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A Philosophical History of the Idea of the "Democratic Public" in the United States:

A Provocative Emersonian and Deweyan Pragmatic Perspective

Abstract
DEWEYan pragmatism offers alternative theories of mind, self, and society that challenge the currently dominant ideology of the democratic public in the Unites States and elsewhere. By tracing DEWEY's thinking to its origin in the essays of RALPH WALDO EMERSON we catch a glimpse of what makes democracy somewhat unique in the U.S., for better and worse. We will also see how DEWEY appropriated and reconstructed EMERSON to develop his own theory of the democratic public. I will also examine DEWEY's response to the "democratic realists", especially WALTER LIPPMANN, who were skeptical of DEWEY's democratic ideal. This will provide a distant mirror for reflections on our own era. The paper concludes with some speculations about the future of the democratic public in the U.S. in the age of multinational cooperate capitalism.

The intellectual history of the idea of "the public" in the West, and especially the United States, is largely the history of persons signing social contracts. Political theories of the public usually begin by assuming persons are isolated social, moral, and psychological beings. The public is usually conceived as some simple aggregation of atomic individuals into a larger quasi-mechanical system. The system is supposedly designed to maximize the privacy of social atoms by protecting them from unwanted control by other atoms or the system itself. The joys of Romantic modernity are usually confined to the private sphere of passionate imagination. Meanwhile the public sphere consists entirely of Enlightenment rational planing directed toward securing smooth functioning of the social system.

The foregoing assumptions regarding the character of the public are ensconced in what I call Western Folk Psychology (WFP), Western Folk Morality (WFM), and Western Democratic Liberalism (WDL). Together they constitute the dominant ideology of Western social, political, and economic thought. This ideology provided the seeds from whence the modern idea of a democratic public sprang. Today, though, it is time to sow new seeds if democracy is to flourish throughout the world. Deweyan pragmatism attempts to provide alternative theories of mind, self, and society that challenge the entrenched democratic ideology of the public (and the private) while disclosing new possibilities for exploration.

Western Folk Psychology, Morality, and Democratic Liberalism

The following list of enabling beliefs and values constituting WFP will look very familiar: (1) There exists a mental realm apart from the social and physical. This realm has at least four members called the faculties: Perception, passion, will, and reason. (2) Perception receives sense impressions from the body and reroutes them to reason and/or passion. (3) Passions arise through bodily experience. (4) The will is capable of making free decisions to act uncoerced by physical forces. This freedom is the prime mover of unique and autonomous personality. (5) Reason calculates, passes judgment, and formulates theoretical or practical principles of thought and action. The will then receives the results of rational machination. (6) Passion and reason both exert, often opposite, force on the will. (7) Will exerts force on the body causing it to act. Will may resist either reason or passion. The stronger the will the better it resists the force of passion. Most Western psychological theories are but some permutation of these principles. Moreover, most Western social, political, and economic theory assumes such a psychology. Western Folk Psychology is part of the dominate discourse of Western modernity. JOHN DEWEY rejected WFP entirely, and his thought has been marginalized as a result. For DEWEY, freedom and rationality are not individual, innate endowments; instead, they represent shared social achievements.

Western Folk Morality also looks very familiar: (1) It assumes WFP. Bodily passions pursue pleasure and avoid pain and harm. Passions are not intrinsically rational. (2) The problem of morality arises because people can help or harm other people. Possessing free-will, human beings can exercise reason to formulate rules, principles, and laws regarding how they ought to act. They alone decide whether to obey these laws. (3) General moral laws are disclosed by universal, necessary, and *a priori* reason that determines what we must do (prescriptions) and what we must not do (prohibitions). (4) Morality consists in obeying reason while immorality consists in deviating from reason.[1] Morality is a power struggle in the economy of forces described by perception, passion, will, and reason. We struggle to preserve the purity of reason and the resolve of the will against the constant temptations of passionate embodiment. Western legislatures and courts of law assume all of this without question.

The enabling beliefs and values of Western Democratic Liberalism look like this: (1) It assumes WFP and WFM. (2) It assumes the essential autonomy of individual will and personality. (3) It places an absolute value on individual (social, political, economic, intellectual, and religious) freedom and equality. (4) It believes individuals are born with inalienable natural rights in virtue of their humanity. (5) It assumes rationality is the essence of individual human beings and that they are essentially good. (6) It asserts the state and all public institutions arise because of a social contract drawn between innately free, autonomous, rational individuals and the state solely for the rational purpose of preserving and protecting individual natural rights. Further, if unalienable rights are violated by the state, the contract is broken. (7) A belief that social control is best secured by rule of law. (8) The existence of a transcendental order of truth acces-

1 The descriptions of WFP and WFM are adapted from JOHNSON (1993, pp. 15–17).

sible to humankind's natural reason and capable of evolving a moral response. This order is the source of abstract, formal natural laws of physical and human nature.

The public on such an account is assumed to emerge historically because of tacit or explicit social contracts between psychological and moral atoms electing to participate in a democratic social solar system that places a premier or president at the center. I want to challenge these dogmas using the resources of DEWEYAN pragmatism with special emphases on pragmatic social constructivism.

Cross Pollinating the Seeds of the Democratic Public: Liberalism in the New World

The American revolution sowed the seeds of Western democratic liberalism into the soil of a new world. These have evolved many mutations, although only pragmatism flourished. EMERSON is probably the first identifiable instance of this still evolving strain. The old world seed stock, however, remains supreme even in the new world. My pragmatic democratic faith is that someday, somewhere, pragmatism will prevail.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON is less than a great poet, prophet, or philosopher. He is more than a fine essayist. CORNELL WEST (1989) argues that somehow America evaded "epistemology centered philosophy" evolving instead "a conception of philosophy as a form of cultural criticism" (p. 5). Perhaps it is best to read EMERSON as America's first great cultural critic and the one who pointed the way to pragmatism. In evading epistemology, EMERSON overthrows many of the epistemologically centered elements of traditional democratic ideology.

EMERSON developed a discourse that allowed a former Colony to begin thinking for itself. Most interpret him as fleeing history and refusing all authority. Emerson calls for a new kind of "man" fit to occupy a new world. EMERSON looked upon America as almost a new Eden where a new Adam could roam as he did before the fall. It is impossible to escape history and extremely difficult to overcome the authoritarian prejudices of one's culture. EMERSON himself was sexist and racist, although less strident than most in his day. Nonetheless, West is right to say EMERSON succeeded in developing patterns of distinctly American thought that also relate to "the European explosions (both intellectual and social) that produced KARL MARX, JOHN STUART MILL, THOMAS CARLYLE, and FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE" (p. 11).

EMERSON preached a doctrine of perpetual revelation expressing what West calls "Emerson's theodicy" (p. 17). EMERSON's response to the problem of evil is the following trinity: (1) Existence is "congenial to and supportive of the moral aims and progress of the chosen or exceptional people," (2) "the basic nature of things, the fundamental way the world is, is itself incomplete and in flux" and (3) "the experimental makings, workings, and doings of human beings have been neither adequately understood nor fully unleashed on the modern world" (pp. 15–16). This trinity establishes America's secular religion.

The first doctrine of EMERSON's trinity is a statement of what some call "American exceptionalism". For some reason those that fled the old world thought that

they became new "men" amid the vast regions of unsullied land they settled. Immigration somehow freed them of the corruption of the old world. Slavery, the genocide of native Americans, and the continued oppression of women were conveniently ignored.

It cannot be denied, though, that through four centuries millions born into Europe's underclass found wealth and social status within their lifetime upon immigrating. In a very real sense these people often lived exceptional lives. There was authentic cause for optimism, a sense of newness, and novel creation. It was possible to imagine oneself at a new beginning of history.

In the opening paragraph of his essay "Nature" EMERSON boldly writes:

> The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs?

Well, why not? Everyone born into the world is as unique and one time only an event in the universe as their fingerprints. We are alive, and it will not always be so. No one ever has and ever will look upon the world exactly as we are looking now. Every child born into the world is an original beginning, a new start, and a break from tradition. Emerson issues a provocation to creative action, to exercise our powers in a world that at worst does not care, so makes no special provision against us. The creation is sufficiently congenial to support meaningful moral action, that is enough.

The second member of EMERSON's trinity alleges that we live in a world of flux and creative possibility. Ours is a forever contingent, uncertain, and evolving universe, but it is a provocation to action and a price any creator is willing to pay. In the essay "Circles" EMERSON observes, "There are no fixtures in nature. The universe is fluid and volatile". And in "The Poet" EMERSON writes, "For all symbols are fluxional; all language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not as farms and houses are, for homestead". For EMERSON, humankind is a participant in, and not a spectator of, an unfinished and unfinishable universe.

The final figure of EMERSON's trinity is the release of intelligent experimental inquiry in the hands of free individuals bent on deliberately using the results to create a better world. EMERSON abandons the quest for epistemological certainty and ultimate foundations for knowledge. His concern is with creative transformation and, therefore, with what *ought* to be today rather than with what *is*, supposedly, for eternity. Knowledge is purely instrumental for EMERSON; it is not a matter of privileged representation or correspondence to reality. Like language, it is a vehicle. Language, knowledge, and essences are all but means created to help us achieve the aims we desire. They are instruments; tools of creative action.

EMERSON issues a provocation to heroic action in an ever changing world where creation, including self-creation, is forever necessary. In "Circles" he asserts:

> Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning ... This fact ... symbolizes the moral fact of the

> Unattainable ... at once the inspirer and the condemner of every success, may conveniently serve us to connect many illustrations of human power.

A world without end or beginning, a world without fixed center or circumference, a world forever in flux, is a world that provokes the trial of our experimental creations, exertions, and practices. Later in "Circles" EMERSON proclaims, "I am only an experimenter ... I unsettle all things." EMERSON's essays are true to the definition of the word "essay;" they are a trial, an experiment, an assay of meaning and value.

EMERSON thought disciplined intelligence could create cosmos out of chaos. In the essay "Nature", Emerson insisted with two fisted confidence that "the world exists for you ... Build, therefore, your own world". EMERSON struggles to overcome the constraints of history even to the point of moral transgression. If self-reliance and moral consciousness require it, then an authentic agent must transgress custom, law, and tradition. In an unfinished and unfinishable universe the ultimate meaning of any action remains eternally unknown. All we may do is perform new experiments, devise new plans of action, and otherwise seek means to mortal ends. Because action needs to be intelligent as well as creative, it is wise to experiment upon the values one envisions as ends by examining their consequences.[2]

EMERSON held an ideal of a nonhierarchical, egalitarian, and democratic society, but only for those special people provoked to action, power, and self-creation. Having set tradition aside, Emerson embraces the public marketplace. There he finds flux, risk, and the need for continuous action as well as transaction and reciprocal provocation. His praise of the marketplace is, however, ambivalent. He feels market forces undermine authority, overthrow tradition, and place the burden of life upon isolated individuals where it belongs. Emerson, nonetheless, decries the crass materialism of the marketplace and the loss of self-reliance in the possession of property. Markets have replaced history for many in the modern world. Emerson retains a deep commitment to the essential autonomy of the individual will and personality. Because Dewey is a social constructivist who believes minds and selves are social functions, he celebrates democratic community more than democratic individuals. That does not mean Dewey abandons self-creation; the difference is that for him, self-creation is a social-historical achievement of concrete communities.

Dewey's *Self-Creating Appropriation of Emerson*

WEST (1989) boldly declares:

> DEWEY is the greatest of the American pragmatists because he infuses an inherited EMERSONian preoccupation with power, provocation, and personality – permeated by voluntaristic, amelioristic, and activistic themes – with the great discovery ... of historical consciousness that highlights the conditional and circumstantial character of human existence in terms of changing societies, cultures, and communities (pp. 69–70).

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2 It is no surprise that the first edition of NIETZSCHE's; *The Gay Science* carries an epigraph from EMERSON's essay "History".

DEWEY appropriates those aspects of EMERSON he approves and either ignores or reconstructs those he rejects. DEWEY re-creates his cultural tradition by re-creating the historical meaning of its undeniable influences. DEWEY's is a very creative, very EMERSONian, reading of EMERSON. DEWEY calls this kind of reading "reconstruction". While we cannot escape history we can always reconstruct entrenched cultural meanings in the present thereby redirecting what the past means for the future. That is the goal of my paper.

DEWEY (1903/1976) regards those who think EMERSON clever though confused display their own "incapacity to follow a logic that is finely wrought" (p. 184). EMERSON's ideas are not framed in the logic of formal hypothetical reasoning. He believes EMERSON's work "a hymn to intelligence, a paean to the all-creating, all-disturbing power of thought" (p. 187). DEWEY rejects the separation of creative from rational thought (see GARRISON, 1997). DEWEY (1903/1976) proclaims it is "no more possible to eliminate love and generation from the definition of the thinker than it is thought and limits from the conception of the artist. It is interest, concern, caring, which makes the one as it makes the other" (p. 186). Emotion and imagination are an intrinsic and necessary part of deliberation. EMERSON and DEWEY draw no ultimate dualism between poet and philosopher. Eventually, DEWEY comes to prefer the word "intelligence" to "reason" because the history of the latter term has become so entangled with anti-empirical, transcendental, and supernatural doctrines DEWEY's naturalism denounces.

DEWEY feels that for EMERSON "reference to the immediate life is the text by which he tries every philosopher" (p. 188). If the contingencies and risks of life provoke us to exercise our powers of action, the response must be both intelligent and creative, otherwise it will be insufficient to life. So where does one find truth in a contingent and risky world? DEWEY thinks EMERSON "finds truth in the highway" (p. 189). In many ways it is the adventure not the destination that matters most for DEWEY and EMERSON. What DEWEY says of EMERSON we could say of DEWEY:

> His ideas are not fixed upon any Reality that is beyond or behind or in any way apart ... They are versions of the Here and the Now, and flow freely. The reputed transcendental worth of an overweening Beyond and Away, Emerson, jealous for spiritual democracy, finds to be the possession of the unquestionable Present (pp. 190–191).

DEWEY realizes many philosophers worship Reason as an abstract noun much as others worship the abstract noun God. His theodicy, like EMERSON's, finds God in the highway of life. Dewey (1934a/1986) asserts that it is the "*active* relation between ideal and actual to which I would give the name 'God'" (p. 34). This active relation is a living relation that strives in the present to transform the way the world *is* into the way the world morally *ought* to be. The logic of such a relation is practical means-ends reasoning. Dewey does not fix his ideas of God or Reason on any Reality beyond, behind, or apart. Life upon the highway requires applying yesterday's lessons to today's tasks of creating a better tomorrow. This sentiment expresses DEWEY's natural piety before the miracle of life and wonder of existence. DEWEY thought democracy one important way that people work together to build a better future.

DEWEY (1903/1976) concludes:

> EMERSON stands for restoring to the common man that which in the name of religion, of philosophy, of art and of morality has been embezzled from the common store and appropriated to sectarian and class use ... He is the Philosopher of Democracy (p. 190).

In this passage DEWEY mistakenly attributes to EMERSON a virtue he did not entirely possess. EMERSON was a democratic elitist; DEWEY a philosopher of popular democracy. DEWEY departs dramatically from EMERSON in other ways.

First, DEWEY was a naturalized Hegelian for whom not only rationality, but all meanings are historically constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed in the social practices of culture. Unlike G. W. F. HEGEL (or MARX), though, there is no end of history for DEWEY any more than there is for EMERSON. For them, meanings are on the highway; there is no final destination. The meaning of life for them is to make more meaning, what DEWEY simply calls "growth". Second, DEWEY has a social theory of the mind and the self. For these reasons, DEWEY emphasizes community and communication in ways EMERSON ignores. Indeed, he develops a communicative ideal of democracy. Finally, DEWEY does not share EMERSON's naive optimism. DEWEY is a meliorist, not an optimist. He has been wildly misunderstood on this last point.

DEWEY (1922/1983) reflects: "There is something pitifully juvenile in the idea that 'evolution', progress, means a definite sum of accomplishment which will forever stay done ... and advancing us just so far on our road to a final stable and unperplexed goal" (p. 197). One does not need to think things are getting better to do her best, or that there is some cosmic backup story guaranteeing success. DEWEY's attitude is that of the meliorist in contrast to the optimist. DEWEY (1920/1982) depicts meliorism thus:

> Meliorism is the belief that the specific conditions which exist at one moment, be they comparatively bad or comparatively good, in any event may be bettered. It encourages intelligence to study the positive means of good ... and to put forth endeavor for improvement of conditions (pp. 181–182).

One may choose to stop and ameliorate even hopeless situations on the road of life. In spite of his criticisms, DEWEY affirms EMERSON's trinity, although he would never have called it that. DEWEY rejected the notion of American exceptionalism as well as the inevitability of progress. He did think existence congenial to and supportive of our moral aims and of meliorism. According to DEWEY (1929/1984), "Man who lives in a world of hazards is compelled to seek for security" (p. 3). DEWEY contrasts two ways human beings have sought security. The first involves "an attempt to propitiate the power which environ him and determine his destiny. It expressed itself in supplication, sacrifice, ceremonial rite and magical cult" (p. 3). This is the way chosen by those that do not believe existence congenial to human purposes. The second way "is to invent arts and by their means turn the powers of nature to account; man constructs a fortress out of the very conditions and forces which threaten him ... This is the method of changing the world through action" (p. 3). Even when humankind has turned to practical arts to better its lot, humanity has still assumed there is a realm apart from art and everyday existence that is the exclusive province of theory.

DEWEY (1925/1981) explicitly rejected the theory versus practice distinction: "Science is an art ... art is practice, and ... the only distinction worth drawing is

not between practice and theory, but between those modes of practice that are not intelligent ... and those which are" (pp. 268–269). Critical and creative intelligence is what releases the experimental makings, workings, and doings of human beings within a world congenial to our moral aims. According to DEWEY (1934b/1987), "Science itself is but a central art auxiliary to the generation and utilization of other arts" (p. 33). He understood science as merely refined, practical, means-ends, reasoning; it is a way of creating what morally *ought* to exist. A tool for intelligently turning nature in such a way as to secure our moral aims and desires.

DEWEY rejected those forms of metaphysics that assert that the truly real is eternal, immutable, necessary and to be known with theoretical certainty. Dewey (1938/1986) affirmed the ephemeral, mutable, and contingent that could, through inquiry, provide practical "warranted assertibility" but never absolute certainty (p. 15). He (1925/1981) insisted on "the ineradicable union in nature of the relatively stable and the relatively contingent" (p. 56). In such a world, "The striving to make stability of meaning prevail over the instability of events is the main task of intelligent human effort" (p. 49). Nonetheless, the flux of existence is fully affirmed.

DEWEY embraces EMERSON's second doctrine that the basic nature of things is incomplete and in flux. CHARLES DARWIN proposed a scientific theory of what EMERSON intuited. DEWEY (1920/1982) learned this provocative lesson well: "change rather than fixity is now a measure of 'reality'... change is omni-present," he writes, "natural science is forced by its own development to abandon the assumption of fixity and to recognize that what for it is actually 'universal' is *process*" (pp. 114, 260). Estimations are that 99% of all species that have ever lived are now extinct. In such a world breaks from tradition occur every time a species vanishes. A species is an essence, an *eidos*. DEWEY's neo-Darwinian realization is that what holds for biological forms or essences also holds for logical and ontological forms as well. The essences of things, including the objects postulated by theories and methods of science, are relatively stable, yet their existence is precarious. DEWEY (1925/1981) declared, "A thing may endure...and yet not be everlasting; it will crumble before the gnawing tooth of time, as it exceeds a certain measure" (p. 63). Nature, including human nature, is always in flux. DEWEY's psychology extends these insights regarding the contingency of existence into the study of human nature. The implications for his concept of individuality and the public will become clear later.

We have already seen the experimental aspects of the third part of EMERSON's trinity are present in DEWEY as well. DEWEY (1929/1984) rejected "the old spectator theory of knowledge" in favor of a "participant" view wherein "knowing is one kind of interaction which goes on within the world" (p. 163). For DEWEY, human nature is a part of nature, therefore working within nature we may artistically trans-form it so as to secure the ends, values, and goods we seek. Reasoning, for DEWEY, is always practical reasoning carried out to secure the values we desire. This is not mere practicalism; DEWEY thought it very important to distinguish between objects of immediate desire and those that recommend themselves upon philosophical reflection.

"Philosophy", for DEWEY (1925/1981), "is inherently criticism" (p. 298). Educational philosophy is inherently criticism as well. Criticism of what? DEWEY

responds that "the most far-reaching question of all criticism [is] ... the relationship between existence and value, or as the problem is often put, between the real and ideal" (p. 310). The philosopher of education must ask: What knowledge is of most value? What is the end of education? By philosopher here I do not mean professional academic philosophy. DEWEY (1917/1980) spoke of "The Need For a Recovery Of Philosophy". For him, "Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men" (p. 46). DEWEY championed the ideal of the peripatetic philosopher reflecting upon the issues she encounters on the road of life. The problems of education are equally the possession of historian, sociologist, teacher, and above all, citizen. All may engage in philosophical reflection as DEWEY understands it, and their results should enter into the larger public debate. DEWEY championed the ideal of the uncloistered public intellectual.

Philosophy and Democracy

In "Philosophy And Democracy", DEWEY (1919/1982) explicitly affirms the first and third members of EMERSON's trinity, and implicitly affirms the second:

> All deliberate action is in a way an experiment with the world to see what it will stand for, what it will promote and what frustrate. The world is tolerant and fairly hospitable. It permits and even encourages all sorts of experiments ... Democracy is a form of desire and endeavor which reaches further and condenses into itself more issues (p. 49).

The world is congenial and supportive of humankind's moral aims, and it will respond to the experimental makings, workings, and doings of human beings. Because the world is contingent and in flux, experimentation and inquiry are both necessary and possible. The last sentence of this passage describes democracy as a form of desire and deliberate endeavor condensing into itself many philosophical issues. Democracy is a social experiment, a tool we are testing to see if it works and will help us make a better world.

DEWEY distinguishes between two philosophies. The first seeks to become a super science, so it wants to determine a body of fixed and final facts, laws, and principles. This philosophy imagines it "somehow knows reality", as DEWEY puts it, "more ultimately than do the other sciences" (p. 42). The second sense, the one he advocates, is true to the etymology of the word "philosophy". It is a form of desire and DEWEY thinks democracy its finest form.

The word "philosophy" derives from the ancient Greek *philein* (to love) and *sophia* (wisdom). Philosophers are lovers of wisdom, that is what they most passionately desire. Here is how DEWEY (1919, 1982) understood wisdom:

> By wisdom we mean not systematic and proved knowledge of fact and truth, but a conviction about moral values, a sense for the better kind of life to be led. Wisdom is a moral term, and like every moral term refers not to the constitution of things already in existence, not even if that constitution be magnified into eternity and absoluteness. As a moral term it refers to a choice about something to be done ... It refers not to accomplished reality but to a desired future which our desires, when translated into articulate conviction, may help bring into existence (p. 44).

Wisdom concerns itself with the possible beyond the actual that morally ought to exist. Cognitive rationality alone remains captured by what is, the actual. One cannot derive an *ought* from an *is*, so cognitive rationality alone is not enough for our active desire to secure the good. The way the world is constitutes but a provocation to passionately pursue what ought to exist. What ought to exist, though, is often the possible beyond the actual, something only grasped by the wise exercise of imagination. DEWEY (1934b/1987) concludes: "'Reason' at its height cannot attain complete grasp and a self-contained assurance. It must fall back upon imagination – upon the embodiment of ideas in emotionally charged sense" (p. 40). Rationality, for Dewey, is a matter of imagination, embodiment, and emotion. It is wrong to read him as devoted to scientific technique. For him, philosophy and poetry intertwine; it is a mistake to read DEWEY as devoted to scientific technique.

DEWEY (1919/1982) investigates "the historic formula of the greatest liberal movement of history – the formula of liberty, equality and fraternity" (p. 49). He provides a pragmatic reformulation. DEWEY distinguishes two formulas for freedom. The first we have already discussed. It says "men are free when they are rational, and they are rational when they recognize and consciously conform to the necessities which the universe exemplified" (p. 49). Democratic Western Liberalism understands social reality as existing under eternally fixed forms that may be known indubitably. Dewey concludes that this form of freedom "is not one which is spontaneously congenial to the idea of liberty in a society which has set its heart on democracy" (p. 50). Genuine freedom requires the second member of EMERSON's trinity, a universe of flux and contingency. DEWEY avers:

> Men to achieve democracy will construe liberty as meaning a universe in which there is real uncertainty and contingency, a world which is not all in, and never will be, a world which in some respect is incomplete and in the making, and which in these respects may be made this way or that according as men judge, prize, love and labor (p. 50).

Humanity participates in an infinitely pluralistic and semantically inexhaustible universe. Dewey is a transactional realist for whom existence is a plenitude of historical events. Each event is a mixture of actual and potential. The actual requires us to acknowledge that "there is in things a grain against which we cannot successfully go" (p. 50). Knowing the grain of events is important because freedom involves constraint as well as release. The actual in any historical event serves to actualize the potential in other events, and conversely. Human beings are events. We are born, develop, become educated, contribute to our culture, and die. Human intercourse is likewise transactional. DEWEY's participatory and infinitely pluralistic metaphysic influences his preference for participatory and pluralistic democracy.

DEWEY analyzed equality in terms of inequality. Inequality requires hierarchy; the results of which he calls the "metaphysics of feudalism" (p. 51). DEWEY thinks Medieval philosophy was "an attempt to reconcile authority with reason" and an apologetic for the existing social order devoted to the quest for certainty and authoritative foundations in the Kingdom of God (p. 52). DEWEY believes Western Democratic Liberalism remains disabled by an almost feudalistic philosophy that allows society to treat individuals in a hierarchical, quasi-feudalistic, way. DEWEY concludes that "whatever equality means for democracy ... the

world is not to be construed as a fixed order of species, grades or degrees" (p. 52). Instead, DEWEY avers:

> Every existence ... has something unique and irreplaceable about it, that it does not exist to illustrate a principle, ... or to embody a kind or class. As philosophy it denies the basic principle of atomistic individualism as truly as that of rigid feudalism. For the individualism [WFP and WFM] traditionally associated with democracy makes equality quantitative, and hence individuality something external and mechanical rather than qualitative and unique (pp. 52–53).

Educational reform in the United States today treats children as ciphers not selves. Educational reform revolves almost entirely around test scores while issues of diversity are shunted aside. Human beings are conceived as human capital for the economic production function.[3] Virtually all public educational discourse in the United States relies on the quantitative language of calculative rationality and business. Development of one's unique individual abilities, or even preparation for democratic citizenship, is rarely mentioned. It assumes having more means being more.

DEWEY redefines equality in terms of qualitative uniqueness instead of quantitative quasi-mathematical equivalence:

> In social and moral matters, equality does not mean mathematical equivalence. It means rather the inapplicability of considerations of greater and less, superior and inferior. It means ... the fact of individuality, the manifestation of something irreplaceable ... It implies ... a metaphysical mathematics of incommensurable in which each speaks for itself and demands consideration on its own behalf (p. 53).

A great deal of academic discussion in the U. S. today deals with issues involving dialogue across differences and the importance of including perspectives different from the supposed norm. The public discussion in educational reform is about norm referenced tests and mythical back to basics curriculum that does little more than restore the privileges of the social classes with sufficient power to define what "the basics" or "the normal" are. DEWEY's vision of democracy protects us from the dictatorship and dogma of those elites having the power to impose their ideas upon the body politic. For DEWEY, cultivating differences and including others different from the norm is an important function of democracy because we live in a pluralistic universe.

DEWEY believes a proper understanding of democracy is participatory and communicative; therefore, fraternity is not a quasi-mechanical system for lawfully conjoining social atoms. He concludes:

> If democratic equality may be construed as individuality, there is nothing forced in understanding fraternity as continuity, that is to say, as association and interaction without limit. Equality, individuality, tends to isolation and independence. It is centrifugal. To say that what is specific and unique can be exhibited and become forceful or actual only in relationship with other like beings is merely ... to give a metaphysical version to the fact that democracy is concerned not with freaks or geniuses or heroes or divine leaders but with associated individuals in which each by intercourse with others somehow makes the life of each more distinctive (p. 53).

The metaphysics at work here is transactional realism. Viewing human beings as historical events, it completely rejects WFP and WFM. The meaning of the mind

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3 For instance, I hold my appointment in "The College of Human Resources and Education".

and the self, instead, emerges historically in human intercourse. What is actual in one person actualizes the potential in another, and conversely. Just think of your love life and all it means. DEWEY (1925/1981) declares, "Of all affairs, communication is the most wonderful ... sharing is a wonder by the side of which transubstantiation pales. When communication occurs, all natural events are subject to reconsideration and revision ... Events turn into objects, things with a meaning" (p. 132). Meanings, including the meaning of mind, self, and society, emerge slowly in time through discourse and other forms of social transaction. Society is a historically evolving event that we may not entirely objectify. DEWEY understood democracy as part of the continuing conversation of humankind.

DEWEY conceived democracy as moral, economic, and educational, not just political. DEWEY's (1916/1980) pluralistic conception of democracy led him to the following communicative definition of democracy:

> A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to breaking down barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity (p. 93).

The public, governmental structure assumed by a democracy is of secondary concern. Government does not matter as long as it promotes communication. Conversation for Dewey was about creating and sharing meaning; it was about growth. We may secure and continue the conversation in many diverse ways and diversity is the key to creative conversation. Versions of elitist democracy resembling EMERSON's reappeared in the 1920's to challenge DEWEY's transactional, communicative, and creative vision.

Democratic "Realism": Government For the People[4]

The so-called "democratic realists" of the 1920's began to erode two fundamental pillars of liberal democracy. First, the "discovery" of the irrational subconscious undermined Modern Democratic Liberalism's belief in the capacity of everyone to engage in rational political action. FREUDian psychology is the best known instance. Second, arguments arose alleging that few people are sufficiently rational to participate in democratic politics. The idea began to circulate that democracy is the EMERSONian prerogative of privileged experts. America started becoming a planned rather than planning society. The result is today we have government *for* the people rather than *by* the people.

The first world war, the supposed war to end all wars, left the nation in a bitter and cynical mood. It was also the era in which psychology and the social sciences came into their own. At the same time, the American academy was thoroughly professionalized. Professionalism meant embracing the highly successful techniques of the physical sciences. During this period logical positivism

4 I have found ROBERT B. WESTBROOK (1991) valuable in developing this section and the next.

emerged as the dominant intellectual force in the English speaking world. The historical movements that pushed DEWEY's philosophy to the margins of 20th Century thought were under way. Democracy has yet to recover from these events.

The use of propaganda in the first world war to whip the populace to hysterical nationalism suggested that the public is docile and easily manipulated. These techniques have become refined into today's fifteen second rhetorical "sound bites". The results of intelligence tests administered to 1,700,000 military personnel putatively proved over half of those tested were mentally deficient. Such prominent psychologist as LEWIS M. TERMIN and WILLIAM S. MCDOUGALL argued for the veracity of such tests that also "proved" the superior intelligence of Anglo-Saxon racial stock. Today in the United States those who still adhere to such racist nonsense find support in the "science" of intelligence testing. Intelligence testing still assumes the validity of WFP.

The social sciences claimed to provide "value-free" knowledge. For example, in his 1929 presidential address to the American Sociological Society, WILLIAM F. OGBURN asserted a stance that still holds for almost all departments of American higher education:

> Sociology as a science is not interested in making the world a better place in which to live, in encouraging beliefs, in spreading information, in dispensing news, in setting forth impressions of life, in leading the multitudes, or in guiding the ship of state. Science is interested directly in one thing only, to wit, discovering new knowledge.[5]

This unfortunate academic versus cultural dualism is built out of what most now think are indefensible theory versus fact and fact versus value epistemological dualisms. While philosophy without knowledge, including the knowledge provided by the social sciences, is empty; knowledge without philosophical wisdom is blind. One could have perfect, even indubitable, knowledge of the way the world *is* and still not know what he *ought* to do, so wisdom is beyond knowledge. Scientific philosophy forgot this in the 20th century as surely as the social sciences. Western Folk Psychology, Morality, and Democratic Liberalism made forgetting easy.

Liberal intellectuals concluded most citizens are incapable of determining their own best interests; therefore, it is best if decisions are left to experts. State control became vested in cadres of bureaucratic elites, including those baptized in the waters of scientism called technocrats. America is a nation without a ruling and titled class. Professionalism satisfies elitist needs for status and distinction without connecting to a particular egalitarian community or tradition. The Ph. D., LL. D., and M. D. are the mundane imprimatur of the ruling middling classes in America. For democratic elitists, these letters designate those with sufficient rationality to rule for the masses of people incompetent to govern themselves.

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5 Cited in BECKER (1971), p. 28.

Human Nature and Conduct: Undermining the Psychology of Democratic Realism

DEWEY (1922/1983) *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology* is a response to the democratic realist and their psychological, and associated moral, claims regarding the irrational subconscious and the nature of rationality. DEWEY does not deny the existence of the subconscious, indeed, for him it makes up most of the mind. He does, though, think the mind is a social construction, so the mind one comes to have has much to do with the society in which one is raised. Dewey thought democracy the best way to raise a child in a DARWINian world.

For DEWEY, beliefs are embodied dispositions to act expressing emotion. They are habits of conduct. As DEWEY defines it, the "essence of habit is an acquired predisposition to ways or modes of response ... standing predilections and aversions ... It means will" (p. 32). Habits are acquired through *transactions* with a habitat, especially a socio-political habitat. Habits interact holistically within the individual in such a way that, DEWEY concludes, "Character is the interpenetration of habits" (p. 29). Freedom, will, and rationality are not innately determined; all are products of building good habits.

"Man is a creature of habit", writes DEWEY, "not of reason nor yet of instinct" (p. 89) We are born with instincts and impulses, but they are too vague to guide conduct, whereas rationality is an achievement. "Concrete habits do all the perceiving recognizing, imagining, recalling, judging, conceiving and reasoning that is done", declares DEWEY, "Yet habit does not, of itself, know, for it does not of itself stop to think ... Neither does impulse of itself engage in reflection" (p. 125). Most of our habits, good or bad, are unconscious. Being unconscious does not necessarily make them irrational. The task of education is to impart intelligent habits and to render unintelligent habits conscious by reflection so the agent may intelligently reconstruct them. The habit of reflection and rationality emerge slowly over years as individuals learn to coordinate their conduct in situations, especially social situations, wherein the habits acquired up to that time are inadequate.

When habits of action are disrupted, the agent is thrown into a state of emotional disequilibrium and cognitive doubt. This is the context of conscious reflective inquiry, and for DEWEY all inquiries have context. Educating rational agents involves disrupting their unreflective, habitual, historical functioning. The end of inquiry is melioristic; it involves coordinating some situation so as to remove doubt and restore habitual functioning. In such provocative circumstances, impulses previously controlled by habits are released. DEWEY (1922/1983) defines inquiry or deliberation as follows:

> Deliberation is a dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various competing possible lines of action. It starts from the blocking of efficient overt action, due to that conflict of prior habit and newly released impulse ... Deliberation is an experiment in finding out what the various lines of possible action are really like (pp. 132–133).

When one hits bumps on the highway of life the best response is passionate, elaborate, and creative action; experimentation is required. The highway is congenial to human purposes, but only intelligent action will secure what is needed

and desired, and only critical self-reflection distinguishes the immediately desired from the truly desirable. For DEWEY "habits are arts. They involve skill ... craft, and objective materials" (p. 15). The arts of deliberation, intelligence, rationality, creative imagination, and self-reflection are learned. They are not innate endowments, neither are freedom nor natural rights. Again, education is crucial, although an exclusively cognitive education is not enough. Bodily desires must become directed toward the truly good and imagination disciplined to discern the best moral possibilities. Imagination and passion as well as reason are part of freedom and moral improvement. Freedom is not innate; rather it is the ability to become reflectively aware of the environmental contingencies that form and control our habits of conduct, the ability to imagine alternative possibilities, the energy and passion to act to actualize those possibilities, and the intelligence to design effective patterns of action.

DEWEY (1928/1984) decries philosophies of freedom that assume "emancipation of individuals having a privileged antecedent status, but promoted no general liberation of all individuals" (p. 100). Liberation for DEWEY is an achievement, a consequence of reflective creative action. He concludes, "The real objection to classic Liberalism [WDL] does not then hinge upon concepts of 'individual' and 'society' ... The real fallacy lies in the notion that individuals have such a native or original endowment of rights" (p. 100). DEWEY denies the doctrine of innate natural rights. Rights, like every thing else in a world of flux, is an accomplishment, a matter of social as well as an individual growth. "Freedom is a growth", asserts DEWEY, "an attainment, not an original possession, and it is attained by idealization of institutions and law and the active participation of individuals in their loyal maintenance, not by their abolition or reduction in the interests of personal judgments and wants" (p. 103). Fundamentally, freedom involves two things. First, it requires agents to become reflectively conscious of the environmental contingencies, especially social contingencies, conditioning their habits of conduct. Second, agents must *act* to transform the contingencies of the environment in such a way as to alter their conduct. This is why the public and private can never be completely separated as proposed by WDL.

Democratic realists assume a dualism between self and society. DEWEY thought the relationship circular. For him social customs and public institutions historically determine, although not entirely, the meanings assigned the habits of individual selves. DEWEY joins LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN and MARTIN HEIDEGGER in making language the key to comprehending meaning. Social meanings, inscribed as habits, constitute the mind for DEWEY (1925/1981): "Through speech a person dramatically identifies himself with potential acts and deeds; he plays many roles, not in successive stages of life but in a contemporaneously enacted drama. Thus mind emerges" (p. 135). This is bildung. Building a mind is a temporal event, something that happens in one's personal history. Dramatic role playing places the emphasis on creative sociality.[6] Culture has us before we have it. For example, there are cultural scripts prescribing how to play the roles of "good" women and men. Gender, unlike sex, is a contingent cultural construction sub-

6 Dewey's close friend and colleague, GEORGE HERBERT MEAD, works the social theory of mind and meaning out much more carefully. See GARRISON (forthcoming).

ject to cultural criticism and reconstruction. According to DEWEY, what has been culturally formed may always be artistically reformed.

Although habits are social functions, each individual has a unique biological inheritance; that means the same social customs and institutions have a different effect on different individuals. According to DEWEY (1922/1983) "customs persist because individuals form their personal habits under conditions set by prior customs. An individual usually acquires the morality as he inherits the speech of his social group" (p. 43). The quality and character of social institutions determines the quality and character of individuals, and not some innate endowment. At the same time unique individuals and their impulses are the only source of social reconstruction. DEWEY (1925/1981) concedes, "Custom is Nomos, lord and king of all, of emotions, beliefs, opinions, thoughts as well as deed" (p. 165). "Yet mind in an individualized mode has occasionally some constructive operation. Every invention, every improvement in art ... has its genesis in observation and ingenuity of a particular innovator" (p. 164). This is something totalitarian states fail to ever understand. Diverse and creative societies create diverse and creative individuals who then contribute to the diversity and creativity of the society, so the hermeneutic wheel of participatory democracy turns.

"Different institutions", DEWEY (1922/1983) finds, "foster antagonistic impulses and form contrary dispositions" which is what democratic realists fail to understand (p. 90). They are not realists at all. Racists, and other champions of homogeneity, have yet to learn the lesson of Darwinism. In an evolving DARWINIAN world, a species' biological genetic diversity is its key to survival. DEWEY thinks something similar holds culturally as well, that is why he advocates pluralistic democracy. The more effectively individuals and cultures can dialogue across differences the more ways they have of responding intelligently to a contingent and dangerous world. This is why DEWEY thought pluralistic communicative democracy the best form of government practically as well as morally.

Clearly if individual minds, selves, freedom, rationality, and rights emerge historically in the socio-linguistic practices of a culture then the key to freedom, rationality, and rights is education. These virtues are simultaneously the historical achievement of the society and unique selves. Democracy should be pluralistic, participatory, provocative, communicative, and transformative. Public education in a free, rational, and righteous society must be democratic.

The Public and Its Problems: DEWEY*'s Response to* WALTER LIPPMANN

WALTER LIPPMANN was the most articulate of the democratic realists. In books such as *The Phantom Public* he condemns participatory democracy. LIPPMANN argued that citizens do not know their world directly but only by "fictions", representations, or maps. This is especially so for remote regions of our world beyond the community in which we live. Further, because the world is so complex it is often necessary to develop stereotypes that allow us to readily respond to situations. The problem is that quantitative re-cognition is not careful perception of the qualitative uniqueness of persons and circumstances.

LIPPMANN insists building consensus need not be a matter of obtaining ration-

al consent at all, but merely of determining representative symbols that conceal conflict and disguise disagreement. It is worth noting that even if agents are highly rational, the necessity of relying on representations and stereotyping in global and complicated contexts make them vulnerable to their sources of ideas and values. Manufacturing opinion may be as easy as manufacturing automobiles.

LIPPMANN notes that newspapers, and the media generally, depend on advertising. The communicative sources of public information and education are captured by capital. Media relying on stereotypes and representations that threaten capital are unlikely to survive in a market economy. Americans are especially ahistorical people for whom markets have replaced history as the site of social action. Manipulation is easy if one thinks, as most Americans do, that freedom, rationality, and human rights are innate (as in WFP and WFM) instead of something achieved in personal and cultural history. Arrogant and ahistorical people are readily manipulated by false representations of public reality.

LIPPMANN's (1922/1965) analysis takes the elitist turn typical of democratic realists. With the development of the social and policy sciences it is now possible to interpolate "some form of expertness between the private citizen and the vast environment in which he is entangled" (p. 238). The result, of course, is nonparticipatory government for, not by, the people. The DEWEYan response is that we need to reconstruct public institutions, especially schools and media, to educate democratic citizens.

LIPPMANN concludes that self-determination is only one of a plethora of human interests including social order, rights, prosperity, amusement, and pleasure. Participatory self-government is only one relatively minor good among others. One may readily infer much of DEWEY's response to LIPPMANN from what we have already seen of his psychology. The rest is given in *The Public and Its Problems*, DEWEY's only protracted work on political philosophy.

Recall that in DEWEY's metaphysics all actions are trans-actions. To survive and thrive human beings must carry out successful transactions with their environment. Since human beings are socially constructed creatures, social action is especially important. To succeed these actions must be intelligent, creative, and transformational. Transformations have consequences, including social consequences. When social consequences are confined to those immediately involved they are private. When the transactions have significant consequences for those not immediately involved they are public. The useful distinction between private and public must remain somewhat vague: otherwise, we construct a false dualism between self and society.

When represented by appropriately designated officials with special powers the public becomes a state: "A public articulated and operating through representative officers is the state; there is no state without a government, but also there is none without the public" (DEWEY, 1927/1984, p. 277). The quality of the state depends on the quality of organization and the extent to which its officers perform their role in caring not for themselves but for public interests (see p. 256). DEWEY grants the state broad powers to intervene in the internal affairs of a group when important public interests are at stake.

A public remains "inchoate" and unorganized when its members do not realize they collectively suffer the consequences of some action. When they recognize

they share consequences a public may emerge. In recent decades people of very diverse political opinion in the United States have formed a single public regarding the consequences of smoking. A public may also remain inchoate when the existing state ignores their needs. Many in the growing private, and especially religious, school movement in the United States feel they are an example.

DEWEY distinguishes between what he calls "the Great Society" and "the Great Community". The Great Society draws power from the intersection of capital, science (including positivistic social science) technology, and economic production, "but it is no community" (p. 296). Indeed, it erodes community (p. 314). The Great Society emphasizes centralized bureaucratic management and control. President LYNDON B. JOHNSON tried to build what he called "The Great Society". It was modeled after FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT's "New Deal". DEWEY never cared much for ROOSEVELT's government *for* the people. DEWEY concludes that until "the Great Society is converted into a Great Community, the Public will remain in eclipse, communication can alone create a great community" (p. 324). The Great Community is a participatory democracy requiring two things to sustain itself; they are communication and education.

Powerful interests do not necessarily want to free the intelligence of the masses. DEWEY believed LIPPMANN and the so-called democratic realist did not provide an indictment of public democracy but of private industrial capitalism, its control of mass media, and the failure of outdated modes of government to respond adequately to public needs. DEWEY rebuffs the major claims advanced by democratic elitists. First, DEWEY proclaims that participatory democracy demands everyone receive the best education possible, not just public administrators and directors of industry. DEWEY did not think this necessarily meant formal schooling. Popular media could make a great contribution: "A genuine social science would manifest its reality in the daily press, while learned books and articles supply and polish tools of inquiry" (p. 348). Today this suggestion must extend to all mass media, but capital controls the media.

Next DEWEY points out the obvious. The notion of democratic elitism is nonsense. It is just elitism, crass and crude: "A class of experts is inevitably so removed from common interests as to become a class with private interests and private knowledge, which in social matters is not [public] knowledge at all" (p. 364). This element of democratic realism leads directly to oligarchy.

In response to the claim that the public is incompetent to judge matters of policy intelligently, DEWEY offers two related responses. First, "Until secrecy, prejudice, bias, misrepresentation, and propaganda as well as sheer ignorance are replaced by inquiry and publicity, we have no way of telling how apt for judgment of social policies the existing intelligence of the masses may be" (p. 366). In typical pragmatic fashion, DEWEY urges us to perform democratic experiments. LIPPMANN accurately describes the manipulations of a degenerate actual form of democracy, but that the public is being deliberately duped does not prove a better form of democracy could not free their intelligence.

Second, DEWEY retains his stance regarding Western Folk Psychology and Morality:

> *Effective* intelligence is not an original, innate endowment. No matter what are the differences in native intelligence (allowing for the moment that intelligence can be native), the actuality of mind is dependent upon the education which social conditions effect ... The level of action fixed by

embodied intelligence is always the important thing. Capacities are limited by the objects and tools at hand. They are still more dependent upon the prevailing habits of attention and interest which are set by tradition and institutional customs. Meanings run in the channels formed by instrumentalities of which, in the end, language, the vehicle of thoughts as well as of communication, is the most important (p. 366).

When the historical event that is a person's life carries out transactions with the historical events of a culture, the habits of the former and the customs of the latter may both become transformed. A culture's technological artifacts, from flint and steel to steam engines to computers, may enhance the intelligence of its members. The same holds for socio-political technologies. DEWEY thought participatory democracy the social technology most likely to release individual intelligence to reconstruct cultural customs and material technology. The social technologies of education and communication are DEWEY's preferred vehicles of social transformation, not revolution.

In the end DEWEY, like EMERSON, distrusted large organizations. DEWEY's preferred sites of experimental inquiry, communication, and practical action were always small scale:

The problem of securing diffused and seminal intelligence can be solved only in the degree in which local communal life becomes a reality. Signs and symbols, language, are the means of communication by which a fraternally shared experience is ushered in ... Systematic and continuous inquiry into all the conditions which affect association and their dissemination in print is a precondition of the creation of a true public. But it and its results are but tools after all. Their final actuality is accomplished in face-to-face relationships by means of direct give and take. Logic in its fulfillment recurs to the primitive sense of the word: dialogue. Ideas which are not communicated, shared, and reborn in expression are but soliloquy, and soliloquy is but broken and imperfect thought (p. 371).

DEWEY's etymology is correct; logic derives from the ancient Greek λογος (*logos*), a speech, or to speak. Dewey thinks the most logical form of democracy should emphasize experimental inquiry, participatory community effort, and conversation.

While philosophy may contribute insights into what a public ought to be, DEWEY thought that how "protean historic states" actually perform their functions is not a philosophical problem *per se*. For him it was a matter of continuous critical reflection and experimental examination within a world in flux. Policies that may work well during one historical epoch, or in a particular place, may fail miserably later. What we require to close the gap between what is and what ought to be in a contingent, ever changing, world congenial enough to our purposes is intelligent social experimentation.

Some Criticisms and Reflections Upon Our Times

DEWEY's preferred method of forming publics and reconstructing society is pedagogy and dialogue. He was involved in organizing the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Association of University Professors, the New School for Social Research, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and many other organizations. He was a major contributor to the *New Republic* and many other widely circulating publications. No American aca-

demic has ever received the public recognition accorded JOHN DEWEY. Yet he distrusted large scale political organizations and preferred small face-to-face communication in local communities. Are such communities realizable in a globalized world?

DEWEY lacked any extensive analysis of the operations of capital in modern democracies. This is a serious criticism since capital tends toward monopoly and is therefore inherently undemocratic. He could have profited immensely from reading MARX. DEWEY also seems naive in his understanding of social, political, and economic power. He does, though, frame a desirable image of participatory democracy. DEWEY inquires of the public: "By what means shall its inchoate and amorphous estate be organized into effective political action relevant to present social needs and opportunities?" (p. 313). It is a question he must take seriously. Elsewhere, DEWEY (1922/1983) remarks that an ideal "becomes an aim or end only when it is worked out in terms of concrete conditions available for its realization that is in terms of 'means'" (p. 161). It is a grave DEWEYan criticism of DEWEY that he does little to articulate such means.

As the 20th Century advanced, Dewey lost his middle class constituency either to Marxist ideologies of class struggle and party organization or "realist" democratic liberalism. Ironically, popular unrest in the United States in the 1990's seems to seek participatory democracy. The inchoate public is again struggling to organize itself for effective political action relevant to present social needs and opportunities. The United States is now in the midst of a populist rebellion that struggles to name what oppresses it. Knowledge is desperately needed, but it does not come because the people, devoted to WFP, WFM, and WDL, cannot even frame the inquiry. This rebellion is going to fail. Participatory democracy is dead in the United States, Marxism is considered a complete failure, while elitist democracy is evolving into technocratic oligarchy and multinational cooperate plutocracy.

Much of the populist unrest has been deflected into reduction of federal government, welfare reform, and school reform. Those who know anything about the history of American education in the 20th Century know there is nothing fundamentally new in any of this. The emphasis on more state mandated testing reduces wisdom to knowledge and knowledge to information on a pencil and paper, machine graded, multiple choice test. This is simply a continuation of what ARTHUR E. WISE (1979) described twenty years ago in his book: *Legislated Learning: The Bureaucratization of the American Classroom.* All these experts really know how to talk about is raising test scores without providing the means, and certainly without providing funding, to do so. Selves really are reduced to ciphers. It is merely technocratic democratic realism applied to schools.

Current school choice initiatives seeking to free schooling from elitist and centralized state steering is understandable. As a DEWEYAN, I tend to support more local control of schools and their curriculum, and I find the idea of charter schools intriguing. The real danger, though, is that a pluralistic nation will fragment into parochial homogenous communities that see no need to communicate with those different from themselves, and that is something a pluralistic society cannot survive. The struggle over school choice is a crucial battlefield in the war of many diverse inchoate publics to organize themselves. If it is possible to secure local school choice without destroying the common shared experiences

necessary to hold a union together, then America will find a better future than I anticipate.

I feel DEWEY's struggles in the 1920's provide a distant mirror for reflection upon the 1990's. In terms of DEWEY's critique of Western Folk Psychology, Western Folk Morality, Western Democratic Liberalism, and democratic realism, here is what I think is happening to the public in the United States today. The elitist democratic government *for* the people that gripped the nation from ROOSEVELT's "New Deal" to JOHNSON's "Great Society" is rightly deemed a failure by the populous. RONALD REAGAN's election in 1980 is a historical watershed. Marxism, or any other critique of capital, is falsely assumed to have been refuted. The public is striving to regain government *by* the people. They will not succeed. Multinational cooperate capitalism will emerge as the unchallenged victor of the social, political, and economic struggles of the 20th century, and to the victor go the spoils.

The current populist upraising in the United States represents little more than a romantic escape into the fantasy of innate freedom, individual rationality, and the doctrine of natural rights contained in WFP, WFM, WDL. This fantasy is fed and manipulated by mass media and cooperate international capitalism. Corpulent and complacent, America is lost somewhere in Disney World. The state will continue to steer, although not for the people. It will work largely for multinational capital in the new world order. Western ideology assures the public in the United States that each individual owns themselves without the effort of reflection and creative inquiry. The irony is those who are convinced by this ideology are precisely those most enslaved, irrational, undeserving of rights, and least self-possessed. They are too lazy to engage in the hard work required to achieve these desirable traits, so they just assume they were born with them. The slogan of politicians and multinational cooperate capitalism is – let them eat ideology. The diet will prove fatal.

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