarming. As it continues, the noise is experienced as worrisome, which leads to inquiry that reveals its origin, and now the noise is experienced as a known thing—a flapping window shade. Dewey’s assertion is that the alarm, the worry and knowledge are all real experiences, and that the difference in “experienced existence [was] effected through the medium of cognition.”

Within the context of the aforementioned broader conception of experience, these differences in experience underscore a distinction Dewey makes between the cognitive experience of a thing and a thing experienced as cognized. A cognitive experience is one that provokes behavior, such as investigation and making inferences. The alarming nature of the noise, and doubt, described as worry here, were both cognitive experiences.
because they motivated inquiry into the source of the noise. The cognitive experience is “fulfilled” in the ensuing experience of that noise “as a known object, and is thereby transformed or reorganized” before it is returned to what Dewey refers to as the unanalyzed totality.\footnote{Dewey, Postulate, 162.} It is at this point of fulfillment that the cognitive experience becomes the cognized thing or object, which is attained objective. Every experience as a unique event is never replicated; what is replicated is the thing experienced. The inferences and relations made by the subject concerning that thing are no less real that the initial experience but the understanding of that thing determines its status as an object of import to the subject. Knowledge certainly demands special attention because the thing experienced as known as been affirmed in and through the process of inquiry, but in no way does it replace or demote the first experience of the noise because it is less real.

The traditional concept of knowledge was based on the strength of the corrobororation of an experience with a particular state of affairs or mind-independent object. The experience that most closely corresponded to the object was considered “more real” than any other experiences. The experience, substantiated by the concrete existence of an object in nature, was given the status of truth. In Dewey’s description of the epistemological process, every experience is equally real in the sense of really being that experience, though some are more warranted that others or have a greater explanatory value. Experience, in its double-barreled nature, is unified in the unanalyzed
totality, which will be discussed next. Experience, as a double-barreled term, means both the “what” or process of experiencing, and the “how” or history of experience.

The Unanalyzed Totality

The two meanings of experience are united in the unanalyzed totality, which Dewey refers to as “immediate experience,” characterized as a state of stability. Totality in this context is not a description of the world in its entirety but a description of the scope of information and tools available to a subject, comprised of cognitive work done previously. In this default state of everyday life, subject and object are undifferentiated. Thought and objects are not separated out of this settled totality of experience. As one sits at her desk there are habituated things, objects sounds, and processes that comprise the non-reflective ground of experience. Sitting at one’s desk, the bulk of attention is only on a fraction of this, what is read and typed. At the same time, one is surrounded by books and other items. In this state, one is vaguely aware of the hum of the computer and the mini-fridge, and Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto playing in the background but because these things already have been experienced as known, they are no longer attended to. They have been assumed into the totality and make up what William James referred to as the “field of the present.” It is only when something presents itself by calling my attention—the telephone rings, I am hungry, the music stops, there is a knock at my door—that I am pulled out of this state. In these moments I must differentiate

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myself from the field of things around me and attend to those things in particular that require my concentration or investigation. Resolving minor and major ‘glitches’ moves me back and forth between states of immediate experience, to states of doubt and inquiry, and back again to that settled place in which one lives a vast majority of the time. It is in this way that Hegel’s emphasis “on the organic relationship of subject and object, intelligence and the world,” and the function of negation is apparent in Dewey’s epistemological work.38 Dewey’s goal is to describe the totality as a subject or self working in conjunction with experience. Each experience of a habituated (known) thing becomes a part of the unanalyzed totality and enriches the background of habits and beliefs and provides tools for solving future problems. And this is a consequence of the double-barreled character of experience, the “what” and the “how” of experience, which Dewey posits as the ground for even the possibility of knowledge. This ‘division of labor’ between the subject and object, and how we approach problems and what we understand in such activity sustains Dewey’s claim that there is no such thing as immediate knowledge, but that each known object is, in fact, the result of previous cognitive experience.

The significant role of the subject as an agent of this transformation expresses aspects of the aforementioned historicism and organicism American Hegelians maintained in their own scholarly and activist goals. What this means in terms of historicism is that rather than assume that previous knowledge and activity must be torn

38 Good, 107.
down or completely supplanted, it would be more useful to see any inquiry into a particular matter at hand as knowledge that resolved a particular problem that might no longer be applicable to or satisfy a want that has been met. To see knowledge in this light is to give it the role of resource in inquiry. What this means in terms of organicism is that any resolution, product or result of inquiry comes from the individual’s actions toward and responses to nature.

The Experimental Method

Another condition necessary for objectivity is the importance of finding a method that stays true to Dewey’s theory that relies on experience as ground. He finds that the goals and techniques of the scientific method best accomplish this goal. As discussed previously, in positing experience as the ground of knowledge, he redefines the term “experience” as it relates to knowledge and the determination of what facts are. Dewey does this by re-establishing the continuity between experience and nature. The way experience had been understood previously was that it was not robust enough to make any significant assertions about nature because nature is completely apart from experience. In the case of the traditional notion of naturalism, nature is framed entirely in terms of material causes and mechanistic workings. Within that context, experience is degraded to merely another cause and denied “the noble and ideal values that characterize experience.”

The model for re-establishing the continuity between experience and

nature is found in experimental science because experience is not maligned, and nature is respected. Dewey makes this claim based on two aspects of the experimental method. One is the manner in which science takes experience as the primary source for material that aid in the formulation of hypotheses and investigation. The other is the fact that in science, one must return to experience to test hypotheses. Experience is the starting point and essential to the scientific method. At the same time, experience is co-equal with nature in that nothing of consequence can be deduced from either experience or nature alone. Experience in the world is the method, the “how” by which we formulate hypotheses and test them in the “what” of nature. Dewey’s contention is that philosophy looks to the scientific method as a model for its own techniques for getting at this new conception of knowledge. Experience should be a “starting point” and the means by which we deal with nature.

The dynamic association between subject and object emphasizes that any epistemological claim to know is not absolutely or eternally true. Dewey rejects the idea that philosophy should be concerned with truth or knowledge as static concepts. In laying out an argument for an epistemology that relies on an experimental and thus scientific methodology, Dewey emphasizes the continuity between philosophy and science in his assessment that any meaningful theory of knowledge should be practical and critical. The main thesis of this essay is that a common pattern in the structure and function can be discerned in any inquiry. In its most basic formulation, the underlying pattern is that which begins with an unanalyzed totality that is interrupted by doubt and ends with
knowledge. Thus Dewey maintains two ideas: one is that knowledge is not a specialized by-product of reason and the other is that doubt does not jeopardize the inquiry or its results; they are both merely divisions of labor or phases of problem-solving activity. Knowledge and doubt here are defined differently than the definitions customarily accepted in epistemology. Knowledge is an experience that is defined as an outgrowth of inquiry that helps define and direct further development of any subject matter. Doubt is experience that provides the impetus for inquiry.

With the unconditional ground of experience set, Dewey reexamines knowledge, objectivity, truth in an interrelated way that maintains his notion that those terms are a result of humans responding and working in nature. Knowledge is but one kind of experience in the process of inquiry. Objectivity refers to the outcome of any process of inquiry that has affirmed an indiscriminate thing as an object. Truth is not a static concept but a provisional place a subject is situated. This is encapsulated by the description of the movement of inquiry in terms of how it is that ideas (human experience) and facts (about nature) bring us newer conceptualizations of knowledge, objectivity and truth. As has been noted, this “interrelated way” of describing these concepts acknowledges their historical place within human inquiry and the ways in which any decided outcome is directly affected by human experience of the world and human responses to it.
CHAPTER IV

COMMON THEORETICAL ASPECTS

In order to make an argument that the permanent Hegelian deposit in Dewey’s work can be found in his “movement of inquiry,” several steps were necessary in the previous chapters. The first step was to discuss the compatibility of themes that supported the overall goals of their work, which emphasize the continuity of project undertaken by Hegel and Dewey. These themes included historicism, organicism and the role of the apperceptive self in the acquisition of knowledge. The next step was to draw out the particulars of each thinker’s epistemological project. Hegel, driven by Kant’s goal of determining the conditions necessary for objective knowledge, appropriates the Kantian concept of the apperceptive self but defines it in terms of an activity and a ground for the possibility of knowledge rather than a formal structure. Dewey expands the activity of that apperceptive self by redefining experience as the activity and ground for knowledge that is objective as he defines it. For Hegel and Dewey, the organic and historical aspects of their epistemological models are demonstrated by the unfolding of the meaning of objects. Each philosopher claims that both meaning of objects and opposition to ascribed meanings arise organically out of the relation of subject and object.
Additionally, the historical element is established in the fact that the relation between subject and object is continuous and cumulative. Consequently, knowledge as well as the activity in pursuit of it is continuous and cumulative as well.

With this backdrop in mind, what follows will be a discussion of the common theoretical aspects of their work. First, there is a common rejection of three interrelated empiricist principles: a) the separation of subject and object, b) the limited, dualistic character of the correspondence between subject and object, and c) the characterization of skeptical dilemmas as a declaration of the impossibility of knowledge that is an inevitable consequence of this dualistic separation. Second, there is a consideration of a conception of naturalism that Dewey claimed was more in harmony with the scientific method and attitude than traditional empiricism.

**Empiricism and Truth**

As was discussed previously, traditional empiricism posits a qualitative difference between the realm of reality, and the realm of experience or thought. From an epistemological point of view, this means a qualitative difference between the objects “out there” of which the world is composed, and a subject who experiences and proposes ideas about the objects. While there is an acknowledgment of the “overlap” between the two realms, each is independent of the other. It is this qualitative difference upon which two contentions are made. The first is the assumption that reality is transcendent. The world—nature and the objects in it—is real because it is absolute and unchanging in terms of its structures, processes and natural laws. Moreover, the world is the “ultimate”
reality, especially when set in contrast to the sheer variety of experiences and ideas that occur in a subject. Consequently, experience and ideas are judged to be less real or not real at all. This has informed the way truth is defined and evaluated, and leads to the second assumption: truth is to be assessed in terms of an indisputable correspondence between experience and the mind-independent world. From the perspective of empiricism, the ultimately real and unchanging character of reality places on the subject the burden of proving or confirming the correspondence of a proposition to reality. Objective truth, acknowledged to be located in the real world, is likewise transcendent and unchanging, and independent of any subject, his experience or his ideas. The process of acquiring knowledge that is objectively true is a process that is directed toward correspondence with that concrete and unchanging world with truth being the final product that is always true. As a fixed entity, truth in this sense is that to which a subject must align his thoughts, and any idea that does not either “accurately” describe or correspond to objects or facts is considered false and discarded as useless.

The consequence of the foundational, qualitative difference ultimately leads to skepticism because thought is always superseded by reality and the proof necessary to overcome skepticism is unattainable. In a process in which both the world and truth are transcendent of human thought, skepticism devalues any knowledge we may posit about the world in two ways. First, the confirmation of a proposition is saddled by the resulting bivalent system in which there are only two outcomes: true or false. Either a subjective idea corresponds to an object or it does not. The subject is forced into the untenable
position of relying on what is unknowable, the things-in-themselves, which are forever cast beyond the veil of subjectivity, while hampering the possibility of attaining knowledge that is objective and true. The second way skepticism taints a knowledge claim is by demanding justification for the leap that must be made across the “epistemological chasm”\textsuperscript{40} that separates subject and object. There is no irrevocable or independent justification for the move from a subject’s idea of an object to the object “out there.” To distinguish truth from thought in such a manner makes it impossible to establish the significance of thought as it pertains to reality, which is separate and infinite. So if there is any doubt regarding which of these two outcomes has been reached, then absolute truth is unattainable and by extrapolation, NO truth is possible. The quest for knowledge and truth is constantly undermined by skepticism.

Dewey’s Response

Dewey’s response is to reject the tenets and consequences of empiricism and offer a different way of looking at truth that is in direct opposition to the notion of truth as transcendent. Dewey does not accept the separate status of reality and experience. As discussed in the previous chapter, immediate empiricism claims that every experience, in the broader sense in which Dewey construed it, is judged real because reality is what it is experienced as. Since experience and reality are not separated, there is no ranking of

\textsuperscript{40} I have borrowed this phrase from William James, which comes from his essay “A World of Pure Experience,” Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy, Second Edition. ed. John J. Stuhr. (New York: Oxford University Press 2000), 181.
experiences deemed “more real” than others. The broader definition of experience and
the reevaluation of the status of knowledge and doubt provide the support Dewey needs
in order to refute the qualitative difference found in traditional empiricism between
consciousness and reality, or in epistemological terms—between subject and object.

Since Dewey denies the distinction between the two realms, he rejects the
empiricist method of verification which preserves the duality created by the distinction.
This method is self-defeating because it negatively characterizes the value and power of
experience as well as the determination that doubt and truth are both phases of
experience. The issue then is no longer about the qualitative difference between a
subject’s experience and an object, but the location of the correspondence necessary to
verify a proposition as true or false. Truth arises naturally from inquiry because inquiry
begins with a degree of knowledge as reliable “guiding principles” for action, and a
view of what the aim of the inquiry is. Dewey’s dynamic method of inquiry does not rely
on a bivalent system of true or false, but rather relies on a broader conception of truth that
is within grasp and can be verified through the outcome of inquiry that originated to
resolve a problem or dispatch a disturbance. For this reason, Dewey prefers the term
“warranted belief” over the term “truth.” A warranted belief is that which is reflected in
the correspondence between a hypothesis or proposition, and the outcome of inquiry.

41 C.S. Peirce, “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities,” Pragmatism and Classical American
principle, as the starting point of reasoning, results from our experience with any particular object or event,
and serves as a resource in human endeavors to add to the knowledge of an object or event.
Thus, the cosmic leap from a subjective state to a truth found out in the world is unnecessary. Instead there is a progressive function of inquiry in which immediate non-reflective totality, doubts, relations, and inferences accrue in known objects that are subsequently returned to an unanalyzed totality. Things become objects as they are affirmed in inquiry as warranted. Once affirmed in this manner, these warranted beliefs become a part of the non-reflective unity.

Skepticism or doubt as an obstacle to truth is also rejected because it has been incorporated into the extended classification of experience. Dewey describes the experience of doubt as a feeling of discomfort or uneasiness because it is an interruption of the state of non-reflective experience. This interruption disturbs the calm and settled feeling that is dominant in non-reflective experience. A subject undifferentiated from its habituated surroundings is confronted with an issue that compels him to find a way to stop this uneasiness or quell the doubt. The process of knowledge is about testing and verifying beliefs in the world and experience is the way a subject interacts with and responds to nature. The process unfolds within the process itself, instead of being directed by a transcendent truth located somewhere beyond. Knowledge is impermanent and responsive to changes and new problems that arise. The skeptic’s doubt is not a drawback but a way of re-incorporating the value of experience into the quest for knowledge. The acknowledgement of limitation on the status of knowledge leaves room for the development of thought and allows for further questions and possibilities to arise in order to obtain a more thorough account of the world.
The separation of human experience from the rest of nature is, according to Dewey, so deeply “engrained” in our discussion of knowledge, truth and objectivity that we no longer give experience its due. Dewey’s rejection of the basic concepts of traditional empiricism, as well as the implications of those basic notions, is what underlies his re-assessment of the concepts of knowledge, truth and objectivity. Similar to the double-barreledness of the term “experience,” the double-barreled nature of the terms knowledge, truth, objectivity, and world must also be acknowledged. These terms are loaded words implicitly understood as being defined both by the content (the what), and the process (the how) by which the content is acquired. Acknowledging the role of the how and the what of experience as a function or method alleviates the burden the tradition places on these words. The new understanding of these words offers what he believes is a more accurate representation of the reciprocity between individuals and nature.

The previous discussion has been an account of Dewey’s rejection of empiricist tenets. These rejections come out of his position in the overall project begun by Kant. The question was: “How it is that objectivity can be achieved?” Dewey’s answer has been to expand the definition and value of experience into the quest for objectivity, to reject the ingrained assumptions about the separation of subject from nature, and to reject the privileged status of nature. Another aspect of that rejection however, is illustrated in Dewey’s naturalism. This is a component of Dewey’s thought that solidifies his claim that a philosophy should ally itself with the experimental method of getting at knowledge
that begins with what is observed in experience and relies on verification of a claim in experience, and thus can be deemed warranted or objective. This method, while still empirical, assumes a naturalism that maintains Dewey’s rejection of traditional empiricism.

**Dewey’s Naturalism**

Rather than making the commitment to a naturalism that reduces all reality to materialistic and causal relationships, Dewey believes the human role must be reintroduced into naturalism in order to do justice to the comprehensive nature of experience. This naturalism is reflected in Dewey’s epistemology because knowledge is part of the organic process of responses and relations between human activities and nature, and not a matter of correspondence of ideas with immutable and transcendent absolutes. Dewey preferred to call his epistemology a theory of inquiry because traditional epistemologies distinguish too sharply between knowledge and the world to which knowledge refers. Empiricism reduces ideas to “mental copies of physical things,” the copies are (hopefully) identical to the physical things. Ultimately, empiricism ignores the function of ideas in directing observation and establishing relevant facts. Rationalism recognizes that facts are important only in relation to ideas and yet equates ideas with the ultimate structure of ‘Reality.’ Neither theory accurately characterizes the quality of the association between individual and environment or, in epistemological terms, the correlativity between subject and object. Dewey’s account of naturalism calls attention to that correlativity.
In “Experience and Philosophic Method,” Dewey asserts that the correlativity between subject and object is affirmed in the employment of a method in which nature and human experience “get on harmoniously together,” and it must be a philosophy of naturalism that neither isolates nature as separate and mechanistic nor denigrates human experience. Both are invaluable to the acquisition of knowledge. Dewey wants to make some claims about empirical naturalism as he discusses them in terms of experience and nature, but it is necessary to acknowledge the baggage that is attached to them because they have, in the past, implied mutually exclusive notions. This also goes towards explaining the divorce of philosophy from the scientific method and why he argues for a philosophical method that takes into account the best attributes of the scientific method that can make philosophy relevant and meaningful to human life. From the empiricist point of view, experience is judged too flimsy and inconsistent to help make any signification assertions about nature, and nature is said to be completely apart from experience. The result is humans are shut off from nature and unable to make meaningful claims about nature in terms of experience. Nature is framed as completely independent material causes and mechanistic workings that degrades experience to merely another cause and denies “the noble and ideal values that characterize experience.”

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43 Ibid., 10.
Dewey claims that the philosophical method should align itself with the scientific method because in science, experience is “habitually treated as a starting point and as a method for dealing with nature.”44 Pragmatic philosophical method frames nature and experience in a harmonious, functioning unity. Experience is the only way to get at nature and “wherein nature empirically disclosed deepens, enriches and directs the further development of experience.”45 It is significant that science takes experience as a primary source in terms of providing the material for reflection in hypotheses and investigation, what he calls “secondary sources”, but then invariably, science must go back to experience to test hypotheses. Dewey sees this as significant because he wants to illustrate how important experience is to science, which he understands as proven successful in providing humanity with a more thorough understanding of the world around us. Every phase of scientific method relies on experience. According to Dewey, it is in science where one finds that “nature and experience get on harmoniously together.”46 Dewey therefore looks to scientific method to provide a model for a new approach to a philosophical method that puts experience back into the connection between thought and nature, both in terms of its “cozy” relationship with experience as well as its constant confirmation of theory within experience and empirical observation. Philosophical methods that do not acknowledge the value of experience are unsuccessful

44 Ibid., 13.
45 Ibid., 11.
46 Ibid.
because confirmation is placed outside of experience. Without confirmation in experience, philosophy loses its practical function and ultimately results in a theory that is “arbitrary and aloof” and “occupies a realm of its own without contact with the things of ordinary experience.” In the end, both philosophy and the community at large lose out on that which might be learned from experience.

Philosophy as Dewey articulates it would begin with experience as primary material for inquiry rather than traditional epistemologies’ reliance on what he calls the “reflective products” of experience. These reflective products are laden with assumptions and structures that are not acknowledged. Dewey rejects this conventional approach as unworthy of any philosophy that is to fulfill its task as an endeavor that attempts to enrich life and establish conditions under which a community might flourish. From Dewey’s pragmatic perspective, doubt is not about whether or not we can really know anything, but rather it is about the gap between the world as it is and the way we want it to be.

47 Ibid., 17.
48 Ibid., 18.
The previous chapter was a discussion of the common theoretical aspects in the theories of Hegel and Dewey. In light of that discussion, what follows is a brief outline of how the theoretical aspects play out in Hegel’s dialectical circuit and Dewey’s theory of inquiry. The section on Hegel will begin with a definition of sublation and how the concept fits into his dialectic, followed by the three moments of the dialectical movement. The section on Dewey will begin with a definition of instrumentalism and how the concept fits into his theory of inquiry. This is followed by a summary discussion of commonalities between the two theories. The goal of the following chapter is to stress that while there are many parallels between their respective accounts of the method by which objectivity is achieved, the following three are most prominent: 1) the definition of objectivity in terms of that which results from the activity of the subject in experience; 2) the incorporation of doubt into the process of knowledge, and 3) their acknowledgement of the repetitive, recurring cycle of doubt and belief that is the natural, constitutive character of consciousness. In light of such parallels, it does not seem too far-fetched to argue for the significance of the Hegelian Deposit in Dewey’s theory of inquiry as it puts
Dewey in the position of attempting to advance the aim of the Enlightenment project begun by Kant.

For both Hegel and Dewey, despite the different ways in which it is characterized, individuals are both continuous with nature as agents acting within nature, seeking to understand, respond and plan. They are in accord in their rejection of epistemologies that recognize and affirm the Cartesian split between subject and world. Intellectual concepts are useful in a subject’s ability to make discriminations about the “things” in experience, but come from an increasingly complex understanding of nature. Experience is our access to nature, but immediate sense experience (that which is without reflection) does not warrant immediate knowledge. Both Hegel and Dewey see intellectual concepts and sense experience as taking on different tasks within the process of acquiring knowledge. This process moves in a similar way from a non-reflective state, into a problem or interruption of that state, which leads to a reflection state which devises a resolution of some sort that eventually gets reintegrated back into the non-reflective state.

This common approach to the acquisition of knowledge in terms of the continuity of self and world accentuate the three themes mentioned throughout this discussion. This common approach exemplifies the fact that organicism and historicism are accepted as tenets of each philosopher’s method for acquiring knowledge. Organicism is an accepted tenet of both philosophers that results from their rejection of the fundamental distinction between subject and nature made in other epistemologies. The view that self and world are two aspects of a unified whole is recapitulated in the relation between self and
knowledge, in which each part of the whole functions within a dynamic interplay. Historicism is reflected in the temporal aspect of the relation between self and world, self and knowledge. The process of inquiry is influenced by changes in the environment, as well as historical changes, political changes, and changing cultural practices. This influence is outlined in the historical accounting of any human endeavor; and it follows the development of a more complex understanding and at times clearer understanding of an idea, a process or event. The organic and temporal features highlight the connection between the subject and the world and stress the essential role of the self in Hegel and Dewey’s respective theories of knowledge in different ways. For Hegel, the apperceptive self is essential because it is the ground for the possibility of experience and absolute knowledge. Absolute in this sense is not about certainty, but about knowing because knowing assumes that all knowledge is mediated through negation and relation. For Dewey, the experience of a self as an agent of change is essential as the grounds for the possibility of knowledge that is objective as a result of inquiry. It is not the case that either thinker is denying a subject’s ability to know things in the world, but for both Hegel and Dewey, the conditions under which the process of knowledge is possible are traced to an initial circumstance of unity between subject and object.

**Sublation and the Dialectic**

The description of the dialectic relies on a series of negations that preserve aspects of what has been negated. It is necessary to explain this process of negation because it is an important concept in Hegel’s project. The word he uses implies that what
has been negated has not been reduced to nothing or completely eliminated, but is a fundamental element of the epistemological process. Hegel uses the word *Aufheben*, commonly interpreted as sublation, to explain the way in which each moment in the dialectic grows out of the moment before and how it is that it maintains aspects of the preceding moment in the moment after. In recognizing that the moments overlap, Hegel employs the word in a way that encompasses several senses of the word: to raise or hold, to destroy or suspend, and finally, to keep or preserve. 49 If the concept is understood in terms of the dialectic, what I take this to mean is that whatever perceptions emerge from immediate experience become part of the process of thought, and are preserved in any future interaction between the individual and the world. When an inconsistency or contradiction occurs, what has become part of the unity of self-consciousness and object will serve in the resolution to overcome the contradiction by a synthesis of the perception about an object for the subject. This synthesis preserves the contradictions which come to be the seeds of opposition in the next moment of negation. This principle, like Dewey’s circuit of inquiry, is continuous and provides the tension necessary for the movement of the dialectic that begins in a state in which consciousness makes the initial attempt to take hold of a thing, which is described as the unity of subject and object, followed by a disruption of that unity by negation and through sublation, returns to a settled state.

Hegel’s dialectic will now be discussed in terms of its phenomenological phases,

followed by the description of the three moments of the dialectic that illustrate how it is that knowledge arises in the world.

Phenomenologically, the circuit begins in the unity of the subject and the world as the subject takes it in apperceptively. This unity is broadly similar to Dewey’s primary non-reflective experience, as it refers to a subject’s experience already conditioned by the apperceptive self and the sense intuitions of time and space. Hegel refers to this “as what is immediate, [the unity] presents itself as determined as an infinite manifold, as a world in all its fullness.”\(^{50}\) That unity is disrupted when the subject is confronted with a general sense of otherness. This phase of the dialectic is defined by negation that at this point, is simply the other. It is in fact two negations. The first happens when the subject negates the other in its acknowledgment of it. The second happens whereby the subject also becomes aware of itself as a negation of the other. This opposition, as negation, occurs in moments in which the subject experiences something as “internally deficient.” The opposition is resolved as a result of the activity of the self because just as the episode is “internally deficient,” so it is “internally correctible.”\(^{51}\) As stated previously, the essence of self is negation and this “negativity…is not alien to [self] but is its very own.”\(^{52}\)

Hegel’s apperceptive self is the fixed point throughout these dialectical moments which makes objectivity possible. Thus, knowledge is objective because it is the result of the

\(^{50}\) Hegel, *Phenomenology*, §50; 161.

\(^{51}\) Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism*, 100.

\(^{52}\) Ibid. 134.
process by which a subject’s experiences of self-opposition moves toward resolution.

Overall, Hegel’s system is triadic and is subsequently divided and subdivided into three parts or “moments.” What follows is a brief explanation of the three movements self-consciousness traverses as it attempts to make sense of perception, to then begin forming a concept from perception and cognitive work. Finally, the subject arrives at a “new” concept that implicitly contains previous conceptions and negations within it that give meaning to perception and can be used in future cognitive activity. These three moments repeat continuously with ever expanding concepts used to create meaning, as well as ever expanding understanding of the subject’s relation to both concepts and objects.

Hegel begins the introduction to *Phenomenology of Spirit* considering the assumptions made previously with regard to the relation between cognition and what he refers to as “Absolute” knowledge, which is “the result of a long process of inquiry”. The assumption has been that cognition is separate from truth, and that it either serves as a tool “to get hold of the Absolute or a medium through which ones discovers it.” This results in a the belief that there is a separation between cognition and “what exists in itself”(§73; 46). Hegel argues that what is really going on is that we have erroneously assumed “there is a difference between ourselves and cognition” and that cognition is

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53 Hegel, *Phenomenology*. §166: 88,

54 Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, 27-28. The “Absolute” is not complete or unconditional, but is mediated by the development of our understanding of the relationship between its manifestations in the phenomenal world and our knowledge of it. In this sense, the Absolute cannot be absolute *alone*, but is “dependent on its manifestations…as much as the manifestations depend on it.”
outside of the realm of truth (§74; 47). This has resulted in skepticism about our own
cognition in response to the fear that we would base knowledge on “mere authority”
rather than on personal, empirical experience. The history of science has been, according
to Hegel, “the history of the education of consciousness.” The goal is consciousness’
understanding of itself as well in grasping the concept of “other,” comprised of objects
and other consciousnesses. Phenomenal experience is not immediate, since it is already
processed in a particular way; and the apperceptive self, as the ground of knowledge, is
defined by negation which is indicated by the skeptical attitude, that in turn fuels the
progression of consciousness. Skepticism is the pattern of “incomplete consciousness”
that begins in the “bare abstraction of nothingness” of the first moment, a simple
distinction between consciousness and an object. This is followed by the second
moment, which is the progression through “determinate negations” in which
consciousness both negates and preserves the first negation. Finally, in the third moment,
consciousness moves towards the goal of “the Notion,” which is when consciousness
understands it has created a concept, and superseded it on reflecting upon itself. For
Hegel this third moment is when consciousness is aware of how it corresponds to an

55 Hegel, *Phenomenology*, §78, 50.
57 Ibid., 59.
object and how the object corresponds to the Notion. What follows is a more detailed description of these three moments.

The “bare abstraction of nothingness” is the initial state of the subject in its unity with the object: S →←P. This is the state of incomplete consciousness that begins in sense-certainty. This is what Hegel refers to as “being-in-itself,” where immediate knowledge is the experience of what simply is. Herein lays the first negation in the path of consciousness towards understanding. The approach of consciousness in this state is “receptive” and does little to adjust the object “as it presents itself.” Thus sense-certainty appears to be “the richest kind of knowledge” and the truest knowledge. The first moment of consciousness is to decipher the distinction between “two Thises.” One This is the I of consciousness; the other This is the object. The certainty that consciousness feels is the “immediate pure connection” between the I and the object, each as a pure This. But because sense-certainty has not excluded anything from the object, but instead understands the object in its entirety, consciousness does not grasp that this immediacy already has been mediated by consciousness. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Hegel asserts that the term “this,” while it refers to a pure consciousness or the single item of a sense impression, is universal in that it loses its meaning outside of the context of consciousness as a fixed point. As Hegel states, “the force of its truth thus lies now in

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59 Ibid., §84, 53.
60 Ibid., Ibid. §90, 58.
the I, in the immediacy of my seeing, hearing…” Upon pointing out a “this” I have the “first” truth of sense-certainty. The self differentiates itself from other. However, consciousness points out another “this.” The previous “this” and its truth have been negated and “superseded” by another instance of a “this.” This superseded truth is now the “second” truth; and it is again superseded by another experience of the object. And this experience reasserts the first truth (that the “this” simply is) but it is no longer an immediate and simple experience, but instead is comprised of these moments of negation and supercession, which is the process of sublation. The initial “this” is not the same because it reflects both truths and the negations from which they sprung. The object, previously a simple “this,” is now understood by consciousness to be a “plurality of particulars” (“thises”) that have been combined in a universal concept. The result of these moments is a general concept supplied by the consciousness, that is necessary for itself in future cognitive activity. The negations in this part of the triad explain the activity of a subject confronted by a sense impression that is informed by the task of consciousness, which is negation. This first moment of negation and sublation ends in the reconciliation of subject and object reflected in the universal concept of the object supplied by the subject.

The second moment is a negation of the negation in which subject and object are differentiated: S ←→P. Hegel refers to this moment as “Perception” but he also

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61 Ibid., §101, 61.
62 Ibid., §107; §63-64.
identifies it as “being for itself and being-for-another.”

63  In this moment, consciousness takes what is as universal. However, this moment is not the simple differentiation of two thises, but the differentiation between the truth of the sense impression of a “this,” and the meaning imposed upon it by the universal concept. Perception “does not just happen” to consciousness like the experience of sense-certainty. The essence of perception is negation or “difference” because there is the perceiving of an object in relation to the universal concept that contains properties that allow for both a determinateness (the properties that places the object in the universal) and a differentiation (the properties that distinguish it from other particular instances of that object). This is a tension that exists in negating the negation of the first moment. In the creation of the concept, there was a simple differentiation between a subject and the object as merely external. In this moment however, the object has now achieved “thinghood” because it has been experienced by consciousness with qualities by which the object transcends both its particularity and its universality. 64  Hegel affirms that “consciousness has experienced in Perception that the outcome and the truth of Perception, as the second moment in consciousness’ understanding, is its dissolution.”

65  Consciousness is not just apprehending an object in sense-certainty, but apprehends itself, by which it recognizes its role in the creation of meaning in the form of universal concepts. This constitutes a

63  Ibid., §84, 53.
64  Ibid., §113, 68.
65  Ibid., §118, 71.
reflection into self because consciousness becomes the “universal medium” in which negation and sublation are preserved.\textsuperscript{66} In this second negation, an object is a thing because it is represented by a universal concept, but furthermore is an intrinsic thing because it possesses properties that differentiate it particularly that are peculiar to itself. Consciousness makes these differentiations and connections, and “becomes aware of its power to correct perception,” providing a more correct understanding of both its concepts and itself.\textsuperscript{67} Hegel contends that this second negation is a “determinate negation” because it results in a “new form” of both the concept and consciousness that has progressed through a succession of forms that become more determinate.\textsuperscript{68} Universal concepts are preserved for as long as they continue to adequately describe or give meaning to objects. When corrections are necessary, the concept is reformulated in order to respond to difference or contradiction. The result of this moment is of an object grasped within the concept of a universal that is no longer conditioned by sense certainty. Critical to this stage is the awareness of consciousness of the difference between sense impressions and the meanings that come from universal concepts. This difference prompts feelings of skepticism that fuels negation and negation is thus built into the machinery of knowledge. Consciousness generates other concepts to address this difference, because consciousness is able to grasp the concept of the object in itself as

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., §119, 72.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., §118ff, 511.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., §79, 51.
well as the object as it is for consciousness.\textsuperscript{69} This negation is a reflection, in the form of contradiction or opposition, which separates the subject from that which is other because of what Hegel describes as consciousness recognizing an experience as “internally deficient” in some way.\textsuperscript{70} It is not just a matter of self-awareness as reflection, but rather a reflexive activity that is recognition of both the object and itself as subject as well as their interrelatedness. Hegel describes this as a “return to self.”\textsuperscript{71} Subject and object are held together by the work of the apperceptive self in pursuit of knowledge. The progression toward concepts that more adequately express the meaning of objects for consciousness leads to the third moment Hegel calls “Force and Understanding: Appearance and the Supersensible World.”

The third moment is another negation that once more sublates what has been negated previously. What manifests in this stage is the reconciliation of subject and object S ↔ P. We recall that in Chapter II the term “Notion” was discussed. Its meaning is “to grasp or seize, to understand, to conceptualize.”\textsuperscript{72} In this part of the triad, concepts develop that bear the credence of the subject’s desires and goals. This reconciliation is an “externalization of consciousness” that “posits the ‘thinghood’ of an object, not its literal

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\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., §86, 55.

\textsuperscript{70} Pippin, \textit{Hegel’s Idealism}, 100.

\textsuperscript{71} Hegel, \textit{Phenomenology}, §83, 53.

\textsuperscript{72} Inwood, M.J. \textit{A Hegel Dictionary}, 58.
In this manner, the object is more than just a “thing” in the most general sense; it has become an “object of perception” that has been given meaning by the subject who has perceived it. This results from the ability of consciousness to identify the relatedness of universality and particularity in the concepts which are a movement toward knowledge. This relatedness is what Hegel describes as “Force” and Force is consciousness in two ways. In one way it is the “universal medium” that both negates and sublates (preserves) all particulars. This is the process of moving back and forth between the conceptualization of universals that “disperse” into independent particulars. These independent particulars are the expression or manifestation of Force (consciousness). Secondly, while Force maintains these particulars as independent from each other, they arise from the unity of consciousness, that which is not expressed in actuality.

Consciousness reflects on itself through the movement within this unity. The expression of this unity in the appearance of particulars presents itself to consciousness as a complex unity that is what Hegel refers to as “interpenetrated.” Consciousness, however, is still not aware of its full relation to the object as a Thing. The object is still treated as something separate from consciousness because consciousness has not fully grasped the manner in which it transforms the object for itself. This particular

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73 Pippin, Hegel’s Idealism, 168.

74 Hegel used the term Dingheit which literally translated means ‘thing-ness’ or ‘thing-hood’. A Hegel Dictionary explains Hegel’s use of Dingheit in this sense means an object of perception.” 289.

75 Hegel Phenomenology, §136, 81. Hegel refers to these particulars as “independent matters.”
transformation resembles the transformation made in the first moment from a particular “this” to a “this” that has the properties that make it a universal concept as well as a distinct, particular “this”. In this stage, the transformation is the recognition that the truth of an object is expressed in the concept of a “profound” unity of both aspects of the properties that help define the object (the properties that both determine its membership in a universal and distinguish it as a particular thing). 76

The moments here characterized are part of the engine of objectivity by which consciousness continually repeats the process of refining concepts, which are universal, in order to make sense of the particulars of sense impression. Consciousness does this with the continual negation and sublation of previous concepts. At the onset of this thesis, I state my use of a particular interpretation of Hegel set forth by Pippin. Setting Hegel within the context of Kant’s overall project to respond to the challenge to claims of objectivity, Pippin’s final conclusion is that for Hegel, the Notion, as Absolute, is the realization that our essence is negation. It is through negation by which consciousness propels itself toward self-consciousness both individually and socially, in its ongoing progression toward Absolute self-consciousness. For Hegel, the Absolute Notion is the manifestation of self-consciousness, not only in the form of the dialectic, but in our cultural reality as well.

76 Ibid. 81.
Experimentalism and the Theory of Inquiry

Dewey’s theory of inquiry is described as the movement through phases which assume ideas and facts are ‘operational’ and functional in a dynamic problem-solving activity. Inquiry is the controlled and directed movement from what he refers to as an “indeterminate situation” to a determinate situation.\textsuperscript{77} Indeterminate things in the early phases of inquiry are merely “subject matter” and as these ‘things’ are given meaning and context through experience and cognition, they change into objects because they have meaning and context in experience. Similar to self-consciousness, experience is the broader notion that does not imply an autonomous subject. As objects, they in turn become useful in further inquiry or in dealing with other indeterminate situations. As such, “objects are the objectives of inquiry.”\textsuperscript{78} Experimentalism was a term Dewey gave to that part of his theory of knowledge that explained how it is that objects that have been affirmed in inquiry would “grow out of and return into the subject-matter of the everyday kind.”\textsuperscript{79} This transformation happens through the interlocking functions of perception, and cognition in experience. From Dewey’s perspective, knowledge was cognitive but it was also existential. This concrete and empirical function is possible because “object-as-objectives” become instruments in future inquiry. An object-as-objective brings the ideal

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\item Ibid., 119.
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of a plan or hypothesis to fruition. And these also become the tools and information to be used in future inquiry. Immediate experience is the place to begin the discussion of his theory because it illustrates this interlocking function. Immediate experience is really not immediate at all—it is mediated experience that has become immediate. This totality, as discussed in previous chapter, is a state of stability composed of objects and processes that were previously realized or known. They are incorporated into a subject’s habits, of both thought and action, and the perspective from which a subject responds to nature. The stability comes from the integration of subject and objects, and when that stability is disturbed by doubt, the continuous process of inquiry begins again. The goal of inquiry is to modify the elements of an indeterminate situation so that they become elements of the “unified whole” of the unanalyzed totality.\textsuperscript{80} The pattern of inquiry Dewey claims is that pattern which can be discerned from actions and methods that have proven successful. However, Dewey’s point is that it is not the outcome of any particular inquiry that is successful, but the function itself that is successful. Every outcome, whether effective or ineffective, supplies the subject with another means of responding successfully to nature within the context of his surroundings.

**Phases in the Movement of Inquiry**

The initial state is the Unanalyzed Totality. If we recall, the Unanalyzed Totality, which Dewey refers to as “Immediate Experience,” is a place of stability typified by a

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\textsuperscript{80} Dewey, “Pattern,” 105.
state in which subject and object are undifferentiated because of the success of previous
cognitive work. Each experience of a known thing becomes an undifferentiated part of
the Unanalyzed Totality and provides the subject with more complex resources for living
and future inquiries. Dewey describes the first phase of the inquiry as the “antecedent
conditions of inquiry” which is the “indeterminate situation.” It is Dewey’s claim that
this is the default state of experience until a disruption or a “some thing” calls into
question the settled meaning of immediate experience. This disruption, or second phase,
is the Indeterminate Situation. An indeterminate situation is characterized as doubtful or
ambiguous. It is obscure because there is doubt in the ability to predict the significance
or probable outcomes of a situation. Dewey says that when a situation is experienced as
doubtful, doubt is not merely a subjective state but a genuine account of how things are.
Doubt is an important impetus to inquiry because part of the goal of inquiry is to find
some way to alleviate the doubting condition by actions and not just by reconciling
subjective “mental processes.”

The next phase is the initial phase of inquiry -- “the institution of a problem,”
which is followed by hypotheses and testing. The indeterminate situation is not yet a
problem. Things are undetermined and hence, precognitive. The indeterminate situation

81 Ibid.

(Carbondale IL: SIU Press 1977), 158. The term “thing” is defined in the most broad sense to encompass
“anything, everything, in the ordinary or non-technical use of the term “thing.”

only becomes recognized as a problem once an inquiry has begun. To identify a situation as a problem transforms the indeterminate situation into a more determinate one that will direct our questions and hypotheses. The way in which a problem is articulated also influences what is relevant to the resolution of the problem, including hypotheses and facts.84 Once a problem has been established, the next step is to figure out the facts of the situation by empirical observation of the environment. This is when we isolate “the facts of the case”…and these facts must be considered in any proposed solution.85 This is the empirical aspect of Dewey’s theory. At the same time, the critical or reflective aspect is described in terms of ideas. Ideas begin as suggestions that simply occur to us and as such really have no value until it can be determined whether or not they function with the given facts to resolve a problematic situation.86 Dewey says that it is the case that perceptual and conceptual materials function correlative with each other. The perceptual helps describe the problem while the conceptual signifies a possible path toward resolution; however, in Dewey’s theory, the perceptual and the conceptual are used both in the diagnosis of a problem and the development of hypotheses that attempt to resolve the problem. Facts and ideas are deemed true “by their capacity to work together to introduce a resolved unified solution” because they represent possibilities that

84 Ibid., 108.
85 Ibid. 109.
86 Ibid. 110.
anticipate a particular goal.\textsuperscript{87} Testing the possibilities is crucial in achieving an objective resolution.

The fourth phase is the outcome of the process and the redefined notion of objectivity that results. Facts, ideas, and situations are all labeled “things” in the broadest sense of the term. These “things” are what they are experienced as, but they are, in fact, not fully objects yet. These things—facts, ideas, situations—are transformed into objects because their meaning has been affirmed in the resolution of a problem. The objects then become tools for future inquiry and aid in the process of determining the meaning of other things. The temporal quality of inquiry means not only that the process of inquiry takes time, but more importantly, it means that the objective subject-matter of inquiry undergoes temporal modifications as well. As a consequence the status of knowledge and truth is not fixed or absolute. The pragmatic measure of truth is achieved in the way “perceptual and conceptual contents” work together. The perceptual is the “how” and the conceptual is the “why” and when they work together to “introduce a resolved unified situation” that can be said to be warranted as true.\textsuperscript{88} What is warranted as true, Dewey refers to as “operational” because he means to include the notion that facts, as objects-as-objectives “are not self-sufficient and complete in themselves.” Furthermore, they will be used in relation with other facts in order to accomplish some definite goal.\textsuperscript{89} What this

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid. 111.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. 111.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid. 113.
means is that matters of knowledge and what constitutes “truth” change just as there are changes in the ways in which individuals experience and respond to a situation. This is Dewey’s response to the notion of objectivity defined by that which resolves the widest range of problems over the longest length of time. Dewey did not agree that objectivity could be reached by removing ourselves from the situation at hand and taking a “god’s eye view.” Objectivity in this sense would be fixed and thus insensitive to the constantly changing and developing experience of humans interacting with one another and the environment. Dewey’s theory of inquiry suggests that we must assume the attitude of inquisitiveness, one that reserves no judgment until the facts of a situation are assessed and a hypothesis formulated that can be tested for efficacy. Therefore objectivity merely refers to the culmination of investigation and inquiry that values facts and ideas only if they are of use in the resolution of a problem and not just because they have worked in the past.

The final phase is the reintegration of known objects, events and ideas back into the unanalyzed totality of immediate experience. This is what happens when an indeterminate situation is transformed into “a determinately unified one.”90 This is the unanalyzed totality which emphasizes the organic way in which the subject is united with his environment. Primary experience, as a place of settled meaning, is primary because this is the state in which the subject is situated and the state to which the subject is intent

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90 Ibid. 117.
upon returning. It is immediate because it is the basic unity of subject and object, where there is no differentiation between them. The unanalyzed totality is the background of settled meaning for both those elements of the background that resulted from previous reflection and those elements of the background accepted unproblematically. The union of known objects and doubt in the Unanalyzed Totality moves from not only a conception of knowledge as grounded in a separate realm, but the reconception of knowledge as *knowing*, an activity rather than a product. Thus, any outcome that resolves doubt is considered objective.

**Summary and Discussion**

Chapter 2 was a discussion of Hegel’s place within the overall Kantian project of creating an epistemological model that forged a middle way between empiricist and rationalist theories. The goal of such a project was to respond to the “scandal of philosophy” which was the skeptic’s ability to question or even deny the possibility of objective knowledge. The traditional understanding was that mind conformed to objects because objects were (supposedly) fixed and stable things, and thus the measure of objectivity. Appropriating the Kantian apperceptive self, Hegel makes the self an object-referring activity that is the ground for the possibility of knowledge. Chapter 3 was a discussion of Dewey’s place within that overall project and the influence that the St. Louis Hegelians had on Dewey’s thought. The question that guided this project was how it is that knowledge is possible. In Dewey’s model, experience becomes the guiding principle that serves as the ground of knowledge. The answers of each philosopher
emphasized different notions and capacities, but each attempted to advance Kant’s cause. The starting point for both Hegel and Dewey, and their respective enterprises was Kant’s description of the mind as an activity in which intellect and sense intuitions are *a priori* conditions of experience that come together to produce an idea about an object. Chapter 4, was a discussion in which other common aspects of their work are highlighted, and my attempt at creating a framework in which both Hegel’s Dialectic and Dewey’s Theory of Inquiry may be seen as efforts to more effectively answer that guiding question. There are elements of Kant’s theory that have been appropriated by Hegel; and similarly, there are elements of Hegel’s theory that have been appropriated by Dewey. Chapter 5 has been about giving a brief account of the dialectic and the theory of inquiry in order to emphasize the fundamental similarities between the two. From my perspective, the significance of those elements appropriated by Dewey is that these elements, specifically as they pertain to the method of inquiry, are part of what comprises what Dewey himself referred to as the “permanent Hegelian deposit” in his philosophy. The three most prominent are 1) the definition of objectivity in terms of that which results from the activity of the subject in experience; 2) the incorporation of doubt into the process of knowledge, and 3) the repetitive, recurring cycle of doubt and belief that is the natural, constitutive character of consciousness. What follows is a more detailed explanation of these three elements.

The first element to be discussed is the issue of objectivity. Previous to Kant’s revolution, objectivity was a matter of correspondence between an idea and the object in
question. Moreover, in this setup the object retained control over what constituted objective knowledge. In Kant’s construction, control was now shifted to the activity of the Transcendental Unity of Apperception, the hub of work done by the *a priori* constructs of intellectual and sense intuitions. However, the problem returned with the inability to eliminate the thing-in-itself as the ultimate source of the sense intuitions. For Hegel and then later for Dewey, the problem was resolved in moving from a structure wherein cognitive work merely synthesized the different wellsprings of intellect and sense, to making the cognitive work itself the ground for the possibility of knowledge. For both Hegel and Dewey, objectivity should be redefined as resulting from the activity of respectively, self-consciousness and experience, and the products of these, once objectively known, would be useful in further cognitive activity. For both thinkers, their epistemological models illustrate three things with regard to objectivity: 1) objectivity is the relationship between sense, as the object of experience, and the intellect, as the subject that relates itself to the objects; 2) the apperceptive self, or in Dewey’s case, the self as an agent of transformation or change, was the place where subject and object are brought together in reflexive activity, and 3) knowledge that results from this relational activity is incomplete and ongoing.

The second element is the role of skepticism in Hegel’s and Dewey’s thought and how both incorporated it into the process of objective knowledge. Skepticism was the position that conceded to the limitations of knowledge in the claim that certainty or objective knowledge was impossible. Both Hegel and Dewey, while also conceding to the
limitations of knowledge, responded to that claim by incorporating it into their respective systems. In the introduction of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel claims that “the road” of consciousness is comprised of moments in which consciousness loses itself, and “loses its truth” in its realization of the Notion. Notion generally means “concept” or the ability to conceptualize, and this occurs in the attempt of consciousness to understand itself in addition to grasping the concept of “other,” comprised of objects and other consciousnesses.\(^91\) Taken as a whole, the path of consciousness is doubt, or what Hegel refers to as “the conscious insight into the untruth of phenomenal knowledge.”\(^92\) This means two things: 1) There is no “non-conceptual access to objects.” This means that phenomenal experience is not immediate, but is already processed in a particular way.\(^93\) 2) The apperceptive self is the ground of knowledge. This means that it is conscious of itself, conscious of objects, conscious of the concepts it creates in order to grasp the objects and most prominently, conscious of the inadequacy of the concepts it has formed. This inadequacy is experienced as uncertainty that is built into the dialectic as negation. “For consciousness is, on the one hand, consciousness of the object, and on the other, consciousness of itself; consciousness of what for it is the True, and consciousness of its knowledge of the truth. Since both are for the same consciousness, this consciousness is itself their comparison; it is for this same consciousness to know whether its knowledge


\(^{92}\) Hegel, *Phenomenology*, §78; 73.

of the object corresponds to the object or not”94 That apperceptive self, as the measure of
the adequacy of the concepts, is the criterion by which concepts are judged, and the
source of negation that provides the fuel for the continuing process of knowledge that is
defined by concepts that become more and more acceptable to consciousness.

Negation as a function of the apperceptive self is characterized as uncertainty in
Hegel’s system and has a similar function to doubt in Dewey’s circuit of inquiry. In
Chapter III, there was a discussion of the redefinition of experience which made doubt
and knowledge experiences rather than products of, or obstacles to, inquiry. Specifically,
experience is of “thats,” unique experiences of the universe” that are of a characteristic
that. Consequently, an experience of “vagueness, doubtfulness, or confusion” is “this
vagueness and no other,” and specific to the situation. Doubt like all other experiences is
unique, and what Dewey refers to as just “what it is.”95 Doubt does not jeopardize an
inquiry or its results, but is a phase of the problem-solving activity that provides the
impetus for inquiry. When a situation is experienced as doubtful, it informs how the
subject articulates the goal of the inquiry. We recall that the first phase of the circuit of
inquiry begins with the “antecedent conditions of inquiry,” or the indeterminate situation.
This situation is indeterminate because it is an experience of doubt that calls into question
the settled meaning of immediate experience. At this point, the subject cannot even be
sure whether there is a problem or not, only that there has been a disruption.

94 Hegel, Phenomenology, §85; p53.
95 Dewey, “Postulate,” 164.
Furthermore, the broader conception of experience accentuates the distinction Dewey makes between the cognitive experience of a thing and a thing experienced as cognized. A cognized thing is experienced as known, and known things aid in the inculcation of habits. Doubt, as a cognitive experience is one that provokes behavior, such as investigation and the generation of inferences. Doubt has an important task in both Hegel’s system and Dewey circuit because it is the catalyst for the process of knowledge. In one sense, because Hegel grounds knowledge in the apperceptive self, negation is cast as opposition or contradiction that is internal to the self, and essentially an opposition or contradiction of self. Without negation, the apperceptive self would not recognize a contradiction or any reason to reflect on or reevaluate concepts. Dewey’s ground is experience, which has been broadly defined to include experiences of both cognitive and cognized things. Doubt is a “primary source” within experience because it supplies the material for reflection in hypotheses and investigation. Without doubt, a subject would be unable to discern disruptions or be less able to reflect on what has been learned. Furthermore doubt provides the way in which the subject and the world, for Hegel and Dewey respectively, can once again be brought together giving a subject objects that are “render[ed] …more significant, more luminous to us, and make our dealings with them more fruitful.”

The third element is the notion that the natural, constitutive character of consciousness is exemplified in the repetitive, recurring cycle of doubt and belief. Hegel and Dewey do this in two different but interrelated ways. First, they affirm that the apperceptive self or experience defines the boundary within which all cognitive work and all doubt are worked out. Secondly, there is only the function or method by which an experience is negotiated that is constant; there is no “final” judgment or answer to the disruptions or problems that arise in experience. Hegel’s manner of discussing doubt and belief was in his description of the different stages of the dialectic, in which doubt is recast as internal opposition or contradiction. The moment of resolution is presented as a return to a state of belief, or in Hegel’s terms, the unity of subject and object. This return to the newly settled state is the culmination of the entire reflexive circuit of subject and object that is always dynamically advancing. As a pragmatist, Dewey understood the interaction of doubt and belief to be a general guiding principle because it is the starting point for any inquiry, regardless of the subject matter. The movements from belief to doubt, and back to belief again are directed by our values. These values are informed by the state of affairs that confront us and provide the motivation for inquiry and investigation that occurs daily in the execution of plans or resolution of problems. These plans and solutions could not be “external” to the subject since experience is the subject’s access to nature and how hypotheses are created and tested, and objects are affirmed. Furthermore, objects become objects only when affirmed in experience and have no

concrete status outside of experience. The experience of doubt in a subject becomes the impetus for devising new plans, and objects and objectives arise from the activity itself. In this way, the skeptical attitude is changed into a necessary element of the process by which knowledge is attained through inquiry and is thus warranted. Furthermore, these two components are experiences that become part of the repetitive, recurring cycle of doubt and belief that is the natural, constitutive character of consciousness.

Conclusion

To conclude, three points should be made. First, the significance of the Hegelian deposit is that it puts Dewey in the position of seeking to promote the goals of the Enlightenment project begun by Kant. Dewey’s philosophy sought to do two things: one was to advance Kant’s goal of creating a method that would warrant objectivity; secondly, like Hegel, Dewey wanted to overcome the separate wellsprings of intellect and sense. However, Dewey wanted to overcome these separate sources of knowledge and define objects in a “positive” way rather than by negation. This also set Dewey apart from other Neo-Hegelians, who at the time thought that the best they could do was use negation to say what an object was not. 98 Dewey’s philosophy defines the self as functional99 with the recognition “that objects of knowledge are mediate rather than

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99 Ibid.,136.
direct or intuitive,”¹⁰⁰ a position maintained by both Kant and Hegel. The activity of the functional self is to respond to a problem by arranging and organizing the subject-object relation in its recognition and resolution of problems. The result is the achievement of the goal of objectivity in terms of “objects-as-objectives.”

Lastly, though closely related to the first point, is the idea that this particular reading of Dewey’s philosophy is different from a fairly standard interpretation of his connection and break with Hegel’s thought. Dewey’s “drift” from Hegel’s Idealism is characterized as a complete break with Hegel’s idealist principles, and that he basically turned his back on Hegel’s project. My contention is that there are prominent ways in which Hegel’s influence can be seen in Dewey’s later philosophy. It seems that rather than the outright rejection of Hegel’s idealist thought, there is evidence that Dewey made a “rational reconstruction of idealism.”¹⁰¹ This rational reconstruction involves the positive characterization of both experience, and the subject and its activity to create meaning.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 140.
¹⁰¹ Ibid., 130.


