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# SHUNSUKE TSURUMI AND JOHN DEWEY ON HABITS AND IMAGINATION: BRIDGING THE PRAGMATIST ETHICS BETWEEN JAPAN AND AMERICA

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## *Abstract*

This paper seeks to highlight the Deweyan moments in the ethics of Shunsuke Tsurumi, a famous thinker and activist in Japan. While it has been recognized that Tsurumi learned from American classical pragmatists such as Charles Sanders Peirce, George Herbert Mead, William James, and John Dewey, previous studies have ignored the fundamental commonalities between the ideas of Dewey and Tsurumi, as most have only focused on the impact of Peirce on Tsurumi's work. This paper examines Tsurumi's key ideas of "reflexes" and "dreaming," and compares the features with Dewey, referring James and Mead as a preparatory or supplementary explanation for it. The main difference between Tsurumi and Dewey can be seen in the "reflexes"; however, both recognized the importance of imagination as dramatic rehearsals. It is shown that Tsurumi's ethics was based on the fundamental moments from Deweyan ethics albeit he was not aware of it.

**Keywords:** *Dewey; imagination; habits; pragmatisms; reflexes; Shunsuke Tsurumi; dramatic rehearsals.*

## **Shunsuke Tsurumi, a Pragmatist between Japan and America**

Shunsuke Tsurumi 鶴見俊輔 (1922-2015) was a famous Japanese post-war thinker and activist, who was born just after the Great Kanto earthquake and died just after the Great East Japan Earthquake. While it

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is important to highlight the coincidence of his life occurring between two disastrous Japanese earthquakes, this is not the focus of this paper.

Tsurumi was one of the founders of Beheiren ベ平連 (an abbreviation for Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengo ベトナムに平和を！市民連合) or the Citizen's League for Peace in Vietnam, which was a pioneering international decentralized grass-roots activist movement in Japan. Tsurumi was also famous for his studies on Japanese pop culture and marginal arts. He associated games, manga, popular songs, novels, and films (Olson 1992). In this paper, however, the relationship between Tsurumi's ethics and the pragmatist ethics in America are examined, with a particular focus on the parallels with John Dewey and with reference to G. H. Mead and W. James.

Tsurumi was a juvenile delinquent with a notorious reputation, which deeply upset his father, Yusuke Tsurumi 鶴見祐輔, who was a famous political thinker and best-selling writer. As he desired to be a politician, Yusuke Tsurumi sought to maintain the family's high social standing and was worried that the family's fame might be undermined by Shunsuke's actions. Yusuke, therefore, decided to send Shunsuke to the United States of America to study at Harvard University, which is where he first came into contact with American pragmatism in classes such as the "Pragmatic Movement" led by Charles W. Morris and through publications by C. S. Peirce, Dewey, Mead, Morris, and James. Under the instruction of V. O. Quine, Tsurumi became particularly familiar with Peirce through the *Collected Papers of Charles Peirce* (Quine mentioned that Tsurumi was one of his first students, when he received the Kyoto Prize). Tsurumi saw himself as having a similar temperament to Morris. Indeed, both of them worked as an editor, solved some problems in semiotics, and wrote some poems. Even after World War II forced Tsurumi to go back to Japan, Morris and Tsurumi maintained contact until Morris's death in 1979<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> I should add the fact that Tsurumi's first book published in 1950 was on American pragmatism: *America Tetsugaku* アメリカ哲学 (*American Philosophy*). He continued to revise this book, and later he added some portraits of Japanese pragmatists. Actually, his first publication might be regarded as *Taiheiyo jo no Gisoyou Shokubutsu ni tsuite* 太平洋上の偽装用植物について (*On Some Plants in the Pacific*

This strong connection influenced Tsurumi's ethics toward pragmatism. Takashi Sakai, a Japanese sociologist, pointed out that Tsurumi's ethics was influenced by Peircian ideas (Sakai 2015, 92), which to some extent I agree with, because of Tsurumi's focus on Peirce's notion of "habits" in *America Tetsugaku* アメリカ哲学 (Tsurumi 1991, chap. 2). Tsurumi himself noted that. "I think Peirce, James, and Mead were quite unique and had something original" compared with Dewey. However, while the influence of Deweyan moments in Tsurumi's work have tended to be omitted in previous studies, later in his life, Tsurumi changed his evaluation of Dewey (Tsurumi 2008, 70-71):

When I was in America, I didn't admire Dewey so much. Now I find him interesting. [Some years ago,] I was asked to write a book on Dewey [and I read his writings a lot]. I think he was a striking person because he was good at integrating various ideas and continuing his inquiry. This is how his impact on me slowly and gradually emerged after the World War II. (Tsurumi 2008, 179)

Similar to Dewey, Tsurumi used the frames associated with "habits" or "reflexes" to construct his ethics; therefore, to fully understand the commonalities as well as the differences, it is necessary to examine the features of these frames. This paper explores the previously ignored relationship between Dewey and Tsurumi (cf. Yoshimi 2012). In his life, Tsurumi wrote more about Dewey's work than Peirce's, and in his book *Dewey*, published in 1984, Tsurumi seems to highly value Dewey's ethics. Dewey also published more on ethics than the other classical pragmatists, such as in *Human Nature and its Conduct*, and *Ethics*. Further, Osamu Kuno's 久野収 translation of *Ethics* into Japanese indicated how much Kuno had been affected by Dewey (Kuno 1984). Tsurumi had great respect for Kuno as there were of the same temperament (Oguma, Tsurumi, and Ueno 2004, 97). Through Kuno, Tsurumi learned a great deal about Dewey, and therefore I claim that his ideas were more influenced by Dewey than even he perceived.

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*Ocean to Go Under Cover*) in 1942 or *Tetsugaku no Hansei* 哲学の反省 (*Reflections on Philosophy*) in 1946. But Tsurumi didn't mention these as "books" but as "pamphlets" (Tsurumi 2007a, 12-13).

Of course, Tsurumi and Dewey developed their ethics in different contexts as the objectives for their criticisms were different. Dewey criticized the other ethical notions in Western cultures. As it is expected that readers of this journal are familiar with American pragmatism, in this paper, the focus is on the background to Tsurumi's ethics and its relation to Dewey's.

### **Tsurumi's Stake Placed on Masses, and the Influence of Masao Maruyama**

Tsurumi started his intellectual career in Japan just after World War II. In the closing days, with the cooperation of Kazuko Tsurumi 鶴見和子 (sociology, folklore), he had the chance to meet some famous researchers, such as Masao Maruyama 丸山眞男 (political philosophy), Shigeto Tsuru 都留重人 (economics), Mituo Taketani 武谷三男 (theoretical physics, philosophy of science, Marxism), Kei Watanabe 渡辺慧 (theoretical physics, history of thoughts), and Kiyoko Takeda 武田清子 (religious studies, theology). Together, they decided to develop a new journal that was completely free from the authority of the Communist Party (see Silverberg 1990) and would not pretend to be 100% innocent or 100% guilty in order to be responsible for the consequences of what they themselves did during the war. They think they should reflect on the actual experiences before the end of the World War II. To express their critical, that is, scientific attitudes, the journal was named *Shiso no Kagaku* 思想の科学 (*Science of Thought*) and was published from 1946 to 1996.

As Masao Maruyama (1914-1996) had a striking influence on Tsurumi's thinking, here I give a brief explanation of Maruyama's ideas. Maruyama's writings were taken as the common ground for the writers of *Shiso no Kagaku*. In *Nihon no Shiso* 日本の思想 (*The Japanese Thought*), one of the best and longest selling books on the Japanese thought and society, Maruyama developed many concepts to describe and analyze Japanese society. One of the most important ideas, the pairing concepts of Jikkan Shinko 実感信仰 (belief in felt reality) and Riron Shinko 理論信仰 (belief in speculative theory), was quite a shock for Tsurumi. They deeply affected the focus and direction of his research, as it awakened him to the realization that his theory of ethics had been in deadlock.

Throughout his career, Tsurumi opposed the role that Japanese intellectuals had (or have) played. He saw Japanese intellectuals as having an illness, which he called “Ichiban Byo 一番病 (illness of the straight-A),” which referred to the naïve habit of pursuing a considered answer from the given situation, with the answer itself being changeable depending on the changes in the situation; that is, while “Yutohsei 優等生 (Honor students)”, or “straight A students”, were good at discerning, pursuing, and internalizing the so-called “answer.” They were also ready to change their ideas according to the changes in the authorized “answer.” This was the sick habit Tsurumi felt that Japanese intellectuals might easily fall into, which was developed from his wartime observations (Tsurumi 1986; Tsurumi 1987; Tsurumi & Shigematsu 2010).

This habit of mind seemed (or seems, I should say) to be common in Japan. Tsurumi talked about “Jikkan 実感 (felt reality)”, “Shijo 私情 (personal emotion)”, and “Seiri 生理 (instinct)” in his construction of an alternative habit far from these intellectual pretenses (Kuno 1972). He wanted to emphasize the importance of making actions “rooted” in the self, and expected that Jikkan might work as the root to criticize the social conditions as a robust alternative to the emergence of authoritarianism or Fascism. Until Maruyama published the paper “Nihon no Shiso” in 1957 (this paper is included in *Nihon no Shiso*), Tsurumi continued to use the same logic (see Tsurumi & Kuno 1956).

The pairing concepts of “Jikkan Shinko” and “Riron Shinko” are simple. People who have Jikkan Shinko (belief in felt reality) place absolute trust in what they feel, and maintain that as these feelings emerge naturally. They do not wish to change it through reflection or theoretical thinking, because this would undermine the natural aspect of Jikkan. Jikkan Shinko could be understood as one type of “anti-intellectualism,” typical of masses (Maruyama 1961, 44-55).

People who have Riron Shinko (belief in speculative theory), however, place absolute trust in theories that are said to be a correct “answer” in the academism or journalism. They usually stick with the theories imported from the West. They are really sensitive to the latest fashion, while these ideas may not be the latest in the West. Adherents follow these “profound” theories since they regard difficult imported

theories as the symbols of progress. Since they do not really believe in the theories, they could easily change the theories they espouse. Therefore, as adherents tend to have a fetish-like attachment to the speculation itself, Riron Shinko could be understood as one type of “intellectualism”, typical of intellectuals (11-28).

Maruyama found fault with both these notions. They both tend to leave the social conditions as they are. They silently confirmed and echoed the dominant opinions of the authorities. They did not have a moment to think themselves critically. They harmonized the gaps between the ideals and the facts in an easy way in order to maintain their habits of mind. These two are complicit in maintaining the absolute power of the authorities. As these naïve habits of thinking did not embody critical reflection, Maruyama feared that these habits offered no actual resistance to the re-emergence of authoritarianism or Fascism (52-66).

Tsurumi opposed the way of thinking of the “straight-A” people, which was equivalent to Riron Shinko. Instead, he highly valued the Jikkan way of thinking because he thought it is rooted in the self. At first, he believed he could find an attractive moment in Jikkan. But the alternative way Tsurumi presented was nothing but Jikkan Shinko from the viewpoint of Maruyama in *Nihon no Shiso*. Therefore, if what Maruyama pointed out is true, Tsurumi’s evaluation of Jikkan should be dismissed. As Tsurumi also wanted to present an alternative habit to resist the re-emergence of Fascism in Japan, even though Maruyama did not intend to criticize Tsurumi’s views, Tsurumi took Maruyama’s argument seriously, and accepted it (see Tsurumi 1958).

While Tsurumi tried to cope with the frame Maruyama had presented, it is clear that he felt it was difficult to reframe. Later in life, he reflected on the differences between his ideas and those of Maruyama.

The difference in thought between Maruyama-san and me is this; I assume that there is *an intellectual tradition of masses* [but he didn’t]. This is what I set as a premise, so it’s a fruitless effort to argue if there truly is the tradition. I just do what I should do on the assumption that there is one. (Tsurumi 2008, 204)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> It seems that Maruyama understood what he had missed and what Tsurumi had seized on. When Tsurumi was about to publish a book called *A Possibility of the*

Consequently, Tsurumi decided to place his stake on masses to relativize the opportunistic attitudes typical of the Japanese intellectuals. However, this decision definitely led him back to the belief in Jikkan again which would echo the dominant, authorized “answers” in Japanese society<sup>4</sup>.

Even though Tsurumi was unable to give up his trust in masses and his attachment to ordinary people (Oguma, Tsurumi, and Ueno, 2004, 154-57), he presented another possibility that could transcend Maruyama’s frame by developing his ethics based on ideas such as Hansya 反射 (reflex) and Syukan 習慣 (habit), concepts that were borrowed from American pragmatists, especially from Mead. I explore this connection, and compare their thoughts in the following section.

### Reflexes, Customs, and Habits: Tsurumi and Mead

When people hear the word “reflex”, they often think of an instinctive, unchangeable action; indeed, Tsurumi also tended to view this word in this way.

I wish we could live in a peaceful world: in a world where we wouldn’t kill anybody. As every human comes into the world in a state of ‘undress’, it might be better to dream a communist dream that we are intrinsically equal. I think we should go back to primitive dreams of anarchy, peace, and communism, and should think and act upon these dreams. Otherwise, we won’t invent any thoughts that we can live up to. The only thing we can rely on is a ‘dream’, or a flexible attitude achieved by dreaming again and again. Dreaming will hold the flexibility in a self. It’s a readiness to act flexibly. To put it into another term of my philosophy, it’s a ‘reflex’. Masao Maruyama would say ‘this is an Idee’. (Tsurumi 2008, 308)

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*Japanese Thoughts*, Maruyama criticized the title and induced him to change it. He said to Tsurumi “What I have learned from you is the importance of the Nichijo-teki 日常的 (ordinary)”. Tsurumi liked to recall Maruyama’s insightful criticism. Besides, he sometimes mentioned this episode to describe Maruyama as a man of penetration that enabled him to understand that others’ thought better than they did (Tsurumi 2008, 374-75).

<sup>4</sup> To know much about the influential frame of Jikkan (and Riron), (see Yokoo 2010). She also pointed out the delicate differences between Jikkan and Nichijo.



There are three main points we can find in this passage. First, Tsurumi constructs the idea of the “reflexes” as working symbols that express our thoughts. Second, reflexes are fundamental because they are based on simple, homely wishes located deeper in the self. If we want to make our thoughts robust, they should be derived from our reflexes. Third, as we can try to dream repeatedly and thereby construct our reflexes, we can condition our own reflexes and make our attitudes consistent and robust. Therefore, reflexes may be called “instinctive” as they are deeply rooted in the self, and could be seen as “unchangeable” since they enable us to invent the robust attitude.

Customs or social habits are some fixed rules imposed on people. But they set the stage for personal habituation, at the same time. People can adhere to as well as revise them. This point was mentioned by American pragmatists such as Dewey, who considered social habits to be “evolving customs” (Fesmire 2003, chap. 1). A person living in a society of a lot of smokers may consciously form a new habit of not approaching smoking areas, or of not buying substitutes for cigarettes, through deliberation or reflection. There are two aspects in the idea of “habits”; habits are fixed and can be changed.

The word “custom” usually refers to a fixed, automatic behavior; if it is a custom because the habits people have inherited are “taken for granted.” It is natural for them to unconsciously behave in that way. A habit is a “second nature”, but is “continually mistaken for the first”, as J.S. Mills said (Mills 2015, 9). However, Tsurumi reversed the direction of these ideas when he developed the idea of “reflexes”. By using the word “reflexes”, Tsurumi focused on a possible fixation of changed habits. If we form a high-minded habit as a reflex, it will enable us to be consistent even in a so-called “limit situation”; such a situation as people may experience in a wartime. This idea reframes the thinking based on Jikkan Shinko and Riron Shinko, since this opens up a possibility to transcend the given conditions of the society; organizing certain reflexes on one’s own means the changes of social habits. Even when the social situation destructively changes, the thoughts expressed by “reflexes” remain unchanged. Tsurumi’s suggestion for us was, by utilizing the tenacity of habits, we can have a robust attitude with consistent thoughts.

Tsurumi insisted that all humans are situated, and as such inevitably internalized the customs imposed by the societies in which they lived. He carefully added that they can habituate the customs, therefore they could be revised:

When you want to apprehend any patterns of your reflexes, you may imagine how you can revise them a bit. Peirce would call this a 'thought', or a 'change of habits.' A habit is a pattern of a thought. (...) Habits permeate an individual person. Mead developed this kind of idea into a 'self-conditioned reflex'. (Tsurumi 2008, 579)

According to Tsurumi, we can organize our own habits and we can imagine what the revised customs might be, when we become conscious of them. We can discern, locate, and train our internalized habits through our reflection. We can condition our responses to a specific possible consequence. That is why he called this process "self-conditioned". However, we are not conscious of the fixed habits, as we do not pay much attention to our routine in the morning; we do not stop to think how we should spring out of bed, how we should grip the toothbrush, how we should brush our teeth, how we should open the door and so on. Tsurumi found it attractive to form a habit that did not or need not involve consciousness. If we can act in a right way without reflection, we have the capacity to act up to the thoughts even in an extreme situation (Tsurumi 2007a, 19-22)<sup>5</sup>.

While this idea was seen by Tsurumi to be connected to the theory of Mead, Mead's thoughts were different. Tsurumi's idea encouraged the creativity of fixing habits of one's own, so his stress was put on the personal aspect of habitual actions. Rather, Mead emphasized the *social* aspect in *Mind, Self and Society* (Mead 1934). In this publication, Mead focused on the sociality of people to criticize his contemporary psychologists such as V. Wundt and J.B. Watson. In addition, Mead was not interested in

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<sup>5</sup> There are some ways of interpreting Mead (Joas 1985, 1-14). Just to name a few, the social behaviorist, the symbolic interactionist, the phenomenological way of reading Mead and so on. According to Joas, Morris is the interpreter typical of the first, and it seems that Tsurumi is on the same side. This paper mainly deals with his reading of Mead and James, and as a result reference to the recent interpretation of them is limited.

addressing the possibility of the robust attitude; however, he did refer to the organizing or conditioning of habits through reflection. Most importantly, while Mead used the word “conditioned reflexes” as a technical term in psychology to describe a conditioned response that didn’t “involved consciousness” (122n), he never used the word “*self*-conditioned reflexes”. Instead, he used the term, “reflexiveness” nearly equivalent to it.

It is by means of reflexiveness – the turning back of the experience of the individual upon himself – that the whole social process is (...) brought into the experience of the individuals involved in it; it is by such means, which enable the individual to take the attitude of the other toward himself, that the individual is able to consciously adjust himself to that process, and to modify the results of that process in any given social act in terms of his adjustment to it. Reflexiveness, then, is the essential condition, within the social process, for the development of mind. (134)

Mead did not insist that a habit formed through reflection should be transformed into so-called “conditioned reflexes” or should be done without reflection; instead, he emphasized the importance of sociality and the power of “reflexiveness”. However, this argument did inspire Tsurumi to develop his interesting ethics of “self-conditioned reflexes” for his own purpose noted above<sup>6</sup>.

The origin of his idea of “reflexes” can be traced back to the term in Mead’s social psychology. But Mead did *not* aim to use these in his ethics. It was the pragmatist John Dewey that developed his ethics on these terms. After investigating the reflex examples that Tsurumi noted, the ethics of these thinkers are compared.

### **Having Trained Habits, or the Differences between Tsurumi and Dewey**

If a child reaches out for a candle to play the bright object, the child will burn his fingers. Now she understands the fear of fire; that is, if she

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<sup>6</sup> Tsurumi’s use of “reflexes” is rather similar to those found in “Suggestions Toward a Theory of the Philosophical Disciplines” (Mead 1981, 6-24). In this paper, Mead re-interpreted and re-evaluated Dewey’s famous paper, “The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology” (Dewey 1975, 96-112).

reaches out for it again, she will put back her hand not to touch it. This is what we usually call “reflexes” or Hansha. Tsurumi sometimes used this example to explain the notion behind the reflex (cf. Sakai 2015, 88), and interestingly, Mead also mentioned the same example to revise the Deweyan concept of the “reflex arc”.

There are at least two tendencies to action, that of withdrawing the hand from the object that burns, and that of reaching out for a plaything. In the conflict between these two tendencies the bright yellow dancing something is shorn of its objective meaning in the child’s former experience, and [s]he is trying to learn what it is. While it is thus deprived of its action, it may become a sensation. But with knowledge of its real nature it ceases to appear in this form in consciousness. It can be sensation no longer until it again becomes the center of a problem episode in experience. (Mead 1964, 6)

Dewey indeed sided with Mead. “We have to make up our minds, when we want two conflicting things, which of them we *really* want. That is choice,” said Dewey. He associated his key concepts of “deliberation” or “reflection” with a situation in which we have incompatible preferences (Dewey 1989, 286). This is how things appear in our consciousness, and Dewey and Mead were interested more in the ability to reflect; the capacity to change ourselves. On the contrary, Tsurumi were interested in the ability to do something without reflection even though he knew this would be achieved by reflection in the first instance. Tsurumi, therefore, extended the pragmatic doctrines of Dewey and Mead when he developed his idea of “reflexes”.

As an example, Tsurumi liked to mention what Kouji Kata 加太こうじ did before the end of World War II. Some Special Higher Police (Tokko) officers came to ask Kata whether he had any books related to Marx or socialism. Kata replied, “Marx? That famous Russian?” Of course, he knew Marx was not a Russian and was only pretending to be ignorant. He just responded in this way without involving consciousness as he had trained himself by continually repeating the phrasing “Marx, a Russian, Marx, a Russian”. Tsurumi saw this type of response as a “conditioned reflex” that could be achieved through persistent self-control (Tsurumi 2012, 404). Tsurumi used this example to establish his idea of a robust attitude achieved

through changeability in human nature. Takashi Sakai claimed that the point of this argument was the fundamental plasticity that enables us to construct our attitudes to be unchangeable (Sakai 2015, 91). Tsurumi wanted to focus on the state without reflection that in the first instance is achieved through personal reflective training. That is a reflex.

Dewey emphasized the power of having trained habits to “command over immediate appetite and desire”. He knew that “thinking [or reflection] is comparatively impotent in giving this command”, whereas “trained habit is potent”. Consequently, Dewey claimed that we should “practice the right act till habit is firm” (Dewey 1989, 204)<sup>7</sup>, which appears to be a position that is closer to Tsurumi’s “reflexes”. But when Dewey accommodated his argument to the ethics of James, Dewey appeared to shift his point a little to the practical behaviors, as can be seen in the following quote from James:

To go back now to our general maxims (...) about habits, offer something like this: *Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day.* That is, be systematically heroic in little unnecessary points, do every day or two something for no other reason than its difficulty, so that, when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you unnerved and untrained to stand the test. (James 1983, 53-54)

Dewey often cited this passage. It may be true that the motivation for James to write this passage (and for Dewey to cite it) may be the same as for Tsurumi. But both James and Dewey encouraged reflective training by daily practical conducts, while Tsurumi did not stress on the daily practices so much, compared with them. What produced this difference?

They are different in what should be typical of their ethical problems. That is, the objectives for their criticisms are different. What Dewey, along with James, criticized most was inaction, or inertia. Dewey cited some sentences of James from *The Principles of Psychology*. James stated, “if one has not taken advantage of every concrete opportunity to act, one’s character may remain entirely unaffected for the better” and suggested if

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<sup>7</sup> Dewey connected this point with the tradition of British empiricism. He considered his ethics to be a developed version of what John Locke wrote in *On Education* (Dewey, 1989, 205).

we become used to acting gently such as “speaking genially to one’s aunt, or giving up one’s seat in a horsecar” (James 1950, 129-30). Although James (and Dewey) added that expressing a “better intention” by acting should be “the least thing in the world”, their main aim was to dismiss ethical inertia. If the better intention “is not decisively acted upon when the occasion presents itself,” it might be transformed into “what Milton calls ‘fugitive and cloistered virtue’” or inertia. To get rid of the possibility of this inertia, they highlighted the need to act (Dewey 1989, 204-07).

There is another example of the reflex, which is quite interesting as it addressed a type of problem that was not dealt with by the American pragmatists. Tsurumi sometimes suggested that it was necessary to develop our own critical questions (Tsurumi 2010). The biggest problem for him, for example, was on the killing of others. When he was serving as a civilian employee for the Japanese army in Djakarta, one of his colleagues was ordered to kill a certain prisoner. Though Tsurumi himself did not kill anybody in his life, he might have been the one forced to kill others. “After all, I’ve been troubled by this lingering question even in the post-war era. If I had been ordered to kill the enemy, what would I have done?” he said. He regarded himself as a coward, because he would not have been able to reject the order, and might not have chosen to die than to kill somebody. He went so far as to consider himself a murderer, and then translated the question based on this self-understanding: “If you, as the murderer, are asked ‘Is it really bad to kill someone?’ how do you respond to this question?” He decided to develop a reflex for this and trained himself to say the phrase, “I killed one, killing’s bad” in one go. He made much of saying it “in one go”; he had borrowed this idea from the Tanka tradition, a Japanese poem of thirty-one syllables. He mentioned the idea of “Koshiore 腰折れ (clumsy wording)”, claiming that it was necessary to avoid Koshiore to maintain a decent Tanka rhyme. Therefore, the reference to saying it “in one go” means responding to the question in a specific way without fear, hesitation, or upset (Oguma, Tsurumi, and Ueno 2004, 50-53)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Tsurumi combined his own problems with so-called performative contradictions. When he came up to this topic, he usually mentioned C.L. Stevenson and his book, *Ethics and Language* (Tsurumi, 2007b, 45-47; Stevenson 1960).

Tsurumi further remarked that the original problematic situation could not be settled, because there still is a room to imagine he might have killed one (Oda and Tsurumi 2004, 38-39). His biggest question was based on the extreme situation, and he constructed it under the counterfactual imagination. As such circumstances are far from the everyday experiences, there are very few concrete ones in which he can equate his imagination. Besides, it was a fruitless effort for him to settle the question by denying, as his question was based on the counterfactual assumption from the start. It was the figment of his imagination. Thus, he was unable to have the opportunity to express his prepared intention by “acting”. Therefore, there was a gap between the ideas inherent in Tsurumi “reflexes” and those of Dewey. Even though, Tsurumi expressed his admiration for Dewey in *Dewey* (Tsurumi 1984, 162-70), what they were attempting to tackle was quite different, as discussed further in the next section.

### **Along with Dewey, Beyond Dewey**

The passage below is the one cited before. Tsurumi attempted to describe his ethics as follows:

I think we should go back to primitive dreams of anarchy, peace, and communism, and should think and act upon these dreams. Otherwise, we won't invent any thoughts that we can live up to. The only thing we can rely on is a 'dream,' or a flexible attitude achieved by dreaming again and again. Dreaming will hold the flexibility in a self. It's a readiness to act flexibly. To put it into another term of my philosophy, it's a 'reflex'. (Tsurumi 2008, 308)

Tsurumi used “dreams” or “dreaming” to imply that his ideas were related to “imagination”. While this could be interpreted as a reduction of his ethics to unreal things, it is necessary to review this in light of his background. These arguments were born out of his observations during wartime, at which time all intellectuals who had boasted of “realistic” thinking gave up these thoughts to bow to the “Imperial wishes”, which is the reason why Tsurumi said that “possibilities to be relied on should be in the things of no use, don't you think?” (Tsurumi 2008, 306-07).

These “things of no use” were in reference to “dreaming” in our imagination. Tsurumi obsessively imagined how he would do under the extremely bad situation noted. At the same time, he insisted the importance of imagining how it could be if our primitive wishes come true, the importance of imagining an extremely good situation. Thus, he said we could achieve robust but flexible attitudes that enable us to carry on even in a “limit situation”. If Tsurumi is right, having a reflex generated in this “unrealistic” way is more “realistic”. However, “dreaming” cannot directly bring changes in our ordinary lives as these are “of no use”. This is because the kind of the problems Tsurumi tackled were ones we do not usually undergo. He used his imagination to rehearse an extreme situation good or bad, to be ready for that. He was trusting in our capacity to imagine, for this opens a way to our fundamental plasticity and gives us a way to achieve some unchangeable things in ourselves. Dreaming or imagination gives us the readiness to act flexibly, and consequently regulates our way of living as a whole, even though the changes may be hardly noticed.

This theme is related to the “moral imagination” (Werhane 1999; Johnson 1997; Fesmire 2003). “Moral imagination is the ability in particular circumstances to discover and evaluate possibilities not merely determined by that circumstances, or limited by its operative mental models, or merely framed by a set of rules or rule-governed concerns” (Werhane 1999, 93). Fesmire, whose pragmatist ethics were strongly tied to the thoughts of John Dewey, also based his ideas on our ability to frame and reframe situations using our imagination. Therefore, these researchers all believed that the role of the imagination was to broaden, evaluate, and even change a moral point of view (Fesmire 2003, 63).

Although it appears that Dewey emphasized that action was needed to better our intentions, at the same time, he also recognized how potent the imagination was, which he referred to as a “dramatic rehearsal”.

(...) Deliberation is a dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various competing possible lines of action. (...) Deliberation is an experiment in finding out what the various lines of possible action are really like. It is an experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses to see what the resultant action would be if it were entered upon. But the trial is in imagination, not in overt fact.



This is the Deweyan idea that Fesmire frequently mentioned; “An act tried out in imagination is not final or fatal”, stated Dewey. Deliberation or reflection is mainly performed as a dramatic rehearsal in our imagination and as it is retrievable, it can work as an instruction for “actual failure and disaster”. While Dewey did not wish to construct an ultimate, fixed principle for morality, he did take the moral imagination seriously, believing that dramatic imagination could develop new habits from a new moral point of view in a particular situation (Dewey 1988, 132-33).

Therefore, from this discussion, it can be seen that Tsurumi “unconsciously” accepted the fundamental ideas behind Dewey’s ethics and then extended them to his idea of “reflexes” constructed in the imagination. Dewey would also support Tsurumi’s idea of “reflex” through his argument on habitual “continuity” (Dewey 1989, chap. 11). Despite the lack an analysis in previous studies and despite the differences in the way Tsurumi and Dewey approached problems, it is clear that Tsurumi’s and Dewey’s respective ethics corresponded as there is a common ground that is fundamental to both.

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