

The concept of experience by John Dewey revisited: conceiving, feeling and “enliving”

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Studies in Philosophy and Education. An International Journal. Stud Philos Educ. DOI 10.1007/s11217-012-9330-7

Abstract.: The concept of experience by John Dewey revisited: conceiving, feeling and “enliving”. Dewey takes a few steps towards a differentiation of the concept of experience, such as the distinction between primary and secondary experience, or between ordinary (partial, raw, primitive) experience and complete, aesthetic experience. However, he does not provide a systematic elaboration of these distinctions. In the present text, a differentiation of Dewey’s concept of experience is proposed in terms of feeling, “enliving” (a neologism proposed in this paper) and conceiving. Feeling refers to the basic mode of experience where action, emotion, cognition and communication constitute an original unity. Enliving, aesthetic experience, constitutes the lifeworld, as a person-in-world experience. Even though enliving is holistic and relational, a certain distance emerges between action, emotion and cognition which allows contemplation and choice. Conceiving, on the other hand, refers to the isolating and abstracting understanding of the world with even greater distance between action, emotion and cognition. Such a differentiation provides a clearer understanding of the scope of education. It avoids the risks of regressive tendencies in the concept of experience, and it helps to include conceiving within the realm of experience.

Keywords: experience, John Dewey, aesthetic experience, knowledge

Dewey’s concept of experience allows a holistic approach to education, in the sense that it is based on the interaction between the human being and the world. It takes all sides of human existence, its being in the world, as the methodological point of departure. Experience is a central aspect of this interaction and thus a communicative, historic and cultural phenomenon rather than an individual or mental one.¹ There are several reasons for the interest in Dewey’s concept of experience today. With respect to the ongoing political discourse on education, the concept counteracts a developing culture of reification, of surveying, testing and measuring. It is clear that some aspects of experience can be measured. But experience as an integral event is beyond such an approach. Moreover, a growing number of voices within the science of education field are warning against the reductionist traits in actual education policies (Amrein & Berliner 2002, Nichols & Berliner 2007, Saito 2006, Karseth 2008). The following investigation intends to contribute to the new light in which we must see this development.

¹ In preparing a new introduction in 1951 to *Experience and Nature* (LW 1, 361), Dewey regretted the use of the term due to the exasperating individualistic and mentalist misunderstanding. In retrospect, he wished he had used the term culture in order to emphasise the social aspect of experience (see Alexander 1987, 70).

Thus, while the ongoing political discourse advocates knowledge as the property and commodity of the individual consumer and the globally competing state, Dewey underlines the importance of the cultural and societal aspects of education. This not only captures the collective aspect, which must be balanced against the individual interest, but also the uniqueness of a given culture. The question is what we lose when, in the name of globalisation, education is levelled and the specificity of the cultural basis is denied.

Furthermore, the quantifiable and measurable aspects of education threaten to suppress the development of the tacit and the aesthetic aspects of education. These aspects are decisive in the development of all kinds of skills. But even more vital is their importance for the cultivation and renewal of meaning, for the enhancement of the individual's and the community's life. The concept of experience emphasises precisely that aspect. *Primary* experience constitutes the lifeworld. It precedes discourse and conceptualization and plays a key role in the cultivation of meaning (Alexander 1987). However, Dewey's concept is not without problems. One is that Dewey's concern with continuity results in a lack of conceptual differentiation. In the following I will try, mainly on the basis of *Art as Experience (LW 10)*, to differentiate the concept while simultaneously maintaining its holistic quality.

I will present three modes of experience and discuss them against the background of Dewey's concept of experience. Even though the different modes do not emerge simultaneously in a person's life, they do not constitute a hierarchy and all three are seen as vital. Also, and in that I concur with Dewey, it is the integration of these aspects that defines experience. Roughly speaking, the modes may be distinguished by the degree of integration of the main aspects of experience, of action, emotion, cognition and communication.

My presentation starts with the youngest mode in human life, which I call conceiving, i.e. experience mediated by statements and concepts. Here cognition has achieved a comparatively high degree of independence from action and emotion. My discussion of the role of concepts in experience seems relatively close to the everyday life understanding. Statements are the media of understanding and allow the formation of concepts and open a space for reflection. But they also play a central role in the destruction of experience, an aspect which seems beyond the scope of Dewey's concept, even though it is important from an educational point of view. After the discussion on conceiving, I proceed by presenting the mode which I consider the basic experience in sentient life. I call it feeling. There, action, emotion, cognition and communication constitute an original unity. This defines the scope of what can be experienced at all. My main concern, however, lie with the last mode, which I call "enlivening" and which is mediated by form, aesthetic utterances.

The point of departure for these reflections is a certain unease and reservation about Dewey's concept of experience. Even though sympathising with and endorsing the emphasis on unity, integration and continuity, I suspect that this concern has given Dewey some theoretical difficulties. The first is that activities which are mediated by statements no longer seem to qualify as experiences. Consequently, it is difficult to see how scientific and philosophical experience is possible or even how pupils' school activities could generate experiences. Another consequence is that it seems difficult to conceptualise the psychoanalytic experience of repression and denial, i.e. the destructive role of statement in experience (Lorenzer 1981). However, these seem to be minor problems or even not problems at all compared to the issues arising with respect to the aesthetic quality of experience and to aesthetic experience. The former term refers to the degree of integration and structure in experience. The more differentiated and integrated, the clearer and well-structured an experience, the more aesthetic it is. Aesthetic experience, represented by the fine arts, is then the instance of the ideal realisation of integration and structure. The strength of this concept is that art is theoretically re-integrated into life, art being an intensified and fulfilling mode of living. The cost of this operation, however, is considerable, namely that art cannot be thought

of as a distinct realm of activity and meaning, and that, consequently, the relationship between art and everyday life is blurred. To put it differently: art is not the ideal mode of living. It is a distinctive mode of life as a reconstructive reflection of praxis and world.

Conceiving the world: presentation and simplification

As a point of departure for a differentiation of Dewey's concept of experience I take his distinction between expression and statement. The difference is found, according to Dewey, in the fact that the expression is a medium of experience while the statement is a means. The expression realises intent while the statement refers to one. The expression consists of form; the statement uses signs and abstract symbols. Since science operates at the level of statements it is not able to offer experiences. Statements are namely, in Dewey's view, nothing but signposts which point in the direction where a certain experience may be had – thus contradicting the dominating view that science is a privileged mode of experience. The chemical formula of water, for instance, offers directions as to how to identify or produce water but does not offer any experience with water itself. Thus, the validity criterion of the scientific statement is its “directive efficacy”, i.e. how detailed, precise and reliable directions for action it conveys.

The distinction between expression and statement leads, however, to serious theoretical problems which Dewey does not address.² One thing is to criticise the monopolisation of knowledge by science, quite another thing is to exclude the statement and with that science and, as I suspect, most of school based learning from experience. For instance, does the detection of the chemical consistency of water qualify as experience? Clearly it does not if we follow Dewey's distinction between expression and statement. Generally speaking, if we agree upon the tenet that the formation of concepts is mediated by statements, by “words and symbols”, then conceiving falls outside the realm of experience. The consequences for school based learning are fundamental. The logic of schooling is based on denaturalised learning. Even though much can be done to re-naturalise it – the Laboratory School being an example – its main activity will remain based on representation and on reorganisation of experience.

Another problem is that the relationship between knowledge and experience seems to be turned upside down. Common sense suggests that one needs experience to gain knowledge. However, now it would appear that knowledge (of signposts) is needed to have experiences. Finally, Dewey ends up in an awkward theoretical position when he uses the terms intellectual and scientific experience even though, assuming that statements play a dominant and even decisive role in these activities, the respective designations should be contradictions in terms. Such things as intellectual and scientific experiences cannot exist. A corresponding, though inverted, problem arises when Dewey sets out to explain the working of poetry and literature. Here Dewey postulates that the poem's meaning is “super-propositional” even though it relies on statement and grammar. Nonetheless, Dewey does not drop the notions of intellectual and scientific experience or, more generally speaking, the notion of *secondary* experience, even though he did not address the conceptual problem.

It seems obvious that there is an important difference between expression and statement. One could claim with Ernst Cassirer (1944) and Susanne Langer (1942) that science in a

² In *Experience and Education*, the distinction seems irrelevant as it is not mentioned at all. Remarkably enough, there is no mention of *aesthetic quality* even though it is presented as a validity criterion of experience in *Art as Experience* four years earlier. This implicit contradiction is for me just another incentive to differentiate the concept of experience.

decisive way is about developing concepts and that this activity is mediated by discursive practices, i.e. by statements. Conceiving, I propose, is a mode of experiencing the world, even though it is not the only one. I concur with Dewey's criticism in *Experience and Nature* (LW 1, 1925) that concepts represent not a primary but a secondary experience. The fundamental flow in epistemology since Plato consists in having misunderstood or failed to see the non-propositional nature and origin of experience. But it does not follow that concepts do not represent experience even though they are mediated by statements. Concepts are per definition abstract and thus related to a class of events. Nonetheless, concepts are not devoid of sensuousness and emotionality; they function as concepts precisely as long as they are embedded in "enlivings"³ and feelings. The difference between enlivening and conceiving is identified by Cassirer (1944) in a comparison between science and art. While art and form aim for a holistic, cognitively condensed and emotionally intensified experience, science and discourse aim for an objectified experience for a radical simplification of reality by way of abstraction, analysis and classification. This sorting of reality is based on logical criteria and uses abstraction from the sensuous and emotional manifold as method. Heidegger's (1962) notion of scientific "pre-sentation" points in the same direction i.e. an isolating procedure which gets hold of a specific object, severs it from its natural context, and puts it in the light of our attention where it may be inspected and investigated. Thus, concepts are the results and the media of emotionally distanced inquiry into isolated objects. The linguistic system plays a decisive role in their evolvment. Without language, without words and statements there would scarcely be any science or concept. But this does not mean that language is restricted to science. On the contrary, it has its main operation in everyday life and in enlivening⁴.

Moreover, using George Herbert Mead's concept of symbol, Alfred Lorenzer (1981) reminds us about the psychoanalytic experience and points out that the progressive merging of interaction and language in language games (Wittgenstein) during the formative years also plays a decisive role in the "destruction of language" (Lorenzer 1972), i.e. in the destruction of consciousness and, in a certain sense, of experience. The introduction of the child into language is, in Lorenzer's view, a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it creates spaces for reflection, for operation on symbolic levels; on the other hand, it implies a systematisation of interaction and imposes a logical structure on action since the single interactions are now related to each other. Language tolerates no inconsistencies, thus interactions which conflict with others are, in extreme cases, de-symbolised and pushed back into a pre-symbolic mode. The involved words, though, do not disappear from speech, but they lose parts of their (cognitive) meaning and of their (emotional) import. The language becomes hollow and brittle. This is the first act of the drama of *displacement* and *denial*. However, the de-

³ The term and concept of "enlivening" will be developed later on. In its substance, it is close to that of Dewey's "experience". However, since "experience" here is used as a super-ordinate term and concept referring to specifically human ways of having the world, there is a need for a new term for this distinct mode of experience. It is inspired by a term in use in the Nordic countries and Germany – *opplevelse* (Norway), *oplevelse* (Denmark), *upplevelse* (Sweden), *Erlebnis*, *Erleben* (Germany). Max van Manen (1997) translates the term as "lived experience" which is useful in many contexts. But in the context of this article it has several disadvantages, the main one being that experience is a central live process which makes *lived experience* appear to be pleonastic. Moreover, the term does not easily lend itself to verbalisation, which is important as the emphasis of *experience* is on process rather than structure. Also, the neologism *enlivening* may be an acceptable term as it is made analogically to *enacting* and *enactment*. However, in the end, its legitimacy may be decided by whether it carries sufficient theoretical weight.

⁴ In fact Dewey actually makes this point nine years earlier in *Experience and Nature*

symbolisation does not make the emotion, the *drive*, which is the organic part of the interaction, disappear. What disappears is the awareness of it. Thus, in the second act, in the squeeze between the persistence of the drive and the linguistic dictate of consistency, the de-symbolized interactions are reworked by *rationalisation*, i.e. they are tied to a false designation. If the possibility of the destruction of language and awareness is accepted, then there is one more reason for the differentiation of the concept of experience.

Feeling the world – action, emotion, communication, and cognition as original unity

I propose that we call the fundamental mode of experience *feeling*. For once, feeling is active as it evolves within the infant's corporeal movements towards the world. One of the most important achievements of the concept of experience is that Dewey can render it plausible that emotion and cognition are mutually dependent on each other. Far from being antagonists, as we have come to understand them in Western philosophical tradition, the one simply cannot be had without the other. Action, emotion, cognition, and communication are intertwined and form an organic unity. When the interaction between organism and environment threatens to break down, the organism, according to Dewey, reacts with an emotion which puts it into action. However, there is also a need for cognition since the break must be identified and a course of action must be projected. In order to survive, it is not enough for the cat to feel hungry. It must also have the intelligence required for finding its food. Thus, feeling is defined by a form of intelligence which is sensori-motor and pre-symbolic. Even though Piaget may be criticised for cognitivist one-sidedness, it is to his credit that he showed that each mode of intelligence has its own rationality. Thus, it would be a mistake and would not make sense biologically to identify feeling with the irrational. When later in life, and as a consequence of the differentiation of interaction, heart and head possibly come in conflict with each other, this is not a conflict between feeling and reason but a conflict between two modes of experience and of rationality, namely between pre-symbolic interaction and discursive symbolic interaction. The notion of irrational qualities of feeling is only justified insofar as feeling also comprises de-symbolised interactions, i.e. emotions which are at variance with the language system and with the social norms it articulates. Insofar as these interactions are falsely named, they indeed fail to make sense and are irrational.

In the interaction between the crying child and the reactions of the caregivers the child learns to discriminate between different kinds of discomfort and to recognise with increasing clarity desirable situations and interactions. Thus, one can maintain that within feeling there develops a structure of expectations, the fundamental cognitive structure which all subsequent cognition is based on and differentiates from. Feeling thus represents the tacit foundation and dimension of knowledge. Some of it evolves towards more reflective forms of knowledge, but a great part remains in the mode of feeling. It seems quite adequate to use a plant metaphor and claim that feeling represents the root system of experience. From here comes nutrition and renewal.

Feeling may not be confounded with emotion. Rather, emotion is an aspect of feeling. One could find support for this view in the psychoanalytic concept of instinct (Freud 1957/1915) which shows a surprising likeness with Dewey's concepts of experience and emotion. The three aspects "instinct", "experience" and "emotion" are historic and cultural categories with roots in both biology and culture. Emotions – which are in Dewey's view organic, integral components and qualities of experience – are not biological destiny but develop alongside with and as integrated parts of the interaction between organism and environment. The cries of the infant may illustrate this. To begin with the cries are a *manifestation* of an undefined

bodily demand and discomfort. As they become expressive of a purpose, the undefined discomfort differentiates into more specific sensations, such as hunger, thirst, loneliness, feeling cold, and so on. Parallel to this differentiation specific needs develop, the need to be fed, picked up, and have one's diaper changed. All these wishes and needs develop within and as a consequence of a differentiating interaction between the child and the caregiver. Lorenzer (1981) has called the constitution of interaction a *situation of agreement* since the evolving interaction is the result of negotiations and is the unique synthesis between the child's yet undefined corporeal demand and the caregivers' culturally defined proposals of interaction. In this synthesis, according to Lorenzer, the child's needs structure comes into being. Emotion is, as Dewey pointed out, a quality in the relationship to the world which the self establishes and develops.

Even though it may seem trivial to claim that feeling has an emotional aspect, a glance into Piaget's (1950) concept of sensori-motor intelligence can suggest otherwise. Either way, Dewey's notion of emotion as a historic and cultural category is of great interest to education as this suggests that emotions enter the scope of education, not only as motivations, i.e. educational tools, as objects of educational intervention, but also as integral parts of experience. This is not to say that there is something like *emotional intelligence* (Goleman 1995) which Michalinos Zembylas and Lynn Fendler (2007) have criticised in depth.

Since feeling develops in the sensori-motor interaction it also has a communicative and an instrumental aspect. Dewey uses an implicit distinction between instrumental and communicative action when he defines the expression as the presence of means and media. Thus, when the child discovers that its cries have certain outcomes then, according to Dewey, the cries become expressive; they become means and media. The cries understood as means refer to an instrumental context. In that sense, the cries are meant to bring about a certain change. The cries understood as media, however, point towards a communicative context. Then the cries are intended as messages where the aim is that they are understood. The last decades' infant research has shown that very early in life the infant distinguishes between interaction with objects and interaction with persons. The research group around Colwyn Trevarthen (1998) has identified musical aspects as the basis of language development (Malloch 1999). Thus, alongside a needs structure and a cognitive structure there emerges a communicative structure in feeling. Needless to say, the *situation of agreement* entails a creative, imaginative, counterfactual, transformative quality, as the interaction generates a new reality. Thus feeling is *worldmaking*, to borrow a term from Nelson Goodman (1978).

Feeling establishes the basis of a person's psychological structure. Whether, at this stage of development, one should talk about subjectivity remains, however, open to discussion. Both the psychoanalytic and the pragmatist tradition hold that the development of subjectivity is dependent upon the development of language. George Herbert Mead (1934) has shown that the emergence of the *significant gesture* entails the emergence of the distinction between sign and object and between self and the world. Psychoanalytic theorists like Lorenzer (1981) and Daniel N. Stern (2000) assess the situation in a similar way.⁵ However, Trevarthen (1998) postulates a *primary inter-subjectivity* already in the pre-symbolic infant, and Stein Bråten (1998) argues that there is a native dialogic structure in the infant. Both refer to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962) concept of the *body-subject*.

In the above sketch of feeling as the basic mode of experience nothing contradicts Dewey's concept of experience. The notion of feeling as a distinct mode of experience, however, takes the concept a step further. What distinguishes feeling from other modes is the role the single aspects of experience play in interaction and how they connect.

⁵ Alexander (1987) seems to concur when he points out that experience for Dewey begins long before the differentiation between subject and object.

With respect to emotion, an immediacy can be observed which other modes lack. There is no distance between the ongoing action and emotion as the emotion is enacted or, better, developed in an immediate way, so much so that one is tempted to say that in feeling emotion dictates action. However, it would be wrong to talk of an *emotional discharge* as Dewey seems to propose. For even in this emotional immediacy of feeling there is emotional transformation.

With respect to the mode of cognition in feeling one could, concurring with Piaget (1950), define it as sensori-motor and pre-symbolic intelligence. As the terms indicate, this mode of cognition is embodied and enacted in an immediate way. There is not yet a clear discrimination between *self* and world which makes the mode of cognition truly relational. Thus, the cognitive content of feeling is neither about the individual nor about the world but about the interaction, about the relationship between individual and world. Feeling could be called an *individual-in-the-world* experience. Both Piaget's concept of sensori-motor intelligence and the psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious have contributed to the understanding of this mode of cognition.

With respect to communication, feeling is based on bodily and vocal gestures. Gregory Bateson's (1970) observations on *analogical* communication are informative on this point. Originating in interaction, analogical communication is about interaction; it is in fact ostensive, relational and situational. In connection with its ability to catch and communicate the complexities of emotion and relationship comes the lack of truth function. For example, there is in analogical communication no possibility of making a statement or of communicating "not".

To summarise, in feeling emotion, cognition, communication and action represent an original and organic unity or, looked upon from the position of later modes, an undifferentiated whole. Dewey is credited with having emphasised this wholeness in experience. However, there may be a regressive trait in his concept when he makes this unity into the ideal form of experience, as the more differentiated modes of experience are then per definition defective. There may still be a kind of coherence in more differentiated forms of interaction and experience, but it can never match the original unity of feeling. In later and differentiated forms of interaction, emotion, cognition, communication and action gain a certain independency and their roles vary dramatically. Indeed, what distinguishes feeling from other modes of interaction is the fact that feeling represents a non-symbolic or a pre-symbolic mode, whereas the others are symbolic, i.e. mediated by symbols. To define the symbolic, however, would take too much space, so a draft must do. Here *symbol* is used in the sense of George Herbert Mead's concept of *significant gesture* or *significant symbol*. It is a sign which refers to or creates a shared meaning. This view, even though separated by a methodological divide, is not far from the neo-Kantian concept of *symbolic form* (Cassirer), which refers to distinct media of understanding and thus constitutes, for example, the distinct world of myth and religion, the world of science, the world of history. It is, however, not understood in the sense Dewey uses it in *Art as Experience*. There symbol is tied to the statement and means a sign which refers to an abstract object, to a concept like, for example, the chemical formula of water. That would be too narrow a definition. In the case of the statement, I would talk of discursive symbolism. The symbol, then, is defined by creating or allowing a more or less clear distinction between I and world, between sign and object and a certain distance between sign and doing. It creates the possibility not only to communicate *something* – the crying infant in Dewey's example communicating the need for company – but also to communicate *about* something. Consequently, the symbol stabilises memory and allows the construction of time and narrative. Finally, it must be emphasised that the symbol mediates what Dewey called aesthetic emotion (Hohr 2010 a, b). It is a mode of emotion

which, unlike the pre-symbolic mode, does not dictate behaviour but, although operative, is open to reflection. Here Dewey's theory converges with the psychoanalytic experience.

Enlivening the world – proximity and distance, fiction and non-fiction, enhancement of life

In feeling we are immersed in the world, in *enlivening* we awaken to the world as (conscious) subjects. There is a close kinship between experience in the Deweyan sense and enlivening as it comprises sensuousness, emotional presence, perception and transformation. However, the term enlivening marks a categorical difference to feeling. With enlivening we enter a world of interaction mediated by symbols, i.e. a world of significant forms which I will, inspired by Mead, call "significant pattern". In this term, *pattern* refers to the physical side of the sign and includes all kinds of patterns, such as visual patterns, acoustic patterns, movement patterns, and linguistic and text patterns. *Significant* refers to the cultural and mental side of the sign, to its symbolic meaning, i.e. to its relationship to thought, to human practices, to *shared* experience.

Dewey maintains that expression uses *form* as a language. Form, according to Dewey (*LW 10*, 111), means language, actually it means many languages. And each of these form-languages is a medium to a specific content. Thus, something which is formulated in a certain medium cannot be formulated as well in another and cannot be translated to another, at least not without loss. In expression, form and content constitute a whole; they are inseparable except through analysis.

All this is also valid for the significant pattern. The term expression, however, is problematic in two respects. It suggests an almost physical and mechanical process – indeed Dewey uses both the operation of a winepress and volcanic activity as metaphors for the process of expression (*LW 10*, 70, 79). Although there is undoubtedly a need for meaning, an urge for differentiating and clarifying experience, an urge comparable to physical pressure, the process of symbolisation is, nonetheless, a deliberate action. Furthermore, the term expression suggests a subjective addition to an otherwise objective presentation. Indeed, with Dewey this is not only a suggestion. He deems, for example, the painting of the artist as a subjective rendering where the artist adds, subtracts and distorts according to his or her vision. He also contrasts the painting with the photograph of a crime scene taken by a detective (*LW 10*, 93) which he considers to be a "correct description" of "items in the natural scene as they literally occur" (*LW 10*, 93). He thereby neglects that any symbolisation is a construction which furthermore is based on cultural meaning systems. *Expression*, thus, connotes a subjectivist aesthetic. I propose, therefore, the term *presentation* as a designation for the aesthetic utterance, i.e. for the utterance through significant pattern since it is presented by a subject on the basis of prior experience and cultural meanings, or what we could call a collective meaning system, as a synthesis of these.

To awaken as a subject means also to awaken as a moral entity. Enlivening is the origin of morality precisely because of the looser ties between action, emotion and cognition, because of the emergence of an alternative course of action, because of the emergence of choice. Still, morality is also dependent upon emotion. It is not enough to cognise right and wrong, there is also a need for wishing the right. Although moral law is clarified and defended against fallacy by understanding and conceiving, morality as such is not dependent upon theory. Morality is based on a mode of experience where cognition and emotion are integrated and balanced. I propose to call it *moral* (religious) *enlivening* (Hohr 1993b). Support for this view can be derived from the Scottish moral philosophers and even from so staunch a defender of reason as Kant (1964).

In the characteristic relationship between emotion and cognition in enlivening, the simultaneous distance and proximity is based, according to Friedrich Schiller (1967), upon the emergence of make-believe and play. He calls this a *leap* in the person's and the culture's development. By that he means that with play reason enters the scene and starts to befriend emotion. Similarly, Lev Vygotsky (1976) talks about a mental revolution when play enters the scene in the life of the infant. From now on, not impulse but thought, not the factual but an imagined scene rules the action. In the light of later research Schiller's observation is not entirely tenable as reason is in the life of the individual from the beginning. Nonetheless, the philosopher and poet is right in observing that with play there comes into being a new realm, a realm of appearance, of illusion in the literal sense of *in-ludere*, of putting thought into play. In this realm there is a new "jurisdiction" as the dictate of action by feeling (and by reason) is suspended and a playful exploration of emotion, thought, communication and action becomes possible. For instance, since play is removed from non-play, the ethical laws are suspended, and accordance with moral law is no validity criterion; play is a-moral.⁶ And precisely for that reason it allows the playful exploration of moral action. The role play of children illustrates that they enact the norms and standards pertinent to a determinate role.

Schiller (1967) points out that the emergence of fiction has another important cognitive consequence. As we increasingly cultivate the realm of make-believe, we gain the ability to question reality: is something factual or imagined, is it reality or delusion? The negligence of this differentiation may prove to be the decisive flaw in Dewey's aesthetics and theory of art. It leads him not only to exclude the statement from the mediation of experience, it also leads him to declare expression to be a kind of super-reality. In expression, says Dewey, a new experience develops which is as immediate and independent from conventions of interpretation as is the contemplation of a flower garden (*LW 10*, 89). Thus, expression is an object in the world which may be experienced like any other object, with the difference that the expression is an intended and made pattern which may offer a better structured, i.e. more differentiated and integrated experience, than the random object in everyday life.

One can hardly overestimate the importance of Dewey's discovery, namely that a presentation is an object in the world. Heidegger (1971) simultaneously and independently makes the same discovery. But besides being an object amongst others, the presentation has *hermeneutic identity* (Gadamer 1975), i.e. it demands to be understood, and this means it inscribes itself into the realm of cultural meanings. Even more important, presentation is not only an object, is not only *something*, but is *about* something which may not be present. Dewey, for example, may have difficulties explaining the reading of a novel as an experience. Although the reading would offer a reading experience as it happens in the here and now, the appropriation of its content would hardly qualify as experience. Not only is the novel about something not present, it is also about something admittedly fictitious. Its appropriation depends in its entirety on prior experience. The listening to music represents similar theoretical problems. Thus neither is the statement barely a signpost nor is the presentation the thing itself. Both are symbolic interactions which are able to refer to objects not present or not even existing.

With respect to cognition, the difference between statement and presentation lies in the purpose and degree of abstraction. Enlivening and presentation constitute a mode of cognition which is holistic, situational and relational, grasping complexity and subtlety (holistic

⁶ Actually play operates at two levels simultaneously, at the level of play proper and of praxis. At the level of play proper moral law is suspended. However, since play is action and no action can occur outside praxis, play is not exempt from moral rule. That is the reason why a child may not hurt another child or animal even though operating within the framework of play.

function). Its fluidity – one could call it metaphorical inclination – enables it to generate new meaning (anticipatory and utopian function), and its ambiguity makes it less vulnerable to paradox and contradiction (subversive and critical function). In a way it shares some qualities with both feeling and conceiving without sharing their respective disadvantages. With feeling, it shares a certain degree of integration and wholeness, however, without emotion being at the helm; with conceiving, it shares a certain degree of reflectivity without its dictate of consistency. Play is especially apt for illustrating the special mode of consciousness in presentation, the simultaneous presence of self-oblivion and heightened self-awareness.

Thus, presentation and – what we with Dewey may call – perception make it possible to experience a) what may for ever lie beyond the reach of statement, b) what may not be stated yet and c) what must not be stated any more.

With respect to a: Presentation makes it possible to grasp some of the complexity and subtlety of the world, be that the sensuous complexity of a flower, of a room, or the socio-emotional complexity of social relationship and social structure. Some aspects of these phenomena may of course be addressed discursively by statement but the main, the enlived content is articulated by presentation and on principle beyond the grasp of statement.

With respect to b: Presentation has an anticipatory function as some aspects which originally have been grasped by presentation may later be conceived. Schiller (1967) found poetic words for this function, and Heidegger (1971) assigns to art the role of opening up new areas to experience and scientific inquiry. The anticipatory role of presentation may also be reflected in individual development: play as the dominating activity in children is in the course of growing up supplemented and partly replaced by other, discursive, modes of interaction.

With respect to c: Finally the ineffability of experience may be caused by excommunication, by prohibition of speech either by taboo or *displacement* and *denial*. Hence, in this instance presentation may to some degree counteract the destruction of experience. Fairy tales are examples of this subversive aspect of presentation (Hohr 1993a). They often contain harsh criticism on social conditions, on injustice, oppression and poverty which otherwise may not be allowed to be stated. Hence, the metaphorical aspects of neurosis are not manifestations of the irrational propensity of presentation, of its supposed lack of critical distance and reflection, but rather of its ability to prevent paradox and contradiction from being excommunicated and, thus, to keep them in the loop of communication (Hohr 1993a).

In considering the role of emotion in enlivening it seems advisable or even necessary to distinguish between the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary (Austin 1962) aspect of presentation even though this distinction may sometimes prove difficult. The difference between these aspects may be more easily grasped at the fringes of the large family of aesthetics, for example in art. With respect to the locutionary aspect, art carries a sense of exhilaration and deliverance which goes along with new discoveries and inventions. This kind of emotion is due to the fact that art explores new areas of experience, challenging its borders. The emotional result is intellectual joy and elation. In this sense, Dewey is right that the aesthetic experience is an experience of being in balance with the world. However, with respect to the illocutionary, i.e. to the extent there is emotional content – and not all art is about emotion – art is about exploration, discovery and articulation of emotion. Neither the artist nor the receivers evoke the respective emotions which are articulated in the art object. Rather, in art emotions are developed and objectified by finding an adequate form. For instance, the poem *In Memoriam* by Tennyson, which Dewey refers to, is about grief as a common human experience. It is not an expression of the poet's emotions – not even, as Dewey seems to think, a sophisticated mode of grieving – nor does it make the reader sad and despondent. What it does is broaden our insight into and understanding of culturally shared

emotions and experiences. The range of emotions explored in art is thus limitless and includes the evil and ugly. In the illocutionary sense there is no harmony in aesthetic experience. The purpose of art is gnostic, to borrow a term from Frederik J.J. Buytendijk (1933). Thus, Schiller (1967) observes rightly that art might be about passion, but a passionate art is impossible and as a term self-contradictory. Dewey, too, seems aware of this feature when he identifies the specific attitude in art reception as an interaction between *rapture* and reflective distance. The reflective or contemplative distance of art is hardly found in any other aesthetic activity. As to the perlocutionary aspect, art is characterised by the absence of any intention in this respect.

Looking at advertisement and propaganda, there emerges a quite different picture with respect to emotion. In a way, they represent the opposite of art. They do not intend to promote new insights, they want to create and evoke new needs. Their function is concentrated on the perlocutionary aspect of presentation, and perlocutionary efficiency is their validity criterion.

Even though enlivening in general is, as we have seen, characterised by the lively presence of emotion, there is, nonetheless, a varying emotional distance and latitude within the vast field of aesthetics and presentation. The emotional distance may to some extent be grasped by Dewey's concept of *aesthetic emotion*, which refers to the emotional development and refinement which takes place in expression. The flower arrangement on the dining table, for instance, conveys a sense of being welcome and of consideration, and is received with gratitude. Nonetheless, it is recognizable as a scenic and symbolic arrangement which, even though convincing, is not overpowering. There is room for awareness, interpretation and appreciation. It is an example of presentation where the various aspects are not so easily distinguished. In contrast to an advertisement, the flower arrangement does not aim to create a new need, and, in contrast to art, not to create a new insight, but on the illocutionary level it aims to communicate a friendly disposition and on the perlocutionary level to evoke the emotion of being welcome and of being at ease and well. One may, indeed, suppose that this is the typical communicative pattern of everyday life aesthetics.

There is no room in this paper to develop variations on the role of emotion in presentation and enlivening. Play and rite alone would require much space for an adequate analysis. However, the important traits of enlivening should not overshadow its negative potential. Enlivening is not a privileged mode of experience but can fail and be twisted, just as conceiving can be. To understand this possibility, one must turn to the question of how it originates and develops. Enlivening can be seen as a synthesis between individual feeling and collective systems of meaningful patterns, of form (Lorenzer 1981). The quality of this synthesis is the validity criterion of a given presentation. This criterion is identical with that which Dewey presents and discusses in his chapter "Criticism and perception" in *Art as Experience*. There is no question about a correspondence between object and perception, about whether something subjective (a mental structure) corresponds to something objective. The question for Dewey is how the subjective and the objective come together in experience. In enlivening there is a good unity and a bad unity, there is cheerful and unforced play and there is hidden, compulsive and obsessive play, there is liberating art and there is unredeemed art, there is seducing propaganda (Barthes 1972) and enslaving rites like the Nazi manifestations in Nuremberg (Sonntag 1983). Today there also is a trivialisation, a de-symbolisation, a hollow rendering of patterns due to the cosmetics of consumer goods (Welsch 1997). But the possibility of a bad unity is also the precondition of its perfectibility. Thus we are engaged in a lifelong struggle for a clearer and more differentiated enlivening. Here lies the main challenge of education.

Conclusions

The above-mentioned qualities of presentation may be summarised thus: presentation, significant pattern, is the medium of enlivening. From feeling it borrows a high degree of integration, with conceiving it shares a certain emotional distance. Thus, enlivening may be called a person-in-world experience. I concur with Dewey and will emphasise that presentation and enlivening are not auxiliary to statement and conceiving. If life, given the possibility, were conducted on the basis of concepts alone, it would be a static, esoteric and colourless life indeed. Presentation is a vital part of experience. However, it is also wrong to simply turn the table and claim that concepts are merely tools which help the process of living and enlivening along. If that were true, there would be little joy, pleasure and contentment to be had from the effort of understanding. It is difficult to understand why Dewey would endorse so extreme a position which even is, in a certain sense, at variance with his notion of continuity.

With respect to education, the development of conceptions, discursive symbolism has had the main focus. The reconstruction of the concept of experience, however, emphasises the importance of enlivening, which is not simply a natural skill. It is not a native faculty but is dependent upon cultivation. It is the object of continuous negotiation and struggle in art, play, rite and celebration, just to name some of the areas of meaning production which holds our lifeworld together and develops it. It is within this mode of experience the important moral choices are made, where it is decided upon which values matter and which do not, which values to fight for and which to fight against. One must ask whether our thinking about instruction of subject matter must be put on a quite different conceptual track than that we have done until now, an instruction where not conceptualization but enlivening is the main concern. Indeed, considering the complexity of our relationship to the natural environment and to the community, it seems clear that it would be extremely hazardous to leave those fields of enlivening to random development or to the influence of particular interests. It is enough to point to the catastrophic consequences of misdirected nationalism in the past. And the environmental hazards of our way of living today are mostly conceived but apparently not truly appreciated.

Besides enlivening, feeling as mode of experience also deserves renewed attention in education. Traditionally, we have dealt with the emotional aspects of instruction under the title of motivation. But feeling is not just an instrument which makes us learn. It is the basis of the life process and thus poses an educational challenge in its own right. The differentiation of the concept of experience may also make it more usable for school education.

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