1. Dewey's Philosophy of experience clarifies the essential nature and scope of philosophical criticism

To tell about the environing world, Dewey holds with most of the contemporary thinkers, is not the job of philosophy. Knowledge, more appropriately, is the function of science. The outcome of scientific inquiry constitutes, according to Dewey, a paradigm instance of knowledge. Regarding knowledge, therefore, philosophy is a recipient not a donor. Yet Dewey rejects the contemporary separation of a metatheory from a theory. He rather strongly condemns the tendency on the part of contemporary logical analysts to refuse to step out of the universe of discourse. Even if philosophy is conceived as an activity to enlighten and clarify the usage of language symbols, the confinement of this activity within the boundaries of language renders philosophic thinking incompetent to understand the nature of meaning. It is meaning itself which governs the usage of the words, which are in themselves nothing else but natural events or physical objects, but which by virtue of their meaning alone function within any language as signs. Dictionary definition of the words,
the rules of grammar and the laws of logic do all presuppose some specific background of ordinary human interest and purposes. To conceive that logic only establishes rules within a symbolic system is to narrow it down to highly undesirable limits. Logic so conceived loses its utility as a tool of analysis of the nature and extent of human knowledge; it then becomes a mere play of words. Formal conception of logic and mathematics has already rendered their application by the experimental scientist a mystery. Just because it is unnecessary to ask about the epistemological status of the axioms while demonstrating proofs of various theorems within an axiomatic system, formal thinkers happen to think that language is completely an autonomous activity. Dewey, of course, makes it sure that initial location of form is always in the context of inquiry, the specialized attention to the pure form is only a later development. Language, therefore, even in its purest form deals with the implication of terms previously instituted within the context of inquiry.

Although Dewey's contribution to formal logic and his appreciation of the scope of formal reasoning is rather poor, because he recognizes its role only
as an intermediary function within the procedures of empirical inquiry. Yet it can be argued on Dewey's behalf that axiomatic systems whether mathematical or non-mathematical explicate the implications of the terms which constitute their basic axioms. Even axioms, according to Dewey, are not descriptive of reality, for all empirical concepts are only instruments to think about the world. His instrumentalism, to be sure, registers a claim that efficiency and accuracy of instruments is relative to the purpose they fulfil and that certain instruments are valid only within certain range of phenomena. The applicability of various axiomatic systems could, therefore, be known if only the range of the applicability of their axioms is decided.

Since formal thinkers deal with closed systems of language without a fulcrum, various types of discourse, i.e. science, values or art etc. are assigned by them, different standards of significance as their objective basis. Chapter two refers to the most classical but a fallacious and extremely uncritical classification of various types of discourse; it is to term scientific language as truly descriptive and referential which is separated from other uses of
language named emotive and non-referential. After having so classified the various types of discourse, analytical thinkers find themselves totally incompetent to account for the nature of science, values or art with respect to the empirical functions these are already displaying.

In fact, due to its entirely ad hoc nature, contemporary philosophic analysis has failed to stick to any one interpretation or a few consistent interpretations of various types of discourse. Extreme variations in their treatment of language actually defy a common categorization of their techniques. From a complete rejection of metaphysics, ethics, esthetics on the basis of verifiability theory of meaning, contemporary thinkers shift to a thorough location of intelligibility of various types of discourse in the conventions of formal logic, e.g. failing to establish the relationship between being a man and being mortal on empirical grounds they grant that there is a kind of necessity governing the use of terms "man" and "mortal", once the users of these terms have agreed to relate them in a certain way. According to thinkers who adopt such a position, there is nothing known as material implication. All inference, in their view,
is but an expanded tautology, which by its very definition tells nothing about the matters of fact. Faith of contemporary thinkers wavers, therefore, between the two extremes of all facts on the one hand and all language on the other.

Language functions as language, Dewey clarifies, only by virtue of the fact that words have meaning and the nature of this meaning is not a matter of mere words. To analyze the nature of meaning of any word, therefore, it is not enough to study its verbal usage; it requires to know what events in the actual experience of the user account for its usage, and what precisely constitutes the nature of observational test to examine these events in human experience. With respect to the precision of meaning, Dewey got thoroughly impressed by the language of science. So influenced he happens to consider scientific language as the only authentic version of empirical meanings. He even defines the function of his critical philosophy as analyzing and clarifying the logic of scientific method and extending its application to other areas of language and experience where it has not been so far used. It is, however, argued in the present work that such a conception of philosophy is not consistent even within
his own systematic thought. If scientific bias had not distorted, Dewey's conception of philosophical analysis, it would have meant to him an impartial contemplation and criticism to find out, how and to what effect various methodologies like scientific experimentation, moral deliberation or artistic creation etc. do actually proceed in their respective methodological contexts. Because independently of his scientific insight, Dewey observes that in spite of the fact that language registers meaning which is complex and intricate, men communicate so freely and naturally. Dewey analyzes that if men are able to use words in appropriate circumstances or act in definite way on hearing the word without being able to say that word meant so and so meaning, then, must be referring atleast to a kind of phenomena which is publically recognizable. Dewey's naturalistic conception of language states that it is an additional but a highly efficient factor within experience, i.e., the interaction of man with nature and with other men. Language is a minimal path which nature naturally acquires. Yet it demands great philosophical ingenuity to logically analyze it.
2. Experience provides both the perspective and the focal points for philosophic criticism

An important contribution of Dewey's thought lies specifically in his choice of a macro-approach for the interpretation of human knowledge and experience. His macro-approach gains importance and deserves attention especially in the light of demerits of contemporary trends in micro-thinking. In the absence of a macro-perspective specialization within various disciplines displays a tendency to seek rigid non-communicating compartments. Isolated thinking is bound to grow narrow and superficial, Dewey clarifies, because wider and freer interaction and inter-communication among various disciplines, he thinks, is the only appropriate source for their constant nourishment and growth. Philosophy as an instrument of criticism does naturally find a function, in an age of specialization, in providing a macro-perspective so that separated regions of knowledge and experience get a basis for mutual criticism and inter-communication.

It is not only the case that there is no opposition between micro and the macro-approaches; the two are rather essentially complementary. Micro-thinking attains its fuller significance only against
a macro-perspective, and the logic with which the macro-perspective is built is nothing else than what is pre-supposed by logics in micro-domains. It is suggested in the introduction that Dewey's empirical naturalism constitutes an attempt to build a hypothetical but an exhaustive perspective in which his narrow hypotheses or perspectives of theoretical knowledge, experimental knowledge, ethics, esthetics and theory of education etc. do find their respective places.

3. Dewey's concept of experience provides an empiricism of its broadest kind

Dewey's concept of experience in its broadest sense registers his thorough-going empiricism, for his empiricism refuses to grant existence of any object unless it is capable of entering into specifiable relations with human organism. With experience as the sole source of beliefs, Dewey faces no difficulty, such as, have been faced by Greek or modern empiricists or are faced by contemporary empiricists in maintaining empiricist's thesis. Not only in the case of science, but he is able to disclose empirical basis of values, art and metaphysics etc. He finds no difficulty in holding a fulfledged empiricism, for he neither had to work out a case for empirical knowledge from mere
private sensations (as Greek or modern thinkers were trying) nor the discovery that objects of experience are aggregates of mere isolated and discrete sense data. He finds that the principles of organization, of which either ordinary language or the highly organized language of science are the clear cut evidence, are inherent within experience.

Within Dewey's natural world mental events are not alien to physical, for he is able to trace the development of the psychophysical from the physical and of the mental from the psychophysical entirely on empirical grounds. Along with the physical, psychophysical and the mental, the ideal enterprizes of men, which are obviously the outcome of mental functions in nature, too are the part of natural world. According to Dewey, the answer to the question whether a particular event is or is not the part of natural world is a matter of factual inquiry. Neither the existence of anything can be maintained on apriori basis nor anything more or less can be concluded about the nature of the existent object apart from what is disclosed as the result of factual inquiry.

Dewey's reduction of values to science is in fact a failing of his empirical technique. It is argued that
although he could not arrive at the actual differences in the nature of activities which moral choosing and scientific experimentation exhibit, yet the basis for overcoming this failing is laid in his empirical naturalism. Meanings, according to Dewey, are recognizable and verifiable phenomena. These do, in fact, exist in nature like any other natural object. He clearly argues that learning of language and communication by means of language would be an impossible affair if words did not represent those objects which are capable of entering into recognizable and verifiable links with each and every user of language.

Merits of his behaviorism, in fact, remained hidden to Dewey's own mind. It is only for this reason that he does not directly search for those forms of human behaviors which moral ideas link with their prospective consequences. It is significant to note that Dewey's theory of meaning stands as a distinctive contribution for philosophic thinking of a contemporary kind, for the acceptability or non-acceptability of a meta-theory is closely related to the acceptability or non-acceptability of a general theory of meaning which is presupposed by the metatheory.

Again Dewey occupies his entire attention to
utilize the results of his analysis of scientific method to other areas of empirical knowledge. But here, too, he leaves out the precise import of his analysis. His analysis of scientific method highlights fundamentally the contextual and the methodological import of scientific objects. Knowledge as warranted assertions is strictly relative to the situation it applies. The factual conditions which constitute the problematic situation determine not only the nature of techniques with which to deal with it; these even determine the logic which formulate the most general conditions of inquiry into the problems of any recurrent kind. Dewey, therefore under-rate his own contextual and methodological considerations if he does not clearly distinguish the theoretical from the practical context and maintain the methodological similarity of science and values.

Fortunately his theory of art discloses the distortions in his thought, because it does represent a fair evidence and justification of various important theses which Dewey's critical philosophy aimed to uphold. Dewey very significantly maintains that art defies intellectual or scientific comprehension. It would have been ideal for Dewey's thought if he could clearly develop the respective logics of his minor
hypotheses and as well integrate them in the macro logic of his empirical naturalism. In spite of the ambiguities and distortions Dewey cannot be discredited with inconsistancy of thought, because without any external reference his systematic thinking can get rid of these distortions and ambiguities.

4. Dewey's methodological interpretation of experience provides a highly tenable conception of empirical knowledge.

Discussion in chapter one compares and contrasts Dewey's theory of knowledge with that of Greek, modern and contemporary empiricists. It is argued that although scientific knowledge, according to Dewey, is neither necessary (as held by the Greek and modern empiricists) nor it is true in the descriptive or picturous sense (as held by the contemporary empiricists), yet scientific concepts do refer to something very definite and precise. This something very definite and precise to which scientific concepts refer are the very operations constituting the conscious and deliberate techniques of the scientific inquiry in the theoretical problematic context. It is clearly maintained that Dewey names the statements of scientific knowledge as warranted assertions only because whatever meanings these contain are translatable wholly in terms of the
recognizable and verifiable operations within the process of scientific inquiry.

Dewey's operational theory of scientific concept does, of course, utilize the natural isomorphism of language thought and action, the claim which is basic to any pragmatic theory of knowledge, yet equally significantly his operationalism is instrumentalism too. The nature of these operations is strictly relative to the purpose they fulfil and the range of the applicability of these operations, too, is closely linked with the actual problematic context. The very idea of operational conception of scientific terms, in fact, took birth when Newtonian conceptions were found inapplicable within the context of Einstein's thinking. Scientific concepts as empirical concepts do not attain objectivity by truly picturing the external world, Scientific concepts are made objective by linking them consciously and deliberately with the actual operations within scientific inquiry.

Language in general, as an additional efficacy in the natural interactions, is an instrument of registration of man's ever growing links with nature and other men. Conscious and deliberate methodologies of various types of discourse do, in fact, find their
role only in enhancing and making this natural function more precise and definite.

It is important to note that Dewey is enabled to draw a distinction between ideas about morality and moral ideas only within the practical context of inculcating values in children of his own experimental educational institution. Dewey could be more true to his position if he had conceived moral deliberation not only as a dramatic rehearsal of possible modes of action but as a series of actual trials in life context. An ethical value, say, honesty as the best policy will remain an idea about morality unless what is meant by honesty is linked, in the actual life of men, with some of their very definite kind of behavior.

Scientific import of ideas may be experienced in the laboratory but the ethical import of ideas can be got only through actually practising them in life.

Dewey very rightly pointed out that to criticize art is possible only through practising art. He only missed to say that the import of moral or religious ideas could be got only by undergoing those experiences which may warrant these names as significantly different from the scientific experience itself, significant, of course, in truly empirical sense. To be termed
authentically empirical representation, therefore, any symbolic representation need not be descriptive of the ontological world in a truly picturous manner, it only needs to link some conscious and deliberate forms of human activities with their prospective consequences. Empirical knowledge in this sense refers not only to scientific discourse, but values, and art etc. acquire an equally authentic empirical standing.