

A Comparison of
St. Thomas Aquinas and John Dewey's Philosophy
of Education

A Senior Studies Report

Submitted to the Faculty
Of Saint Meinrad College of Liberal Arts
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

Jeff Patrick Thompson
May, 1995
Saint Meinrad College
St. Meinrad, Indiana

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction
- II. Aquinas' Ideal of Life
- III. Aquinas' Theory of Education
- IV. Aquinas' Ideal of Education
- V. Principles and Practices of Education for Aquinas
- VI. Dewey's Ideal of Life
- VII. Dewey's Theory of Education
- VIII. Dewey's Ideal of Education
- IX. Principles and Practices of Education for Dewey
- X. Conclusion in Support of St. Thomas Aquinas

I. Introduction

In this paper I compare St. Thomas Aquinas' Scholastic theory of education to John Dewey's Pragmatic theory. Scholasticism concerns itself with causes and permanent life elements. Pragmatism concentrates on effects and continuous change. O'Hara states, "The different conceptions of philosophy arose from the different solutions of the problem of knowledge" (103). Epistemology is the central problem of disagreement.

John Dewey's democratic ideal of life will be rejected because of its subjective nature and dismissal of the mind's spiritual nature. Dewey is left with a ceaseless wandering through change and activity without direction. St. Thomas's ideal of life will be favored because it is stabilized by God as the ultimate end which all mankind should be striving for continuously (O'Hara 103).

The central theme will be the effects of an ideal of life upon education. To understand an ideal of life is to then understand the implications it has on the theory and ideal of education. Dewey would paint the contrasts to have Scholastic education emphasize external discipline, texts and teachers, preparation for future, static aims, impositions, and "reality centeredness"; whereas, Dewey's education would focus on free activity, experience, present progress, change, growth, expression, cultivation, and "child centeredness" (Dewey, Experience 19-20).

II. Aquinas' Ideal of Life

St. Thomas is first a theologian who uses philosophy to guide him in seeking truth. His focus is on Revelation, but on the ground that faith and reason both come from God, he denies that there can be any contradiction between the two (Gulley 68). St. Thomas looks upon philosophy as the means to discover ultimate causes (O'Hara 13). The basic fact for him is that the world is God's creation, and since it is created, it is intelligible and can be understood by man. As the perfectly wise and loving creator, God is the final end or ultimate object of man's knowledge and love (Wade 69).

Religion has the central role in human life since the soul and the mind have a spiritual nature (O'Hara 30). Philosophy aids in understanding man as a rational animal in whose soul intelligent and sensible operations form a unity. Because of this unity the intellect, though spiritual, depends on the cooperation of the senses. It is from material things that man can understand immaterial things and have knowledge. Since man is a rational animal, he must function as one throughout his life time. Teaching becomes very important as both an exemplification of the life of reason and a communication of truth. To have a possession of truth is to have an increase in the life of reason (Wade 69-71).

The problem of knowledge for Aquinas includes mind and body as really distinct realities. Mind is different from the external world. As one commentator puts it, "Mind is more than an organ of behavior; it is the spiritual faculty by which we come to know the essence of all things" (O'Hara 26). Mind strives to know the world, not to act upon it. To know is itself the primary act of the intellect; everything practical is not primary but secondary in intellectual life. Because God is Intellect and the world is intelligible, the perfection of our intellect is our participation and imitation of God both as knower and as lover of creation. Mind should never be belittled to a "participative response in social affairs" but should be elevated as interpreter of all reality. When the mind has its place as interpreter of reality, man's approach to life is greatly altered (26).

The origin, nature, and destiny of man according to Aquinas is best described by saying man is created in the image and likeness of God. Man is considered a little less than the angels. Soul is what gives man its diverse operations. As a rational animal, man's destiny is to know, to love, and to serve God (O'Hara 28). Thus, religion has an important place in fulfilling man's destiny. Science does too. The firmly established truths found by science will never come into conflict with religion since truth comes from the same source. Religion and science are not the antithesis of one another but

instead work together in understanding reality (O'Hara 31). Aquinas holds that contemplation of the whole of reality makes accessible the ultimate principles and ends which direct activity. O'Hara states, "Accepting then the truth of God's existence, it follows that all earthly happiness finds its highest meaning in so far as it is well ordered in reference to what is God's will as manifested by reason and revelation" (35). Instruction and reflection assist in man's understanding of the Divine will.

III. Aquinas' Theory of Education

The ideal of life inevitably affects the theory and ideal of education. The theory of education for Aquinas includes God, the pupil, and the teacher. St. Thomas speaks of the teaching-learning situation as a cooperative act between the three efficient causes just mentioned. Teaching and learning have a sacred status since God is carrying out His providential plan for man through the teacher and pupil. Of course, this requires the teacher and pupil to cooperate with Divine providence. The efficient causes of learning- God, pupil, and teacher- are different since their precise roles are different (Gulley 113).

For whatever occurs, man's intelligence demands a cause. The action of an efficient cause is explainable

by the final cause. The final cause moves the efficient cause here and now. Aquinas has finality permeate everything which enforces some weighty conclusions (Gulley 9). This finality comes from understanding God as Creator of the intelligible world. All men are perfected by aligning themselves to their final end. It is participating and imitating God through knowing and loving Him and His creation that leads one to his final end which is God Himself. What gives direction to all activity is the final cause. Man's last end, God, is intimately connected with the whole work of education. It is absolutely necessary to bend education to an end. The reason education today is full of confusion and chaos is because it neglects a final cause to give education direction. The direction that is necessary in the teaching-learning situation comes from a final cause (Gulley 11).

Efficient causality concerns itself with productivity. It is the action in making the thing what it is. The action of a person brings about an effect on another. God is the primary efficient cause needing no help from anyone else. The teacher functions as an indispensable mover by bringing the intellect from potentiality to actuality. God uses secondary causes to help produce the whole effect (Gulley 21). Gulley states, "Education is activity manifestly aimed at changing an individual and leading him to certain goals. It must be guided in

that activity by the end which the First cause has in creating" (29).

Education involves changes, and those changes are brought forth by causes. Aquinas believes everything man does is involved in the cause-effect relationship. The main concern is with efficient causality. The effect produced by the teaching-learning situation is the new knowledge of the learner. St. Thomas demonstrates what is involved in the teaching-learning situation from the standpoint of efficient causality. God as first cause, pupil as principal cause, and teacher as instrumental cause will be explored (Gulley 24).

Aquinas of course holds that the First Cause of all being is God. God is the efficient cause of the pupil's learning because He is the continual cause of all things as creator (Gulley 27). Man's first cause and final end are God. Man is directed toward God. Thus, to understand God is the end of the intellectual creature. The intelligibility of being demands God to be the Alpha; the intelligibility of action demands God to be the Omega (Gulley 31).

The providence of God is his constant action and preservation of all beings in existence (Gulley 33). Notions of Divine providence help understand a Scholastic philosophy of education. First, Divine providence extends to all creation. The explanation for physical evil and suffering can be understood only in an accidental way

for a higher good. Second, the freedom of our actions is safeguarded by Divine providence. Third, God governs the lower creation by means of his Divine providence through the higher. Thus God communicated the worth of causality (Gulley 38). God foresees and foreordains every detail of the created world. The effects of Divine providence are stated clearly by Gulley, "God by moving all creatures toward Himself as their ultimate end, produces in each of them, according to its own nature, a reflection of, or participation in, His own Essential Goodness" (41). The effects of Divine providence include the conservation of the good and the moving forward of things to the good.

Aquinas' understanding of God as an all creative and all loving Cause actively designing and influencing the world every moment is foreign to modern thought. It is as though modern man denies or ignores God's providence in order to take full credit for everything. Atheists have had an enormous impact on the philosophy of education. American education can be largely traced back to the deists nurtured by empiricists which has caused people to forget Divine providence (Gulley 34-35).

Divine providence has an implication for education. It does not miss a detail of a child's growth to an adult. God uses intermediaries, namely parents and teachers, as instruments in His providence. Aquinas holds that the order of things is such that certain human beings

are governed and directed by certain other human beings (Gulley 49). Parents and teachers are cooperators in the divine order. Gulley states, "Since the natural agent acts only by the power of God in which it participates, and since the effect which it produces is due primarily and chiefly to God, God operated in the operation of every natural agent as a principal cause in an instrumental cause" (54).

Some things are more intelligible than others to the human mind. There are two ways in which man gains knowledge of things that are unintelligible to him immediately. One is by intellectual light and the other is by selfevident primary concepts. Man's nature is endowed with a knowledge of first principles. They are effortlessly known intuitively. All that is necessary is a simple inspection of them (Gulley 58).

God causes man's knowledge. The soul has been given intellectual light and the first principles says St. Thomas. Now the naturally known principles which are received by man are given by God. What arises from the certainty of principles is the entire certainty of scientific knowledge. The reason for something being known with certainty is the light of reason given to man by God. God uses the light of reason to speak to us. The more docile man is to the light given him, the more man is able to grow in truth. God becomes more evident in everything (Gulley 60). Because God speaks to us

through the light of reason, it can be said that He alone teaches principally and interiorly. All knowledge gained through human teaching is dependent on the possession of intellectual light given by God. God is the principal teacher while the human teacher is His instrument (Gulley 61).

God as principal teacher is operative through the gifts of the Holy Spirit as well as by natural reason. It needs to be clear that the gifts do not supplant the natural human reason in its quest for knowledge and truth. Rather, the gifts facilitate natural learning both negatively and positively. Negatively, the gifts protect the mind from error by a connection of the natural truths to the supernatural. Positively, the gifts foster a synthetic, harmonious understanding of reality. The supernatural and natural truths become integrated (Gulley 63). The gifts offer a more precise picture of God's efficient causality in education.

Truth that would otherwise be closed to man is gained by the added light of faith and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Gulley quotes the definition of faith given by the Vatican Council, "...a supernatural virtue, whereby inspired and assisted by the grace of God, we believe that the things which He has revealed are true; not because the intrinsic truth of the things is plainly perceived by the natural light of reason but because of the authority of God Himself" (65). Faith does presuppose natural

knowledge. This virtue trusts in an authentic authority for the truth revealed. Faith does need the intellectual gifts to supplement it. In conclusion, God communicates all knowledge since He is the author of truth. God teaches principally and interiorly.

The pupil is an efficient cause of his own knowledge. There is knowledge that is acquired by discovery; in this case a teacher is not necessary. At the level of secondary causes the learner becomes the total cause of his knowledge and not the partial cause. Because of Divine causality no one is the total cause of his knowledge. Discovery is an active process whereby the mind deals with the things the senses has presented it. Because of first principles of knowledge, the mind has something to work with to make sense of the world (Wade 77). St. Thomas states, "For certain seeds of knowledge pre-exist in us, namely, the first concepts of understanding, which by the light of the agent intellect are immediately known through the species abstracted from sensible things" (Aquinas 82).

Learning through instruction is similar to that of discovery since it follows the same steps in the learning process as discovery. The teacher supplies the necessary material and presents it in an intelligible order from principle to conclusion. The pupil then forms phantasms which the intellect can make sense of (Wade 80). The way the teacher received his knowledge is the way it needs to be taught. This can be understood by the cause-effect

relationship. An analogy that St. Thomas uses in describing the learning process is as follows:

Therefore, as there are two ways of being cured, that is, either through the activity of unaided nature or by nature with the aid of medicine, so also there are two ways of acquiring knowledge. In one way, natural reason by itself reaches knowledge of unknown things, and this way is called discovery; in another way, when some one else aids the learner's natural reason, and this is called learning by instruction.

(Aquinas 83)

The teacher is an efficient cause of learning. Man can know many things by means of discovery since he is equipped by God to know reality, yet it would leave the pupil intellectually impoverished if this is the only way of learning. By the assistance of others, man gains knowledge more profoundly and extensively. Isolation and discovery are valid ways of learning but the process is often times slowed down. A teacher who fully knows his subject and can communicate it well does much to speed the process of learning (Wade 72-73).

The principle task of the teacher is to aid the pupil to understand reality or to know it better. Pre-existing knowledge beginning with first principles is the foundation for all teaching. Man can more easily attain his end by being taught truth. The pupil is aided in intellectual

assents with the help of a teacher (Wade 81-82). Consequently, teachers have an active role as an instrumental cause of learning. The human teacher is most valuable to God in achieving constant increase of knowledge. The pupil's perfection of his own rational nature depends on the degree of his docility and intellectual work. Simultaneously, the infinite truth of God is comprehended a little bit more, and man is a little closer to his end (Gulley 82).

IV. Aquinas' Ideal of Education

The ideal of education for Aquinas and the Scholastics has God as the ultimate end. Education needs to cooperate with God's universal order. Philosophy concerned with knowing the universal order and its imposition upon man sets the framework for Aquinas' ideal of education (Wade 85). O'Hara states, "It is from the recognition of the knowledge, duties, and principles flowing from a study of the universal order that the counter processes of individualization and socialization are to be guided" (65). Religion has a role in that it confirms and extends what philosophy finds. Every tendency, impulse, and desire needs disciplining. The pattern of discipline is established by religion and a study of the universal order. This understanding accepts an objective criterion by which the intellectual and moral order have fixed ultimate goals.

God creates an intelligible world, and man's faculty of intellect is designed to behold and follow this objective intelligible order. Thus the spiritual nature of man is affirmed, and the truths that come from supernatural religion are understood as spiritual perfections of which man is by his nature incapable. These fundamental truths set up an ideal that guides the social institutions within which individual action takes place (O'Hara 67).

V. Principles and Practices of Education for Aquinas

Education is a preparation for life. It is not indoctrination but rather is based on self-evident principles implanted by God. Education is "truth centered," not "child centered". The teacher is a dynamic factor and does not just merely stimulate the mind but rather passes on knowledge of reality. Also the teacher is considered a coadjutor of God, teaching exteriorly as God teaches interiorly (Wade 82-83).

VI. Dewey's Ideal of Life

As a leader of Pragmatism, Dewey reacts rather intensely against any philosophical thought that is intellectualistic, as Thomism is. Dewey espouses a philosophy that is broadly practical and emerged from felt difficulties arising from the social environment.

This new philosophy is mandated by modern developments. Radical changes have occurred politically, scientifically, and industrially. Dewey believes these radical changes need a radical new ideal of life so as to keep up with all the changes. He holds that philosophy apart from environmental data tends to become meaningless. For Dewey, speculative knowledge is worthless since there is no creator. The only thing left for him is a philosophy based on man's need to adapt to the world by means of practical intelligence. His philosophy concerns itself with effects and pays little attention to causes. It strives for immediate consequences in practice over beginnings and ultimate ends (Dewey, Democracy 386). Because Dewey's ideal of life centers around activity, progress, and the practical, he favors a democratic society. Democracy allows for equal opportunity and development advocating progress and change (O'Hara 12).

Dewey's philosophy can be classified as a Naturalism which accepts evolution as the explanation for all of life. The world for him is not created because there is no Creator. Also there is no spiritual world and no soul. Nor is there free will. Dewey's psychology is behaviorist. His ideal of life definitely excludes objective value and final ends. He is a process philosopher for whom all striving is not for natural perfection but for the solution of a pressing problem, not for an ultimate end but for an "end in view" (Dewey,

Sources 75).

The province of philosophy for Dewey is pragmatic, in that, it is primarily practical. Its special mission is to apply practical solutions to the problems of men; it concerns human needs and adaptive responses. O'Hara states Dewey's aim of philosophy, "For it regards experience as the only reality, and experience is characterized especially by change" (14). Everything is changing and particular. All things are in a condition of becoming. Evolution has its place as things evolve for the better (Dewey, Experience 30).

The intellect becomes the servant of the senses. Science dominates as Dewey subordinates speculative activity to practical activity. Science literally takes the place of philosophy. Everything is an active process of experience and experimentation. For Dewey freedom means growth which comes through change governed by experience (Dewey, Sources 77).

Dewey's epistemology offers his solution to all of human life. Any finished logical systems, metaphysics, or absolutistic preoccupations have no place. The only knowledge man can have is ongoing and changing. Truth is only instrumental and is constantly changing with persons, times, and places. The outcome determines the value of knowledge (Handlin 39). In Dewey's pragmatic epistemology, everything is relativistic and individualistic. Man becomes the measure of all things.

Its counterpart is found in educational theory summed up in his slogan, "learning by doing" (O'Hara 21).

The origin, nature, and destiny of man can be captured by understanding evolution as the sole cause for man's existence. Man is the most advanced animal organism. A spiritual soul means nothing to Dewey because it can't be proved experimentally. The conception of human nature for Dewey is the ongoing process of activity. Any destiny man has is earthly. The highest good to strive for is a contribution to society at least equal to or more than what an individual receives from society (O'Hara 27).

The democratic ideal nurtures Dewey's progressive movement which is to have all the people cooperate freely and fully while breaking down all barriers that hinders this cooperation. Anyone and everyone can contribute. Change and not conformity is the democratic order. Because of this there is no hierarchy of values or goods. The highest good is the process of growth alone; the only goods are those which contribute to growth (Dewey, Experience 33).

Fixed principles do not exist for Dewey in the intellectual life, nor are there fixed laws and ends in the moral life. He gives no consideration to anything fixed because it would be contrary to his evolutionary and naturalistic philosophy. O'Hara states, "The true and the good are for him ever in a process of change, and he rejects any supernatural and transcendent elements

in truth or morality" (33).

VII. Dewey's Theory of Education

At the very center of his theory of education, Dewey capitalizes on change. Because of the changing environment and an ideal of life that centers on activity, education needs to be centered on change or "learning by doing." Dewey claims education needs to be based upon experience (Handlin 19). The school for Dewey is most interested in "how" to do something and pays little attention to "what" the subject matter is. How something is done is determined by the child and his needs. The crucial test in education is how well the pupil can adapt to the world around him (Handlin 47).

The subject matter for the schools is determined by experience and ordinary life. Its focus is the child's immediate needs. Future goals are not the focus but rather learning that follows a sequence of experiences. Growth comes from exercising the intelligence guided by experience and scientific method. Dewey's school is grounded wholly on experience and experimental method. Dewey states, "But there is no way to discover what is 'more truly educational' except by the continuation of the educational act itself. The discovery is never made; it is always making" (Dewey, Sources 76-77). Education by its nature constantly demands more thought or more science in dealing

with new problems.

For Dewey education needs to foster growth and expansion. It includes the experimental method of science. Hypotheses or ideas are to be tested. A collection or record should be kept of the observations. All learning needs to be a process of discovery by means of experiment. The method is what is most important and not ends in themselves. Also, the method is to be grounded in the empirical sciences (Dewey, Experience 86-87).

The school is oriented toward the needs of the pupil. It is "child centered". Education is not a preparation for the future but rather is activity meant to fully participate in the present moment. The pupil's impulses and desires are to be the spring board of activity. Education is not to be forced upon the student, but rather learning should be a natural desire that comes from within. This desire for learning is to be nurtured, not hindered by dictation and authority (Dewey, Experience 70). This activity is best utilized when the pupil has the freedom to explore his interest. Basic subjects such as arithmetic, geography, and English need to be learned by means of continual reconstruction of the experiences of the student. From here the student can give his attention to broader topics that are more meaningful to the student. The ability to think through real problems is the whole of education (Handlin 44).

For Dewey the school that truly is oriented to the

needs of the student requires little if no external discipline. This is true since students would be actively engaged in their studies. Freedom to move about would be allowed since order would come from within the students. Discipline wouldn't disappear but rather would come from within the pupil, and no policing would be necessary (Handlin 45). Along with internal discipline and natural development, culture and social efficiency are prized as a moral purpose of education. Handlin states, "From the very start therefore the child would become acquainted with, and through his life learn ever better, the relationship of knowledge to conduct. That was the most worthy function of his schooling" (45).

The teacher's influence is indirect. Little emphasis is put on the teacher except as a kind of supervisor or a shaper of attitudes and desires. The teacher's primary responsibility is shaping the environment to be most conducive to learning (Handlin 43). The real power and purposes in the school come from the pupils. The teacher is a concomitant in creating the situation or environment. Preparation on the part of the teacher or a lesson plan is a treacherous idea since this would divert attention from experience and growth (Dewey, Experience 47-48).

VIII. Dewey's Ideal of Education

The ideal of education for Dewey is the very pragmatic

one of social efficiency in a democracy. The process is more important than the outcome of the process. The educational process is its own end and has no further end outside itself. What is particular and changing is the aim of pragmatic education. Dewey dreads any fixed end which is unfitted to his idea of democracy (Dewey, Sources 56).

The individual and social life are strongly emphasized for Dewey. Society and the individual are reciprocally related. His explanation of the relationship of the individual and society is clarified by O'Hara, "Society exists for the sake of individuals; individuals must conform to social beliefs, social aims, and social ideals; society and individuals are organically related to one another, society requiring the service and subordination of individuals and at the same time existing to serve them" (61).

Pragmatism does a service to society by insisting that the present problems in social life be quickly and efficiently solved. The needs of individuals and society are met by practical application. The only guiding element is the means of doing something for the present situation. There are no distant ends but only immediate demands. Education's purpose involves continuous change and growth by means of experience and scientific method in order to adapt to the immediate necessity (Dewey, Experience 89).

IX. Principles and Practices of education for Dewey

Dewey holds education as a way of life and not a preparation for life. O'Hara states, "It has motivated learning by extolling activity; and by providing children with a multiplicity of devices, it has encouraged freer and fuller intercourse with one another and with the teacher; it has glorified freedom and individuality" (82). Knowledge is based on empirical data and not ultimate ends. Education is very much "child centered." The teacher's role is as supervisor rather than a dispenser of knowledge. The active virtues of initiative, originality, and resourcefulness are favored. Progressive education extols free activity, experience, present progress, change and growth, and expression and cultivation (Dewey, Experience 19-20).

X. Conclusion in Support of St. Thomas Aquinas

Dewey's ideal of life betrays a limited understanding of reality and thus cannot be considered a philosophy to include all aspects of reality. The mistakes Dewey makes are found in his epistemology and his athiesm. He doesn't account for speculative knowledge which is to behold the created work of the Creator for its own sake. The fundamental fact that knowledge exists above

and beyond science and experience is dismissed. O'Hara states, "This lack is consciously felt in Pragmatism, for it makes all knowledge reducible to sensations and denies the capacity of knowing anything from the very activity of the intellect alone acting upon the data of sense experience" (23). His epistemology is relativistic and individualistic restricting him to immediate moral and social difficulties. Questions about whether there is a God or what kind of God could there be or where man came from or what is man or where is man going are stopped short of being answered for Dewey because of his epistemology (O'Hara 20).

Science is not the whole of knowledge but only a part. No doubt science has enriched human life, but to say it is the totality of all man can know is clearly false. Science can know the effects, but what about the causes? The reality of causes is almost completely dismissed.

A philosophy of education needs to evaluate human experience and then discover values that are most significant in human progress. A sound philosophy of education is necessary to determine educational objectives. The experimental method is not itself sufficient in determining the objectives of the school. Dewey treats the ultimate objectives as a scientific problem. However, scientific method cannot determine the objectives themselves (O'Hara 19).

St. Thomas Aquinas' ideal of life accounts for both causes and effects. An intelligent God and His intelligible creation are real. An attempt to understand the created universe for its own sake makes man more like his Creator. A comprehensive view of life gives definite, stable, and set truths. His philosophy of education is capable of determining objectives. O'Hara states, "Without well established principles and ideals from which action is to proceed, individual life is at the mercy of whims, caprices, impulses, and social life is disturbed and troubled by the agitations, propaganda, and vagaries of all sorts of fanciful theorists" (24-25). Dewey's ideal of life is nearsighted while misunderstanding the function, nature, and province of man's intellect.

Dewey holds that nothing is but is ever becoming, hence the emphasis on change and growth through experience and experiment in his theory of education. O'Hara states, "His books abound in excursions into its "how," almost wholly neglectful of its "what" and of its end results" (42). To base a philosophy of education on Experimentalism is wrongheaded since there is more than just experiment and scientific method. Clearly the facts of experiment are to be accepted but not as the whole picture. Knowledge can be gained in other ways than scientific method.

A total view of reality given by Aquinas gives more to the ideal of "social efficiency in a democracy". It becomes more meaningful, more abiding, and more secure.

Activity becomes directed so as to make it reasonable with less wanton activity. The "passive" virtues have a place. For Dewey everything is activity, and virtues such as initiative and inventiveness are praised. He thinks the "passive" virtues such as self-control, obedience, submission, self-sacrifice, self-restraint, and humility are a hindrance to activity and the "social efficiency in a democracy." Aquinas thinks differently. Social efficiency is not hindered but is aided by the "passive" virtues (O'Hara 70).

A stable and fixed ideal of life sets up goals that are attainable. Human energy becomes organized toward these goals. It establishes no limit to activity as Dewey might think but rather directs activity into the proper channels. O'Hara states this clearly:

Paradoxical as it may seem, a fixed ideal of perfection becomes the most flexible of ideals. In democratic society, the citizen who obeys just laws is the one who is really free in the expressions of his personality. He places no restraining force on his life by immoral or injudicious interference with the person, property, or life of another. By recognizing basal claims of others, he secures for himself the greatest leeway of freedom. Binding himself, he really releases himself for activity. (74)

Dewey's major contribution to education is his plea

for the cause of the child. The needs and the interests of the child are the departure points for the educational pursuit. Dewey does contribute to education up to this point. However, his emphasis upon childhood neglects the value of adult life. To claim that the cause of the child is the whole aim of education is to utter a half-truth. Education may start with the child, but only an ideal of life like Aquinas' can adequately give necessary direction (O'Hara 79).

To advocate pupil activity is valuable, but it is absolutely essential to specify the ideals the teacher should have so to not waste the valuable time and energy of the pupil. Education built upon the uneducated child's natural inclinations and aptitudes is like building a large structure on shifting sands. Pupil's need ideals to give direction to their action, and teachers need to provide them (O'Hara 83,85). The pupil's judgment needs the constant formation given by the teacher. The human race has learned much over the years by trial and error, and it would make little sense to have the pupil go through all that unnecessary labor. It would also be futile. The child alone cannot discover the most efficient habits and the most valuable knowledge. The pupil must at least initially accept knowledge uncritically given by a credible teacher in order to adequately meet the demands of a complex life. It is important to encourage individual thinking but not without guidance. Individual and social

security are better furthered with an appreciation of the whole of life (O'Hara 100).

For Aquinas education needs to be a preparation for life as well as participation in life. The "passive" and active virtues are both necessary. O'Hara states, "The necessity of the former set of virtues arises from the candid acknowledgment of the dual nature of man, and from the unimpeachable integrity of the body of principles a full view of life affords" (100). The management of any school or ideal home requires obedience, humility, and submission as virtues possessed by the pupil or child. This view can be traced ultimately to God's will which man's reason tries to make sense of continuously. Progress and growth and change in life and education are goods only within the aim of more fully understanding God's ultimate purpose.

WORKS CITED

- Aquinas, St. Thomas. Vol. 2 of Truth. 3 vols. Trans. James V. McGlynn, S.J. Chicago: Henry Regner Company, 1953.
- Dewey, John. Democracy and Education. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936.
- Dewey, John. Experience and Education. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966.
- Dewey, John. The Sources of a Science of Education. New York: Liveright, 1970.
- Gulley, D. Anthony, Rev. Ph.D. The Educational Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas. New York: Pageant Press, Inc., 1964.
- Handlin, Oscar. John Dewey's Challenge to Education. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.
- O'Hara, H. James, A.M. The Limitations of the Educational Theory of John Dewey. Washington, D.C.: Washington Typographers, Inc., 1929.
- Wade, C. Francis, S.J. Some Philosophers on Education. Ed. Gallagher, A. Donald. Milwaukee: The Marquette University Press, 1956.

ARCHABEY LIBRARY



3 0764 1003 5015 1