A Deweyean Approach to the Problems of Contemporary Political Discourse

Abstract

In this paper, I argue that Liberalism, and in particular pragmatist socio-political thinkers, will be better intellectually equipped to confront the challenges the country faces, including the growing anti-intellectualism that is eroding public discourse, if Liberalism embraces and studies the positive function of the moral and qualitative dimension of democratic public discourse. I illustrate some of the perverse and problematic ways in which the “qualitative” does rule today, and offer Dewey’s alternative non-repressive way of handling these problems. We need to expand Dewey’s Logic to include and elaborate the insights that he left us regarding the unavoidable role of the qualitative in thinking and how the qualitative bears on democracy.

In a recent issue of the journal Democracy, some of our distinguished academic intellectuals (e.g., Martha Nussbaum, Michael Sandel, Michael Walzer, William Galston) pondered on the weakness of liberalism in light of the challenges the country faces. The editor summarizes the subject matter of the journal with these questions:

Fourteen months ago, the progressive breast swelled with joy at Barack Obama’s ascent to power. Today much of that hope is lost…But the biggest question is whether liberalism today is intellectually and institutionally equipped to confront the challenges the country faces. What has the
Experience of the last fourteen months taught us about liberalism as currently conceived and practiced? Where do old habits hold us back?¹

None of the intellectuals in this special issue of the journal mentions Dewey (although there are references to John Rawls and John Stuart Mill). This is unfortunate because Dewey warned us about some of the weaknesses of liberalism and, more importantly, there is much in his philosophy that that can be used and developed to rectify these weaknesses and to be better prepared to confront the present ills of our counterfeit democracy. This is what I intend to argue for in this essay.

One of the common threads that emerge in the journal is the present gap between Liberal intellectuals (and their ideas) and the people. There is a low quality of public discourse in America, but liberals have been particularly inept at ameliorating the situation and have failed to provide a cohesive vision that moves and connects with the people. Academic intellectuals working on mainstream political liberal theory share the liberal’s ineptitude. In contrast, conservative groups flush with cash from wealthy donors, exploit the liberal’s lack of vision and leadership. Employing techniques developed by the advertising industry, conservative groups connect emotionally with the people by making appeals based on fear, prejudice and felt anxieties. To be sure, the problem is complex. The public at large suffers from the long-standing American anti-intellectualism² that precludes the emergence of the type of public discourse that is needed in a democracy. This has generated, as a reaction by academic intellectuals, the construction of political liberal theories that centered on “proper” public discourse. Many of these views however, from the point of view of Dewey’s philosophy, operate under traditional unquestioned assumptions that lead them to a different extreme: to downplay, to ignore, and to repress what Dewey referred to as the “qualitative”, i.e., those aspect that are often identified as
feelings, the emotional, imagination, images, and values. There is no doubt that these aspects of everyday life can be threats to--and generate problems for--democratic public discourse but the usual way of philosophers handling these problems is dated and not very promising. For sure, Dewey would find many liberal political philosophies repressive of aspects of democratic discourse that are key to a healthy democracy.

What is peculiar, and perhaps ironic, is that some of the views that can be subjected to criticism for being repressive take Dewey or pragmatism in general to be their predecessors or influence. I have in mind:

(a) Views of democratic deliberation where “deliberation” is understood under a “rational” and “epistemic” model of discourse: an exchange of propositions, reasons and arguments governed by rules and reasoning that often exclude emotional and imaginative elements (e.g. many scholars in “deliberative democracy”).

(b) Views of public democratic deliberation that give primacy to epistemic virtues and goals ("truth") in their view of democracy and downplay or exclude the moral-value dimension of democracy (e.g., Cheryl J. Misak, Robert B. Talisse).

The neglect or the repression of the moral and the qualitative dimension in philosophy is not new. These are aspects of everyday life that tend to be underemphasized, especially by “serious” philosophers that instead have a long standing favoritism towards what is epistemic, intellectual, propositional, cognitive, and linguistic. Dewey observed early on that “the professional philosopher is only too prone to think of all experiences as if they were of the type he is specially engaged in.” In this paper, I will
argue that Liberalism, and in particular pragmatist socio-political thinkers, will be better intellectually equipped to confront the challenges the country faces, including the growing anti-intellectualism that is eroding public discourse, if Liberalism embraces and studies the positive function of the moral and qualitative dimension of in democratic public discourse.

**Neglect and Repression of the Moral**

John Dewey spent a lot of time arguing against those who wanted to reduce democracy solely to a political system. He thought that such a narrow conception of democracy was an obstacle to genuine reform. That narrow conception fails to address what is wrong and problematic about societies, such as the U.S., that takes democracy for granted. If Dewey were alive today he would be glad to see that intellectuals in political theory and philosophy have taken seriously the notion that democracy requires deliberation. There has been a movement from a “thin” to a “thick” conception of democracy. However, I think that Dewey would be surprised to find that we have fallen short of embracing how “thick” democracy is. Philosophy has welcomed the epistemological aspects (content and justification) of democracy but has been very reluctant to accept the more value-laden aspects, such as the moral and aesthetic. What would surprise Dewey even more would be that some of the people in this epistemic trend called themselves “pragmatists”. While there are some significant differences between recent pragmatists thinkers like Talisee and Misak, they are part of a trend to regard epistemology as the most appropriate way for a pragmatist to conceive of and support democracy. To be sure, in comparison to other “thin” approaches to democracy, these epistemic pragmatists have the merit of showing how the relation between pragmatism and democracy is significant, and how there is a normative component in pragmatism that is key to supporting democracy.
But in comparison to Dewey, the moral dimension of democracy has been underemphasized and neglected. Why has this “normative modesty” in political philosophy been taken so lightly today? Perhaps because there is the unquestioned adoption (to some degree and by different authors) of one or two of the following modern tenets and arguments criticized by Dewey:

(a) **Intellectualism.** All experience is a form of knowing. Morality is just about having and prescribing moral beliefs and reasons that are either true of false. Therefore, moral epistemology is central to ethics. Epistemic reasons form a more solid foundation to ground democracy than moral values or moral reasons. Morality is private and subjective. Knowledge and truth are public and objective. Therefore, what has to be said about democracy can and should be explained and presented in terms of “inquiry”, “habits”, “intelligence”, “epistemic goals”, etc. The democratic virtues are all epistemic virtues. About democracy, a pragmatist can focus on the epistemic and avoid making the more controversial moral or value claims.

(b) **Liberal Neutrality.** In political theory we must try to abstain from making or defending substantial moral commitments because it goes against neutrality and pluralism. Moral judgment and commitments have no place in politics. We must set aside as much as much as possible moral convictions in public discourse in a democracy.
I will not here elaborate on Dewey’s criticism of (a) and (b). Instead I wish to raise a more practical concern. The normative modesty of liberal political theorists and of recent pragmatists may amount to prescribing a repression of morality that renders political philosophers inept and out of touch with the contemporary political climate in America. There is today a craving for the moral dimension in political discourse and conservatives are shamelessly exploiting that craving for their advantage. Since the 1970’s, Liberals and secularists have allowed the Christian right to fill the public’s longing for moral values and vision. This is the same concern expressed by Michael Sandel, who recently suggested that what may have helped the election of Obama was the fact that he had the guts to reclaimed the moral dimension of political issues.

A misdirected pragmatism avoids moral commitment. “What Works” for this president is really his remarkable capacity in important moments to rise above the dry technocratic talk and talk about the meaning of democracy and what we owe fellow citizens. He tapped into a yearning for moral discourse during his campaign, since he has been in office this has been less in evidence.

Dewey scholars have tended to stay away from mentioning the moral dimension of the pragmatist’s commitment to democracy. They are, of course, quick to present pragmatism as committed to deliberation, experimentation, fallibilism, and social intelligence. Sometimes, however, this smells like a form of intellectualism and moral neutrality. None of these broad prescriptions address moral values, and in fact seem perfectly compatible with a politician who has these commitments and traits but lacks the sort of moral character needed in an ideal democracy. Are proper epistemic habits (e.g.,
concern for truth, reasoning well, etc.) sufficient to ensure that we have democratic political leaders? Seemingly most people who are cynical about politics think of politicians as “moral” failures and not just epistemic failures. We wish to hold politicians morally responsible and not just epistemically responsible.

Normative modesty on the part of scholars in pragmatism has also help perpetuate the common caricature about pragmatism in politics. Unless Deweyans are ready to affirm the moral values that they stand on, their usual vague assertions that they are committed to “what works” and “intelligence” will continue to strike many as morally shallow, and hard to distinguish from “pragmatism” in the narrow expedient sense. We have recently seen this reaction in the reception to James T. Kloppenberg affirmation of Obama as a pragmatist. Kloppenberg’s argues that Obama is a pragmatist who is committed to a pragmatist epistemology. The New York times reports that, after a lecture in New York where Kloppenberg was presenting the release of his intellectual biography of Obama, “a historian at Rutgers University, wrote in an e-mail arguing that by ‘showing that Obama comes out of a tradition of philosophical pragmatism, he actually provided a basis for criticizing Obama’s slide into vulgar pragmatism.’”13 There is, of course, plenty of evidence in Obama’s own words about his substantial commitment to the democracy as a moral way of life, but these last faulty criticisms or impressions of pragmatism could be avoided by avoiding the recent normative modesty about pragmatism.

Dewey’s pragmatism is not susceptible to the objection of lacking a moral backbone because his pragmatism is not centered on epistemology. For Dewey, moral values, virtues, and commitments are integral to the ideal democratic citizen and deliberation.14 There is no repression of the moral in Dewey’s philosophy of democracy.
**Neglect and Repression of the “Qualitative”**

Dewey and James were committed to do philosophy that, instead of beginning with theoretical abstractions, begins with (and takes seriously) the full richness of experience. Many philosophers by the 20th Century have come to agree that modern philosophers were wrong in assuming that “thinking” is done by “reason” (through some a-historical faculty). Instead, language has been neglected as the concrete means by which “thinking” happens in everyday life. Moreover, thinking is a social process instead of a private or subjective phenomenon. In contrast, James and Dewey’s view of thinking is much more fuller and radical. The emphasis on language in 20th Century philosophy has become a new form of intellectualism that continues to deny or downplay aspects that are integral to concrete thinking. The stress on “language” has been at the expense of the role of the qualitative (feelings, emotion, non-cognitive) in thinking. But Dewey was clear, “Language fails not because thought fails, but because no verbal symbols can do justice to the fullness and richness of thought”.15

Thinking is not an activity of a disembodied mind or of creatures in a language game. Thinking arises from within and emerges out of the pervasive qualitative situations that make up the moments of our lives. All thought is situated, embodied, and interfused with feeling. As Mark Johnson claims in *The Meaning of the Body*, “Even our most abstract and formal concepts have no meaning without some connection to felt experience.”17 Thinking is a process that requires felt experiences in all of its stages, and even logical relations are felt transitions. Modern logic, however,

“interprets logical relations as empty formal relations lacking any felt connection or direction in our thinking…. However, once you grant that that logic is grounded in human inquiry (as James and Dewey insisted), and once
you start to pay attention to how you feel as you think, you will notice an entire submerged continent of feeling that supports, and is part of, your thoughts.”  

Dewey’s view is quite radical. It is not the view that feelings accompany our cognition of logical relations, but rather “feelings of quality, connection, and direction lie at the heart of logical reasoning, as it carried out in actual inquiry.”

There is today a growing body of research in social psychology and the cognitive sciences that supports Dewey’s view of thinking as qualitative. My aim here is to show why the qualitative is important in regard to democracy and what is at stake if we neglect or repress it in our views of democracy, a weakness evident in much contemporary liberal political thought. To do this, I will try what may seem a negative route. I will illustrate some of the perverse or problematic ways in which the “qualitative” does rule today, with the intention of suggesting that the usual way of philosophers handling this problem is not very promising. Their handling amounts to a repression of the qualitative instead of a Deweyean embrace of the qualitative as part of our best inquiries. Dewey provided us with an entirely different approach to the most common patterns of bad public discourse in America.

1) The Seduction of Images and Emotional Persuasion

The dangerous aspects of rhetoric and emotional persuasion are more significant today than during Dewey’s time. The people are swayed by irrelevancy, amusement, and fear. They are seduced by images, propaganda, and demagoguery instead of by the force of argument. Today, there are new forms of emotional persuasion that are the consequence of the medium in which dialogue in public life is had. We live in a world in which images
and other non-cognitive and non-verbal means preclude or divert inquiry. The non-propositional “stuff” that is “amusing the public to death”\textsuperscript{21} is easily dismissed by intellectualist philosophers as simply irrational, psychological, and beyond the realm of logic. This is the same sort of magical safeguard that Dewey criticized in philosophy: just label something as “unreal” or “irrational” and somehow it will go away. A Deweyan view of public deliberation is not as prone to this mistake because it holds that what is emotional, qualitative, imaginative, non-cognitive, non-verbal is an important aspect of any genuine process of deliberation. A Deweyan solution does not pretend to repress what cannot be repressed. Moreover, Dewey would be skeptical of the notion that the solution to our problematic situation lies in a return to a print-centered culture. Those days are gone.

For Dewey, the emotional (qualitative) and imaginative are integral aspects of any deliberation; moreover, they are key to its own regulation. Deliberation may require reasoning and examination of propositions, but it is also an imaginative process and, more importantly, it is the qualitative aspect that provides the guidance needed in reaching judgment. While contemporary political theories have made “public reason” more historical, epistemic, dialogical, and linguistic, it has yet to embrace its qualitative dimension. There is a good reason why Dewey avoided the use of words preferred by epistemologist like “reason” “truth” or “belief”. The aim of inquiry is not to transform belief into knowledge, but to transform the “quality” of a situation from indeterminate to determinate. Communal or public inquiry is the exploration and examination of proposed solutions and assertions in light of and because of a “felt” and shared problem. While it is important in a democracy that this process includes appeals to arguments and experience, that is not all that is needed. This process itself is qualitative and depends on the qualitative for its own transformation. Therefore, inquirers must have more habits than the ones
associated with the intellect, they must be “sensitive” in ways that can be spelled out. For Dewey, even the proper deliberations characteristic of scientist require qualitative sensitivity. He wrote, “scientific thought is, in its turn, a specialized form of art, with its own qualitative control. The more formal and mathematical science becomes, the more it is controlled by sensitiveness to a special kind of qualitative considerations” (LW 5:252).

Deliberation requires the learning and operation of certain embodied habits. Some of these habits go beyond the intellectual capacities associated traditionally with reason or logic. The ability or disposition to evaluate the logical implications of our beliefs and the habit of not making inferences that are not warranted by the evidence may be important, but so are habits of imagination and emotional sensitivity. In democratic deliberation, it is important to have citizens willing to take the standpoint of others and, in sum with all of the doing and undergoing habits that are required for a meaningful, educative, and democratic interaction.

According to Dewey’s view of the ideal character, what we need to counteract the seduction of images and emotional appeals that distort inquiry is more – not fewer -- emotional and imaginative habits. As he notes,

“[t]he conclusion is not that the emotional, passionate phase of action can be
or should be eliminated in behalf of a bloodless reason. More "passions;"
not fewer, is the answer. To check the influence of hate there must be
sympathy, while to rationalize sympathy there are needed emotions of
curiosity, caution,...”

Pragmatists understood the force of habits. It is not enough to become consciously aware that we are emotionally manipulated in order to protect ourselves from being
emotionally manipulated. What we need are people who possess a character that is emotionally receptive to doubt and possess a habitual passion for criticism. To counteract the craving and comfort provided by absolutisms, we must learn to habitually find some emotional zest and thrill in facing uncertainty and contingency. One could also argue that, against the seduction of images, what we need are people whose character can negotiate more not less images. Visual literacy, communication, and criticism may well have their own logic and the proper place in the sort of education that is needed. This is obviously a very different prescription than the repression recommended by many philosophers in the name of reason and democracy.

Deliberative democrats have favor a “rational” and “epistemic” model of discourse: an exchange of propositions, reasons and arguments governed by rules and reasoning that often exclude emotional and imaginative elements. This is not surprising since many of the thinkers of the deliberative movement have been strongly influenced by Rawls and Habermas who, in spite of their differences, claim that their deliberative ideal amounts to a conception of public reason.24

Is pragmatism just another conception of public reason that competes with the ones that dominate contemporary theories?25 “Public reason” is an abstraction, and a very dangerous one when it is used to make prescriptions that ignore or deny features of any community of inquiry. Is not Dewey saying, like many philosophers, that in a good society we need to work on making people more “rational”? Dewey notion of the ideal character is, however, so inclusive and so distant from the traditional use of the word “rational” that even “intelligence” (a term he preferred) seems narrow, misleading, and distracts from appreciating the uniqueness of his view.26
One reason why the usual model of public reason in political theory downplays or ignores the qualitative is because philosophers have associated the affective with what is personal, private and idiosyncratic, and it is therefore what must transcended if we are to have public democratic discourse in a pluralistic society. For Dewey, this view of the affective should be questioned. In a democracy, we do want the people to have the sort of communication where most are able to transcend their beliefs and values to address citizens that have different beliefs/values, but this is done best by having citizens who are embodied with certain imaginative and emotional habits. There is no neutral, value-less, emotion-less, universal point of view that we must strive for, and from which, we can adjudicate in public deliberation. This should not be a cause of despair but a reason to learn to discriminate between better and worse habits of affection and imagination. As Dewey said,

One can only see from a certain standpoint, but this fact does not make all standpoints of equal value. A standpoint which is nowhere in particular is an absurdity. But one may have an affection for a standpoint which gives a rich and ordered landscape rather than for one from which things are seen confusedly and meagerly.

Dewey, for example, presented the hypothesis that when “sympathy” becomes fused with other virtues such as openness it becomes part of the democratic readiness to listen to others and look at things from their point of view whether we agree or not. He claimed that “to put ourselves in the place of another, to see things from the standpoint of his aims and values ... is the surest way to appreciate what justice demands in concrete cases.”

Dewey would find the standard quest of political theory to impose a criterion of legitimate “public reasons,” and the corresponding rules of restraints thus imposed as a
legalistic approach that is questionable in terms of its efficacy to improve the quality of communal democratic inquiry. Even the requirements cherished by pragmatism that inquiry be as experimental and hypothetical as possible is a matter of having citizens with certain habits interact in certain way and not a matter of setting in advance the rules for public discourse.

Do we need a new account of how rationality should guide our democratic practices? I am suggesting that we find in Dewey’s philosophy the possibility of developing a new and promising approach to the problem of poor quality public discourse in America. According to Dewey, the neglect of the aesthetic and affective factors ("direct sensitiveness") in American education is "the greatest deficiency in our educational systems with respect to character building.”31 We need a view of education for democracy that emphasizes -- more than ever before -- visual literacy, habits of imagination and feelings. This inquiry must, however, be informed by an empirical inquiry into both the distortions and positive function of the qualitative in public discourse. In what follows, I will show how such an inquiry is possible, starting with Dewey’s insights about the different phases of inquiry in his Logic. What I offer here is just a sketch, one that should be further developed and that should consult the most recent research about human judgment and deliberation in the sciences. Liberal political philosophers must open themselves to such an interdisciplinary research if they want to ameliorate their present ineptness.

2) Qualitative Distortions at Different Phases of Inquiry

The qualitative must be studied as it relates to very specific phases of inquiry in Dewey’s Logic. Inquiry is the transformation of an indeterminate situation into a determinate situation. This is a continuous process with phases, that require operations of
reasoning, observation, experimentation and culminates in a final warranted judgment. The sad truth is that many of us live more and more in a society where this process of inquiry gets diverted. While it is true that many times the “qualitative” can be blamed for such diversions and distractions, Dewey does not share the common demonization and repression of the qualitative in thinking about the threats to democratic public discourse. For Dewey, the problem is not with the “qualitative” \textit{per se} because all thought is qualitative. In general, "feelings" are one of the important resources we have to guide inquiry at every step in the process. In \textit{Art as Experience}, Dewey says that quality is not only important as a “motive in undertaking intellectual inquiry: but in “keeping it honest”.\textsuperscript{32} If Dewey is correct, then mistakes in deliberation and communal inquiry may be “qualitative” and not just “logical” (\textit{i.e.}, mistakes of reasoning). For instance, just as one “jumps to a conclusion” (a logical leap or mistaken inference), there are also disturbing “jumps” that have to do with the qualitative. A person or a community can have great logical or reasoning powers but a distorted sensitivity may retard the inquiry. In sum, from the standpoint of Dewey’s philosophy, there are failures to guide deliberation by not paying attention to what is “felt” throughout the entire process of transforming an indeterminate situation into one that is determinate. These failures are serious since they threaten democracy. In what follows, I will outline some of the common failures to guide inquiry by the qualitative (in the proper way) at different phases of inquiry.

a) \textbf{The Failure to “Feel” the Problem}

Both Peirce and Dewey stress how inquiry is a middle phase that starts with the non-cognitive qualitative experience of doubt or indeterminacy. “A problem must be felt before it can be stated.”\textsuperscript{33} Genuine thinking starts with feeling a disruption when a problem
is perceived and an explicit reflection about “what is the problem?” There are two possible “qualitative” failures at this phase of the process: (a) inquirers fail to experience the disruption or indeterminacy of a situation, or (b) although they “feel” the indeterminacy, there is a “leap” or disconnection between this initial phase and the more reflective phase of stating what is the problem. I am afraid that my use of Dewey’s technical language can get in the way of understanding what is concrete and commonplace. Therefore, in what follows, I want to show how these two failures ((a) and (b) above) are a common threat to democracy.

The ideal of democracy requires citizens that are thoughtful or prone to deliberate about the shared significant problems of democracy. Today, perhaps even more than Dewey’s time, the lack of publics prone to do such a thing is a serious problem. This is often described as the lack of reflective-intellectual habits in the people. Indeed, one of the oldest objections against democracy is that the people do not think, and are in fact stupid or non-intelligent, especially about public matters that should be the object of their public deliberations. Concern about the personal failings of individual citizens cause many contemporary political theorists to prescribe the existence of public spaces that encourage the people to reason together while putting aside their private feelings and values. For the classical pragmatist, however, this is a rather narrow diagnosis of the problem and an impractical solution.

We must consider what are the pre-required conditions of genuine thinking. The dependence of thinking on suffering indeterminate situations implies that failure to experience these sorts of situations, especially when one should, may be the culprit. To put it bluntly, how can we expect people to think about the key problems of our counterfeit democracy if they do not first experience these problems as problems? People don’t think
merely because they’re asked to. How can we expect people to eat if they are not hungry? We wish more people would think, but “how to make people think” cannot be separated from “how to make people “feel” the indeterminacy of certain situations”. The latter is, in fact, a precondition.

There are people that, for whatever reason, lack the capacity to qualitatively experience (i.e., feel or suffer) certain important problems. Sometimes we call them “insensitive” and at other times just “apathetic”. Apathy has been a serious problem of democracy, and it points to the importance of the qualitative for thinking to even get started. Democratic reformers and revolutionary leaders want the people in a particular society to become aware of their own oppression and to seek change, but this is not a mere matter of knowledge or lack or reflective capacities. It is first and foremost a matter of feeling that something is not right in the present status quo or relationships with others. If the people do not first suffer their oppression on their own (in a immediate and qualitative way), there is no hope that they try to find the source of the problem and find ways to transform their situation. It is true that arguments and even theories can sometimes be effective tools to “provoke” immediate indeterminacy in the people. As intellectuals, we often loose sight of the fact that our success in provoking inquiry is not proportional to the strength or validity of our intellectual arguments, but by the sheer qualitative effect we have with the people. There are different means to break the apathy of the people and made them think: arguments, novels, movies, music, satire, parody, sticks, stones, and bombs. One has to be open and pluralistic about the possible means, even though there are good reasons for preferring some means in lieu of others. I am worried that, as intellectuals, we tend to overestimate the potency of intellectual means to provoke reflection, especially today when people are bombarded with plenty of stimuli to get their attention and prevent
them from thinking. In sum, there is no hope for democracy if the people fail to feel the lack of democracy to be a problem.

b) **Wasted Disruptions: Diversions and the Failure to “Feel” the Same Problem Throughout**

Another implication of the pragmatist view of inquiry is that seriously disruptive social or natural events (e.g., 9/11, injustices, Katrina, wars, terrorism, economic crisis and unemployment) can be opportunities for reflection, sometimes for even long overdue thinking that could ameliorate present conditions. This is not the optimism that denies the evil and tragic character of such events. While it is hard to speak of serious problems and crisis as “opportunities”, this is what they are from the point of view of the pragmatists. Indeterminate situations are not only painful but “wasted” when they either do not provoke inquiry (no learning) or lead to a diverted inquiry. In recent articles in the NY Times there has been some reflections about how to name the first 10 years of the 21st Century, based on the most important events and developments of this decade. Good candidates were “The Era of Misplaced Anxiety”, “The Decade of Disruption”, and “The Decade of the Unthinkable.” One could make the case that the appropriate name should be “The Decade of Wasted Disruptions”. For example, after 9/11 and after the onset of the economic crisis, leaders and the people diverted inquiry into formulations of the problem and views about the facts that had nothing to do with the indeterminate situation experienced. We had leaders that described the disruptive events in terms of the dichotomies of good versus evil (and us versus them). Many people were led to believe that those responsible for the 9/11 attacks were all from Iraq. Some in the left were quick
to construct their own conspiracy theories. These are just some examples of how events can be wasted disruptions because inquiry is diverted.

Inquiry can be diverted or distracted in many ways, and for Dewey the qualitative is key to diagnosing these problems as well as their solution. Inquiry is diverted when there is a “leap” or disconnection between experiencing the initial indeterminate situation and the phase of inquiry that Dewey calls “institution of a problem” (in his *Logic*). The indeterminate situation is at first precognitive, but it is soon experienced as “problematic”, that is, as reflecting on answering, “what is the problem?” At this point, Dewey says, “[t]o mistake the problem involved is to cause subsequent inquiry to be irrelevant or go astray”.35 For Dewey, it is the qualitative that guides the inquirer in knowing whether he/she is still dealing with the same problem or is venturing into a different one. Dewey explains how “feeling” the problem is what protect us from “leaps” or diversions in the process of inquiry. Attention to the continuous but changing feeling is what “enables us to keep thinking about one problem without our having constantly to stop to ask ourselves what it is after all that we are thinking about. We are aware of it not by itself but as the background, the thread, and the directive clue in what we do expressly think of. For the latter things are its distinctions and relations.”36

More examples may help illustrate how common diverted inquiry is. Today, many people are experiencing a serious disruption in their life, related to a drastic change in their social environment, economic conditions, unemployment, etc. They are suddenly angry and feel an acute uncertainty and indeterminacy of their situation. However, they do not know why or have yet to be reflective about their situation. In many cases, instead of
attending to the concrete indeterminacy felt, it is repressed, avoided, or dissipated by quickly latching on to an articulation of what the problem is (and its possible solution) that is unrelated to the initial experienced problem. This is sometimes described as the proper object of one's feelings (e.g., anger, fear) that is misplaced by some other convenient object that is unrelated. Sometimes, we latch onto the first articulation of “what is the problem” that gives us immediate release, comfort, certainty or afford some release or venting. We feel the indeterminacy of our situation, but instead of guiding our inquiry by paying attention to the quality (feeling or pain) we latch on to someone’s simplistic and immediately gratifying description of the problem. Hence, the experienced indeterminacy does not function in the initial phases to guide the inquiry, as it should. What is initially felt is not transformed as inquiry proceeds. Instead it is repressed or displaced.

I submit that we should not call these lasts sorts of problems “failures of reasoning” or problems caused by the lack of reasoning. Thinkers with perfect logical abilities are susceptible to the problem of diverted inquiry. There are plenty of highly intelligent individuals that while good at reasoning, tend to get lost and diverted because they quickly lose, are insensitive to, or do not sustain the immediate felt sense of the problem that started their inquiry. In these situations, their capacity for reflective detachment hardly functions as a virtue. They in fact “jump” into different inquiries that, to someone with a good sense of the problem at hand, are unrelated. The habit of going off on tangents and intellectual analysis that are irrelevant to the concrete problems that initiate inquiry is a common vice for the intellectual person who lacks sensitivity. To have this sort of intellectual leading the discussion is unwise for a democratic community of inquiry.

The problem of diverted inquiry is of course more common among the non-intellectual types, those that are way too prone to be emotionally manipulated by others.
This is a problem today that may account for the some of the “grass roots” populist movements that we are experiencing. In a recent op-ed in the NY Times, Jurgen Habermas expressed concern with the state of democracy in Europe because “politicians are discovering that they can divert the social anxieties of their voters into ethnic aggression against still weaker social groups.”

In America and Europe, we are witnessing right-wing populists stirring up political prejudices against immigrants by invoking phobic images and other techniques. Habermas, however, reflects upon the problem in terms of a relapse into an “ethnic understanding of our liberal constitution” (instead of the liberal state). He gives his characteristic call for a more civic discourse, but the concrete problem is that, for in many people, their felt social anxiety (caused by many factors) is being diverted or displaced by a felt anger, hostility, or fear of immigrants. The problem is not just a failure of reasoning, nor is it a problem that is reduced to a faulty political system. Popular prejudices and mob mentality are problems of diverted inquiry that occur because many are incapable of guiding their deliberation in a sustained way by the felt indeterminacy they experience. The people’s qualitative sensitivity is either easily diverted (e.g., from feeling anxiety to hate) or it is easily distracted in too many directions that provide the promise of immediate gratification. Dewey was aware of this contemporary problem, but that problem is more serious today. The people are easily distracted by entertainment, immediate gratifications, and have short attention spans. From a Deweyean perspective, the problem is not that the qualitative intrudes and diverts (so that we must appeal to “reason”). Instead, it is a failure to guide inquiry by the qualitative. Sustained, disciplined, and continuous inquiry is not a matter of an emotion-less will to inquire or rational discipline. Ideal inquirers are sensitive to the qualitative transformation that is occurring as they think; their doing is guided by undergoing. Ideal inquirers are not easily distracted or diverted by what
is not felt as relevant to the problem at hand. They are sensitive to the unique doubt of each inquiry.

c) **The Failure to “Feel” what is Relevant**

So far, I have claimed that the qualitative is important in order not to mistake the problem and avoid diversions and distractions, which are common deficiencies in our democracies. Yet the qualitative also has the important function of guiding inquirers in their immediate sense of what is relevant and irrelevant as inquiry proceeds. Dewey says that emotion is not just the moving force of inquiry but the “cementing” that “selects what is congruous and dyes what is selected with its color, thereby giving qualitative unity to materials disparate and dissimilar”. In his *Logic*, Dewey presents us with two “evils” that can occur if the inquirer is not sensitive enough to the situation as a whole. There are inquirers who gather too many facts, while others force the facts into a predetermined conceptual or theoretical scheme.

“It is more or less a commonplace that it is possible to carry on observations that amass facts tirelessly and yet the observed “facts” lead nowhere. On the other hand, it is possible to have the work of observation so controlled by a conceptual framework fixed in advance that the very things which are genuinely decisive in the problem in hand and its solution, are completely overlooked. Everything is forced into the predetermined conceptual and theoretical scheme. The way, and the only way, to escape these two evils, is sensitivity to the quality of a situation as a whole. In ordinary language, a problem must be felt before it can be stated. If the unique quality of the situation is had immediately, then there is something that regulates the
selection and the weighing of observed facts and their conceptual ordering.”^39

While Dewey is probably thinking here of a bad scientist or philosopher, these two mistakes are quite common among non-intellectuals and in public or political discourse. The above passage is relevant to the two evils of “factual overload” and “ideological thinking” in the contemporary scene. Because of technological advancement, contemporary citizens suffer from “information” overload. We have never had so many “facts” at our disposal, but it is not clear what to do with them, whether to select them as relevant or even to accept them as facts. The segment of the public that cares to make an informed judgment about an issue feels lost and overwhelmed.^40 This situation feeds into the twin evil mentioned above by Dewey: people seek instead the guidance provided by a predetermined ideology. The relevance of information or facts in deliberating about some social problem (e.g., health care, education) is therefore determined by the predetermined right wing or left wing theoretical framework of the inquirers. In other words, in the process of inquiry the problem “felt” (its quality) plays no role in regulating where inquiry is going to go. In fact, one can predict where inquiry will go; just find out if the person is right wing or left wing.

The importance of sensitivity to the problems experienced underscores Dewey’s reply to Lippman about the elite not “feeling the pinch”. Lippman had an elite-model form of democracy, and Dewey’s responded that the elites are not in a position to come to a better judgment about what is good for the people because they is too far remove from the concrete problems that are directly felt and suffered by the people. To make this point, Dewey made the following analogy: “The man who wears the shoe knows best that it pinches and where it pinches, even if the expert shoemaker is the best judge of how the
trouble is to be remedied.” How the shoe feels is critical to the process if fixing it, and illustrates how important the qualitative is to the inquiry. Today, the intellectual elite continues to ignore the importance of “feeling the pinch” while the people have many distractions and diversions that does not permit them to guide their inquiries by how the shoes feel. This is perhaps something that Dewey could not have foreseen.

The Relation between Reasoning and Sentiment in Public Discourse

Dewey’s view of public discourse -- as a process guided by the qualitative -- predates and is supported by the recent “affective revolution” in social psychology and other sciences. The findings by scientists have called into question the traditional downplaying of emotions and intuitions in comparison to reasoning in deliberation. The research shows that the “rational choice” models used in political science, and the conceptions of public deliberation in philosophy, are out of touch with the way average citizens actually make their decisions.

The recent scientific research confirmed one of Dewey most radical assertions in regard to the guidance function of the qualitative: “Reflection and rational elaboration spring from and make explicit a prior intuition.” All thought begins with feeling, namely the immediate quality of the whole situation. Feeling guides reflection; in fact “intuitions” guide the search for evidence and justification. According to Jonathan Haidt and Selin Kesebir, Hume was not totally right because there is primacy but not dictatorship of sentiment over reason. They write, “the precise roles played by intuition and reasoning in moral judgment cannot yet be established based on the existing empirical evidence” and “a central challenge of modern moral psychology is to specify when, where, and how reason and sentiment interact.”
Some qualification of the recent research is necessary because it is not entirely consonant with the Deweyean view of public deliberation. Reasoning and sentiment are not two independent processes, and recent research must be careful not to fall back on the traditional dualism of reason and passion. For Dewey and James, reason and passion are two mutually dependent functions of the same integral experience or process, \textit{i.e.,} of thinking.

When we are defending the more normative stance presupposed by Dewey, we must be clear about the limitations of science. Research shows that people sometimes override their initial gut feelings, but Haidt and Kesebir ask:

“do these occasional overrides show us that moral reasoning is best characterized -- contra Hume -- as an independent process that can easily veto the conclusions of moral intuition (Greene, 2008)? Or might it be the case that moral reasoning is rather like a lawyer (Baumeister & Newman, 1994) employed by moral intuition, which largely does its client’s bidding, but will occasionally resist when the client goes too far and asks it to make an argument it knows to be absurd?”

These social psychologists raise these questions to prompt more scientific research, but it is not clear how much of it will help settle the more normative issues. To determine how often initial judgments are revised does not tell us how often they \textit{should} be revised. That in most people, the initial intuitions function as “dictator” of reason in the same way that a client that hires a lawyer, does not mean that this is ideal. On this normative issue, Dewey’s position is clear. In the ideal deliberation and in the ideal character, the relation between these two aspects of thinking should be one in which they mutually affect each other in the process of coming to a final judgment as to what the situation requires. We
start with the intuition and then look for the reasons, but ideally this reflective search for reasons has an effect on the intuition or feel of the entire situation.

To be sure, some 20th Century philosophers have given the “qualitative” (as either “gut feelings”, “emotional reactions of ‘yuk’”, or “intuitions”) some guiding role in deliberation, but it is clearly a subordinate role in more ways than one. For example, when “gut feelings” are determined to have some weight, it is because they are conceived as or reduced to some useful form of intuitive social knowledge. They are given some function in deliberation because they are conceived as, at best, disguised crude rules of thumb that have served us in the past. Nevertheless, they are useful only at the beginning of inquiry and are inept to deal with the complexity and nuances of particular situations. We have to rely on them because, unfortunately, we don’t have time for reflection in many situations. For example, it is a good thing that most of us have an immediate “feeling” towards danger and injustices or that there is a natural revulsion that keeps us from practicing incest or cannibalism, but nothing replaces deliberation by reason. In an ideal world, a world without the limitations of time to make well-reasoned decisions, we would not need to rely on the qualitative. This is not Dewey’s view. For him, the guidance provided by the qualitative is not limited to the fact that immediate experience is funded (from previous experience). This is why we have good reason to trust the “gut feelings” of the “experienced” few on some subject. But for Dewey, the qualitative is also what guides the present operations of inquiry in light of the present situation that is being transformed. To put it crudely, we “feel” the present situation as we think, so that contrary to the above view we often need the qualitative to assess the complexity and nuances of particular situations. The particular details of a situation, or what operations are relevant, are determined by being sensitive. In other words, guiding ourselves by the qualitative in a situation amounts
to more that just guiding ourselves by our habits. Sure, a skilled jazz musician responds automatically (habitually to certain cues in experience). There is a know-how that is the result of previous experience, but there is also responding to the unique qualitative guidance of the situation as it develops. Of course, even this know-how requires certain habits (and sensitivity), but the present situation is sometimes guiding in ways that are not reduced to previously found know-how. The richness of present qualitative experiences, and its instructions for us, are not always reduced to its conditions of what we bring from past experiences.

I return once again to the question: Why is this important for democracy? The neglect and repression of the qualitative is of consequence. As Haidt and Kesibir have observed, “liberals in the United States have made a grave error in adopting a rationalist or “Enlightenment” model of the human mind, and therefore assuming that good arguments about good policies will convince voters to vote for the Democratic Party. Republicans, they show, have better mastered intuitionist approaches to political persuasion such as framing and emotional appeals at least in the three decades before Barack Obama became president.”

The repression of the qualitative in philosophy will likely prevent socio-political philosophers from understanding political movements. The recent “tea parties” are purported to have the “grass roots” elements of any ideal democratic movement, except that we worry about how many of the participants are just too emotionally ready to receive the narratives formulated by conservative talk radio hosts about what their problem are and the solution. It is simplistic to argue that the problem with these groups is that they do not reason enough, or are driven merely by passion. There have also been plenty of left-groups prone to accept the comfort of conspiracy theories or single accounts of all of our socio-
political problems. How can one counteract these tendencies that continue to impair and embarrass public discourse? Dewey does not have a simple answer, but for him repression is not the answer. We must revise our notions of public discourse in a way that gives the qualitative is due function.

Let me close by considering some possible objections to Dewey’s anti-rationalism. If, as Dewey believes and recent research confirms, we all look for evidence or reasons that fit or reinforce our first intuitions or “gut reactions”, then how is this nothing but claiming that all thinking is “rationalizations” or “ideological”? Is not this anti-rationalistic/intuition-accommodating obviously false and thus the “qualitative” is and should be discredited?

What is problematic about the ideological mindset of a public is not that they allow the qualitative to guide their thinking, but that there is something too simplistic, unified, or homogenous about what they “feel”. In ideological thinking, inquiry is at the mercy of a mindset or a set of beliefs, but what makes this sort of thinking dangerous and contagious is that it is at the mercy of, and is controlled by, a single intuition or “gut feeling” (such as the fear of government, a love of nation, etc.). Even when we are sympathetic to the pervading qualitative concern or value that guides an ideological thinker, we think that their single passion has taken them over, has make them insensitive to other competing ones in situations requiring a reflective decision. In other words, ideological thinkers are not just closed-minded, but also one-sided in allowing only one “intuition” to dominate their inquiry into facts and reasons. The proper alterative to having a single and fixed felt value or emotion frame an entire inquiry is not to repress all intuition and pretend to adopt a neutral value less “objective” standpoint of public reason. Instead, the antidote to an ideological approach to problems is to have inquirers become sensitive to the variety of
conflicting values at stake in the problematic situations of social life. They must come to appreciate in an immediate and qualitative way that ideological solutions tend to oversimplify problems. Therefore more, not fewer “gut feelings” may help with ideological thinking as a cognitive distortion. People with a character that is capable of experiencing the plurality of values (conflicting intuitions) in these sorts of situations appreciate the ineptness of ideological solutions. What we need in a democracy are people with character that is more receptive to intuitions.

Is Dewey prescribing that all thinking be a form of rationalization? Rationalizations are usually not a good thing, but again the culprit is not the qualitative. In rationalizations, the problem is not that we look for evidence or reasons that fit or reinforce our first intuitions or “gut reactions”, but that this is where we stop. The problem is that intuitions or feelings are not open to change or transformation by further inquiry into reasons. The problem is not that there are passions but that they are fixed. To provoke them in such a way as to weaken their hold upon the process and on us may require more passions.

There is something simply insincere about rationalizations; because they may be a case of divergent inquiry that has already been explained. Feelings are explained in a rational or logical manner to avoid the true explanation of the behavior or feeling in question. It is a case of providing reasons that do not have anything to do with the initial intuition. This failure of continuity could well be caused by not attending to the qualitative. However, Dewey does say that the qualitative is what helps keep inquire “sincere”.

While I have shown the importance of the qualitative for public deliberation, for Dewey there is more to democracy than the thin notion of communal deliberation. The “qualitative” is also integral to democratic relationships and it plays a function in monitoring how democratic our relationships are. For example, the concern for democracy
emerges when some group “feels” excluded because the government does not represent their opinions. Of course, some of these feelings are sometimes, upon reflection, unwarranted. Still, it is with these sorts of feelings we must start and continually address in order to find out whether democratization is happening. What we want in a democratic society is that no one “feels” excluded from the democratic process. One obvious objection is that, in emphasizing the qualitative, one risks neglecting the concrete conditions (e.g., political, economic) that must be changed. Finding a way to make people “feel” that they are not alienated and oppressed, even though they are, is probably the most ideal totalitarian scenario. This objection, however, merely points to a danger about overemphasis, one that we can acknowledge without giving up the thesis about the importance of the qualitative in a democracy.

In sum, there is no denying the perverse or problematic ways in which the “qualitative” does rule today in public discourse in America. We can also admit that too much emphasis on moral values can be a threat to our notion of a pluralistic democratic society. However, pragmatist philosophers of democracy must not under-emphasize or neglect the importance of the moral and qualitative dimensions of democracy. This amounts to trying to repress what cannot and should not repressed. It amounts to providing views of democracy that are too “thin” to deal with the contemporary challenges that we face. Liberalism, and in particular pragmatist socio-political thinkers, would be better intellectually equipped to confront the challenges the country faces if they followed Dewey’s more radical insights. We need to expand Dewey’s logic to include and elaborate the insights that he left us about the unavoidable role of the qualitative in thinking and how it bears on democracy. The problem of democracy is not just that the people do not think but that they do not “feel” as they should. We are going to need a view of education for
democracy that emphasizes -- more than ever before -- visual literacy, habits of imagination and feelings.

Notes


2 A tendency toward anti-intellectualism isn’t new in our country. In his 1966 classic, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, (Knopf Doubleday Publishing, 1966), Richard Hofstadter wrote of our culture’s longtime devaluation of the intellect in favor of the heart or passional.

3 In recent years, philosophers, political theorists, and communication scholars have proclaimed John Dewey as a predecessor, an influence, or as a founding father of “Deliberative Democracy”. John S. Dryzek says, in Deliberative Democracy and Beyond (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), “an emphasis on deliberation is not entirely new. Antecedents can be found in…. theorists of the early twentieth century such as John Dewey (1927),” p. 2. Richard Posner also considers Dewey a deliberative democrat in Law, Pragmatism, and Democracy (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), p.50. I don’t think it is an exaggeration to claim that Dewey is being mentioned and quoted more than ever in political theory thanks to this new deliberative movement. Among those that claim a Deweyan linage are: Benjamin Barber, Strong Democracy (California: California University Press, 1984), Robert Talisse, Democracy after Liberalism (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), and James Bohman, Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000).

4 See, Robert Talisse, Democracy after Liberalism: Pragmatism and Deliberative Politics, and A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy (London: Routledge, 2007); Cheryl J. Misak, Truth, Politics, Morality: Pragmatism and Deliberation (London: Routledge, 2000). Talisse and Misak have been the main proponents of emphasizing the understanding of “pragmatism” in politics as an epistemology, but they both acknowledge the influence of Charles Peirce and Hilary Putnam.

selectivity, so long as the selectivity is acknowledged. Yet the common fallacy in philosophy is not to acknowledge selectivity but instead start with a conception of thinking devoid of the traits and aspects of actual thinking. For James and Dewey philosophy must avoid this mistake and instead begin with the full richness of an experience. I want to argue that, today, we pay a high price for the intellectualist fallacy. If we wish Liberalism and our pragmatic notions of democracy to be relevant, we must embrace wholeheartedly the moral and the qualitative dimensions of democratic deliberation and communication.

6 For more on this distinction between views of democracy, see "Which Technology and Which Democracy?" by Benjamin R. Barber, available at: http://web.mit.edu/m-i-/articles/barber.html

7 Talisse argues that Pragmatist in politics must abstain from normative moral commitments as their grounds for, or conception of, democracy. In contrast, Misak simply holds that the pragmatist view of politics is, at its very heart, epistemic.

8 This may be true in relation also the other better-known “pragmatists” mentioned in the context of political thought, namely: Richard Posner and Richard Rorty.

9 Dewey thought that one of the most insidious and persistent biases that philosophers suffer from is the privilege and almost exclusive concern with anything having to do with knowledge. Dewey argued against the ubiquity of knowledge in philosophy, and I think that today he would argue against this same ubiquity when it comes to philosophical views about democracy.

10 Cheryl Misak argues in “A Culture of Justification: The Pragmatist’s Epistemic Argument for Democracy” (Episteme: A Journal of Social Epistemology - Volume 5, Issue 1, 2008, pp. 94-105) that the pragmatist’s view of politics is, at its very heart, epistemic because it treats morals and politics as a kind of deliberation or inquiry, not terribly unlike other kinds of inquiry.

11 A full criticism of these tenets would target a family of dualism that are presupposed such as: fact/value, public/private, etc. For a recent criticism of some of these dualisms, see Roberto Frega “What Pragmatism means by Public Reason” in Ethics & Politics, XII, 2010, 1, pp.28-51. For criticism of Talisse’s version of political pragmatism and his insistence that a pragmatist should maintain moral neutrality or respect for pluralism see articles in a symposium on his book A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy in the Transactions of the Charles Peirce Society 45, 1 (2009) pp. 50-108.


Ibid. p. 93.

Ibid. p. 97.

Ibid. p.103.


This is an expression used by Neil Postman in *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (NY, Penguin Books, 2005).


For a good survey of these views see Frank Cunningham, *Theories of Democracy: A Critical Introduction* (Routledge: New York, 2001) and J.S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). Rawls and Habermas are, of course, not traditional rationalist, but it is questionable whether their more flexible form of rationalism is flexible enough to accommodate or to include all there is to deliberation and to democracy. There is, as it were, a “rationalistic Kantian residuum” in many of the deliberate democrats and that residuum shows up at different places in their views. For instance, it is clear
that for many, in spite of their differences, the reason to be more democratic is to be more rational. Dewey would be sympathetic with the recent feminist thinkers that have criticized the narrow view of deliberation that is assumed by many in deliberative democracy. Iris Young in “Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy” (S. Benhabib, (Ed.), *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996 (pp. 120-136)) argues against their restriction of deliberation to argument and rational speech.

25 There are new scholars in pragmatism who think that it is best to conceive of pragmatism as just “a third distinctive approach to public reason alongside the classical liberal and the communitarian conceptions”. Roberto Frega, for example, has recently wrote that “the originality of the pragmatist approach to public reason resides precisely in its capacity to propose a fully new account of what is human reason, what its place in human affairs and what its main epistemological requirements” (Roberto Frega, “What Pragmatism Means by Public Reason” in *Ethics & Politics*, XII, 2010, 1, p.28). Frega’s approach has the virtue of building bridges among philosophical traditions, but should we be so eager to become part of the mainstream philosophical dialogue that we are willing to compromise the ideas of Dewey? In particular, should we compromise the ideas of Dewey that would constitute his unique and most worthwhile contribution to the ongoing dialogue? The Dewey that is worth reconstructing is the one that would simply call into question the most basic assumptions that ground many of the present debates in political theory. The recent selective reconsiderations of Dewey’s philosophy as a deliberativist, or as presenting a new view of public reason, fail to bring into the present dialogue the more radical Dewey. These selective reconsiderations fail to use Dewey in the most productive way.

26 For more on Dewey’s view of the ideal character, see, Gregory Fernando Pappas’s *John Dewey’s Ethics: Democracy as Experience* (Indiana University Press, 2008).

27 For Dewey’s view of the affective and similarities with recent feminist thought, see Gregory Fernando Pappas “Feminism: The Affective and Relationships in Dewey's Ethics” *Hypatia*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Spring, 1993), pp. 78-95.

What Dewey meant by sympathy is closer to what feminist writers today have identified as "empathy". See Diana Meyers “Moral Reflection: Beyond Impartiality and Reason,” *Hypatia*, 8 (3): 21-47.


39 John Dewey *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* p, 76, my emphasis [.....]

40 For a recent book with evidence that this is a good characterization of the life of many people today see Todd Gitlin, *Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives* (Metropolitan Books, 2002).


42 Most of this research is done in terms of the role played by moral emotion-intuition and moral reasoning in moral judgment. For a good summary and bibliography of this area of research see “Morality” by Jonathan Haidt and Selin Kesebir in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*5th Ed., S. Fiske, D. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey, eds., (Wiley, 2010) pp. 797-832.

43 John Dewey “Qualitative Thought”, p. 248.

44 Jonathan Haidt and Selin Kesebir “Morality”in *The Handbook of Social Psychology* P.807

46 Ibid. p. 807.

47 This is the view of our immediate emotional intuitions that is assumed by, for example, R.H. Hare in *Moral Thinking: Its levels, Method and Point* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981). This view is also explained in “Julian Savulescu on the 'Yuk' Factor” available at:


49 For example, in many social issues, such as what to do about abortion or about the homeless, there is disagreement about the facts, but how one “feels” about the issue usually determines how well one attends to the facts. In the case of the homeless, someone with a single very strong feelings against encouraging vice makes her blind to the fact that not all homeless are parasites. On the other hand, someone with a single very strong feeling about the importance of helping others tends to disregard that not all homeless are victims. This is how sometimes issues get polarized and how two sides on an issue become incapable of attending to each situation on its own merits.