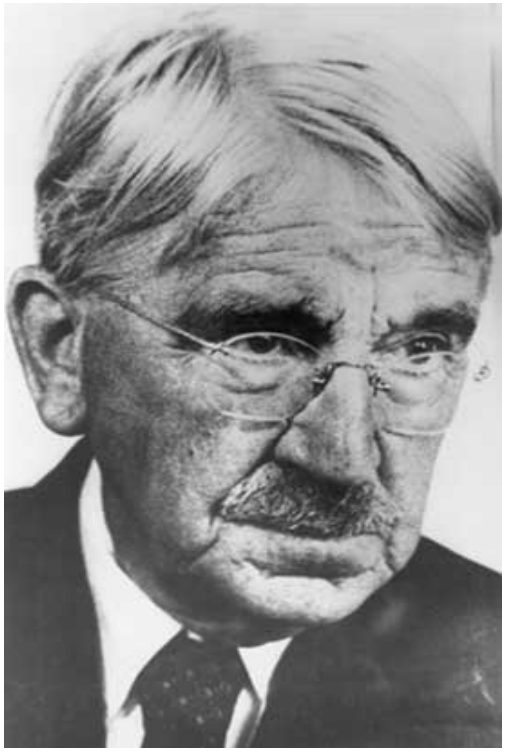
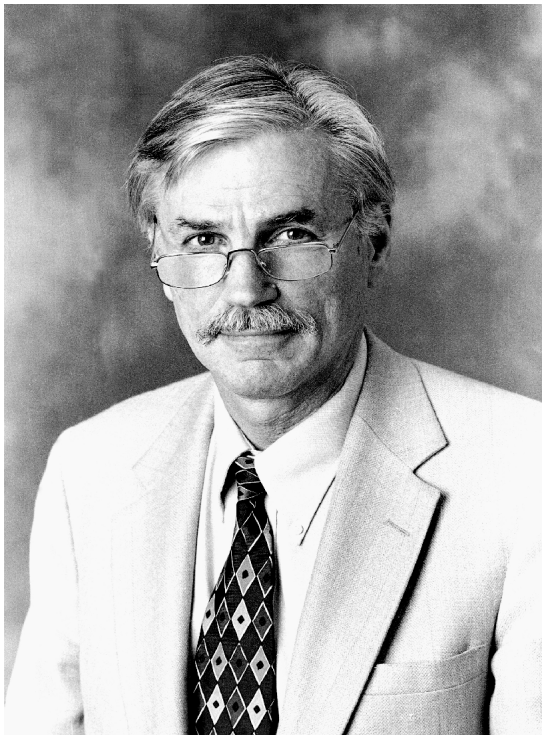
John Dewey's Pragmatic Technology





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Chapter 2: Knowing As A Technological Artifact

- **Thesis: Knowledge is an artifact of technological inquiry**
- **Method: Thematic extractions from Dewey's body of work**

The Nature of Knowledge

- **The outcome of successful inquiry**
- **Does not require certainty**
- **Is situational and mutable**
- **Is not the "mirror of reality"**
- **Is more than "seeing new things" – gives us "new ways of seeing"**
- **Our traditional notion of knowledge becomes a "warranted assertion"**

The Nature of Inquiry

- Active experience to resolve a tension
- More critical than knowledge
- Involves a controlled transformation
- Emphasis on experiment/intervention rather than description (contrast with aesthetics)

The Nature of Technology

- Acts as a tool for inquiry
- Liaison between doubt & resolution / tension and outcome
- Can be either the by-product of inquiry or the object of inquiry
- Not necessarily an object (includes language, institutions, etc.)

The Nature of Technology (contd.)

- Tools have no essence, but only functions with regard to situations
- Use is primary, origin is secondary
- *Meaning* is determined by usage
- Includes the organic, but not religion and aesthetics

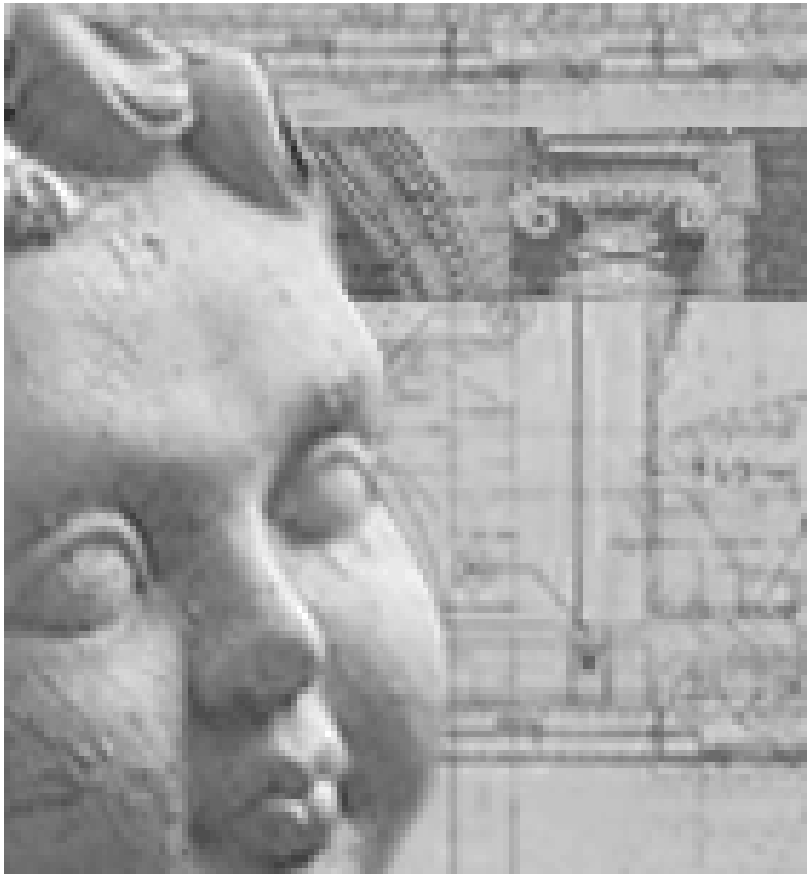
The Nature of Science

- Science is a sub-set of technology
- Should be technological – i.e., instrumental problem-solving of experimentally testable questions
- "Truth" is based on outcome (reality is constituted, not discovered)
- Things exist prior to perception, but not in the same way

The Nature of Meaning

- Meaning is instrumental, not intrinsic (in both language and objects)
- Meaning is contextual, not correspondent
- Experimentation "constitutes meanings"
- Meanings/uses multiply

Chapter 4: From Techne *to Technology: Dewey's Reading of the History of Technology*



- **Thesis: History of artifacts elucidates meanings**
- **Method: Chronological Overview**

Primitive Stage

- Few problems, therefore little inquiry and few tools
- Goals are short-term
- Technology not bound to particular objects
- No systematic science (depends upon consistent instrumentation)

Homeric Greek Stage

- Pessimistic; sees man as fated and destiny as beyond control
- Little inquiry, therefore little technology and little science
- Aesthetic development only

Sophisticated Greek Stage

- Assertion of control enriches both the means and ends of inquiry
- Separation of the artisan and academic
- Academics both utilize and belittle artifacts; fail to identify the transformative role of technology
- Because of the separation from the world, fail to meet Dewey's definition of science

After the Greeks

- Reason and science became a serious competitor to religion and divination
- Value of experiment was lost until the Renaissance
- Technology was seen as performing rote tasks on pre-existing knowledge

Modern Science

- Increased attention paid to instrumentation and experiment
- Knowledge recognized as an artifact of inquiry
- Process of solving problems experimentally gives rise to new puzzles and furthers knowledge
- The future?: Aesthetics and social science become instrumental, as well