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What Dewey says about our sense of the whole seems to differ from what Whitehead says insofar as he makes no clear and sharp distinction between "the many," which he speaks of as "the totality of natural events," or "[the] infinity of events that sustain and support [our small effort]," on the one hand, and "the whole," in the sense of "the one which is all," on the other. In other words, "the whole," as he uses it, does not refer to the unique universal individual that includes the totality; "the whole" is simply another way of referring to the totality.

To be sure, Dewey doesn't expressly state this negative implication. And he does speak in places of "[the] enveloping whole," "the enduring and comprehending whole," "the whole which sustains [particular acts], giving them their final outcome and quality," and "the whole which claims and dignifies [the flickering inconsequential acts of separate selves]." Moreover, he expressly speaks of the "other gods" that religions idolatrously set up before "the one God"—the latter clearly being a reference precisely to "the whole," which he also speaks of in places as "the universe." But at no point does he say or imply beyond reasonable doubt that "the whole" is by way of referring to something that is one as well as many, viz., "the one which is all."

Furthermore, what Dewey speaks of as "consciousness," or "sense," of the whole he can also speak of as "the communal sense," or "[the] sense of community and one's place in it"; and he can refer to "[t]he life of the community in which we live and have our being," evidently recalling the familiar New Testament reference to God, even as he can speak indifferently both of "[r]eligion as a sense of the whole" and of "the office of religion as sense of community."

20 July 1998

