regarding the size of a situation (see Shilpp, 139-140) easily enough in spite of this error; nonetheless, Burke's later discussions of, for example, habits and intelligence become confusing (and in some places misleading) because of the missing distinction.

A second, but related, shortcoming of Burke's presentation of Dewey's logic is his failure to include any mention of what Dewey called "The Cultural Matrix of Inquiry" (Chapter Three of Logic). According to Burke, inquiry is merely the process of stabilizing an "organism/environment system" (22). This characterization, along with many of the examples Burke employs throughout the book, promote a strictly biological/physiological view of inquiry, and hence tend to simplify Dewey's theory. The early Dewey had faced several difficulties because terms as "adjustment," "environment," and "reflex-circuit" bore connotations too narrow for Dewey's actual meaning; his later terminology--"situation," "inquiry," "transaction,"--is deliberately designed so as to be inclusive of cultural factors in inquiry such as language/communication, history, economics, education and all other forms of shared experience. Burke is right when he says that "In Dewey's view, logical theory should address not just a formal study of linguistic syntax but it should be grounded in a theory of experience" (136), but this just confirms that no treatment of Dewey's logical theory could be complete without some mention of culture.

Generally speaking, Tom Burke has written an exciting, provocative, and genuinely important new book which should be read by anyone interested in Dewey's theory of inquiry or even the history of American philosophy. With Dewey's New Logic: A Reply to Russell, Mr. Burke has made a major contribution to the advancement of American philosophy and has filled a void in the Dewey literature which had been for too long left open.

New York University

Robert B. Talisse


Ulrich Engler, in his, Critique of Experience strives to present to the German philosophical scene a "post-Rortyan" image of John Dewey the critical and constructive thinker whose theories are grounded in the concept of aesthetic experience, as opposed to that of Dewey the mere instrumentalist or educationalist. From my viewpoint, the three most significant theses of this well-researched book read as follows: first, in order to counterbalance our technologically determined life conditions, we need to look not at the currently fashionable aestheticization of all life expressions of a dwindling subjectivity, but at aesthet-
ic experience. Second, such Deweyan concepts as experience, nature, culture, imagination, situation, and meaning provide us with a thorough and undeservedly neglected theory of art and aesthetic experience. Third, introducing Dewey’s ideas about aesthetic experience will illuminate numerous parallels between his version of pragmatism and some continental philosophies that go under the labels of hermeneutics, philosophical anthropology, phenomenology, and existentialism.

The Critique of Experience offers valuable insights to those American scholars who know enough German. They should, however, keep in mind that this book was written in a German context: the author takes for granted the reader’s familiarity with the ideas of such figures as Kant, Husserl, Heidegger, Adorno, Benjamin, and Habermas, but not with Dewey’s. Moreover, they should forgive Engler his presumptuous claim to be the first critic to deal with the central position of aesthetic experience in Dewey’s thinking at fitting length—a claim that could be interpreted as a slap in the face for all those American scholars who have recently contributed creatively on this topic.

Engler renders a careful analysis of Dewey’s overall hermeneutical-pragmatist method, and he presents an overview of the, mainly instrumentalist, ways Dewey’s philosophy has been interpreted by German philosophers to date. He criticizes Rorty’s attempts to separate Dewey the critical philosopher from Dewey the constructive metaphysician and epistemologist; and he includes revealing remarks on several striking parallels between Dewey’s notion of primary experience and its European counterparts.

The discussion of the various philosophical, cultural, and political implications involved in the relationships between aesthetic experience and the phenomena of everyday experience, aesthetic judgment, and art occupies a pivotal role in Engler’s study. He supports Dewey’s idea that aesthetic judgment contains normative, intersubjective and objective criteria, but inevitably also subjective elements of personal taste and appreciation. Aesthetic experience forms the basis of art, but it is especially art which, in turn, is capable of deepening and widening our sensitivity to aesthetic experience.

Engler argues most convincingly when he demolishes three influential rival positions, namely, positivistic views, Adorno’s "escapism," and postmodernist theories. These approaches are chiefly criticized for the fact that their discussions about aesthetic experience ultimately amount to esoteric debates on the limits and achievements of art per se.

Hence, the advocates of postmodernism need to understand that the world does not become a more livable place through a cybernetic transformation of reality into a playground for pseudo-realities, or through the artificial beautification of natural somberness and normality. No doubt, the currently increasing interest in aesthetic experience represents primarily a belated
and desperate human cry for help in a lonely search for subjec-
tivity lost. Science, by declaring itself independent of any aes-
thetic, moral, political, and practical considerations, has
promoted barren dualistic thinking and the widespread discontent-
ment with present-day culture. Thus, when dealing with aesthetic
experience, Dewey rightly emphasizes the continuum between the
artistic and the communicative element, the ordinary and the
sublime level, the socio-cultural and the individual factor, the
realms of science and of everyday experience.

The unique fashions in which Dewey's views on art and aes-
thetic experience combine philosophic vision with ideological
perspective, analytic poise, and argumentative power are properly
illuminated. If the human subject is not mere consciousness or
source of motivation, but a creature that actively and imagina-
tively looks for meaning in the world through communication with
others, then Dewey's concept of aesthetic experience must also
become a model of communicative competence. Aesthetic experi-
ence, in other words, must have political and moral consequences.

However, I would have preferred to see these consequences
spelled out. How, for instance, could we envisage a general
improvement in communication resulting from an increased aesthet-
ic sensitivity under the conditions of the 2000's? How can
Dewey's concepts of imagination and art offer us help in our
esthetically hysterical, but dull situation? Nevertheless, Engler's Critique could prove a landmark in the German discussion
of the philosophy of John Dewey and the similarities between
American pragmatism and continental movements in the years ahead.

Fachhochschule Nordostniedersachsen Ralf Sommermeir
Lüneburg, Germany

Reinterpreting the Legacy of William James. ed. by Margaret E.
Donnelly. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association,

This collection of 23 essays were talks presented at the
American Psychological Association's 1990 conference as a reflec-
tion on the contemporary influence of William James's Principles
of Psychology upon the 100th anniversary of its publication. Many of the contributors were psychologists with a few philoso-
phers. Apparently no boundaries were set since the subjects
cover a broad range such as, the present relevance of James's
work, comments on James's debt to Darwin, James's relation to
Fechner on sensation and perception, emotion, instinct theory,
mind-body problem, free will, and parapsychology.

Since space precludes a discussion of all 23 essays, only a
few samples are offered here. With respect to the present rele-
vance of James, Eugene Taylor supports "The Case of a Uniquely
American Jamesian Tradition in Psychology" with a consideration
of James's views in an historical and contemporary context, and