

The Hidden Hand: What John Dewey Learned from Rousseau and Its Implications for Liberal Learning

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Abstract: This paper argues that the educational project of the American 19th and 20th century philosopher and psychologist, John Dewey, owed several intellectual debts to the educational work of the 18th century Swiss-French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, “The Emile,” (1762), with implications inimical to general, liberal learning. Arguably, Dewey, the father of American public education (with the help of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Columbia University Teachers College) took from Rousseau three central ideas: 1) the need for deception (“the hidden hand”) in effecting vast cultural change displacing the classical and biblical inheritance, 2) the strange idea that early education should parallel the historic evolution of the human species, and 3) aversion to teaching the young general ideas (even in the form of parables) in order to not have to later unlearn the cultural baggage this would entail. In brief, Dewey’s educational project to collectivize the American psyche implied that high literacy and numeracy in the young led to self-reliance and individualism, and away from collectivism. The paper also briefly explores the way in which IT and AI support the Deweyan and Rousseauian aversion to teaching general ideas to the young, an essential step in the cultivation of liberal learning and self-discovery.

Keywords: Liberal Education, John Dewey, Rousseau, Progressive Education, Information Technology, IT

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the similarities between Rousseau’s “educational” work, *The Emile* (1762) and the views on public education in a modern industrial democracy of John Dewey, “the father of American public education” (with the help of decades of Rockefeller Foundation funding and colleagues and students of the Columbia University Teachers College for most of the twentieth century). The paper argues that in spite of some of Dewey’s criticisms of Rousseau’s project, he shares some central themes of Rousseau, saliently:

- 1) the importance of concealing one’s aims when attempting to effect an entire cultural reformation (“the hidden hand” “*la main cachée*”);
- 2) the rather strange view that the education of the young should follow the stages of “natural” human evolution, and ignore or minimize cultural inheritances putative-

- ly embodying the wisdom of the ages, in the primary interest of correcting unfair advantages in society at large, *not* cognitive mastery of subject matters;
- 3) as a corollary of this, that high literacy, mathematical competence and general and formal reasoning should be delayed for as long as possible in order not to have to “unlearn” later their embodiment of outdated and/or false religious, ideological and unscientific content (and this regardless of life-long negative effect on student literacy); and
 - 4) in the case of Dewey (more complex for Rousseau) an attempt to “collectivize” gradually an entire population’s behavior and thought, on the belief that all language, thought, and “consciousness” are social, and that *everything* one is as a person is what one is as related to others.

Finally, this paper will indicate the implications and baneful effects on liberal learning of Dewey’s and Rousseau’s “progressive” pedagogy, where liberal learning is seen as an initiation into a culture united by *general* ideas, distinguished from “education” understood primarily as socialization of particular behavior through inculcation of collectivized motor skills directed toward constant adaptation to environmental changes, a process Dewey defines as endless “growth” through sharing. The paper’s central argument will be to suggest that delaying cognitive achievement until late childhood was a conscious strategy of both thinkers to inhibit high literacy and numeracy in the “masses”—for Rousseau because it would only confuse them, and for Dewey because it would lead to self-reliance and thence to individualism, and away from behavioral collectivization. Both thinkers put their hopes in the materialism of modern, empirical science as bulwarks against the influence of traditional philosophy and religion. The paper will also briefly, indicate ways in which Information Technology (IT) supports some goals of progressive education, especially its hostility toward rote memorization, an important component of intelligent and creative problem solving, and *avoidance* of *general* ideas.

I: ROUSSEAU, DEWEY, AND “THE HIDDEN HAND”

The eighteenth century Swiss-French intellectual Jean-Jacques Rousseau is reported to have told the Scottish philosopher David Hume that the secret to his writings was the intent to create in his readers a sense of “marvel” and the “marvelous”. Whether this is a good recommendation for the soundness of Rousseau’s arguments, we shall have to put to one side here, but there is no doubt Rousseau’s rhetorical abilities have made his published work influential from the beginning—his early discourse on the baneful moral effects of the development of the arts and sciences having drawn scores of replies from European-wide critics, including even the king of Poland. This kind of response included reactions to his “educational” work *The Emile*, as well, (including even a book-length critical reply from an intellectually talented Roman Catholic priest—later Cardinal—recently translated into English for the first time)¹; and included as well positive experiments throughout Europe applying Rousseau’s ideas for a child-based curriculum recognizing childhood as a distinct developmental stage.

What was Rousseau’s teaching on the “hidden hand” in bringing about cultural and political change, given his implicit view that writing was a form of political action (a view supported by Dewey)? Let us attempt a summary statement of Rousseau’s teaching on this practice, drawing upon especially three of Rousseau’s influential works—*The Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, *The Emile*, and *The Social Contract*.

Despite Rousseau’s reputation as a champion of democracy, sincerity, and the common man, this is not the whole story. Rousseau’s complete view was closer to his contemporary Vauvenargue’s maxim that intellectuals and philosophers, by teaching the masses to think reflectively, had “set them on the road to error”. Although Rousseau claimed to be a friend of truth, part of that truth was the need for deception and deflection when dealing with, especially, the majority of human beings, concerning education, personal relations, and politics. Rousseau says in *The Emile* that the child must do only what he wants to do, but he should only want to do what the tutor has conditioned him to want through control of the learning environment.² His argument for this practice is that deception is necessary to bring about what is good for most people (given

human pride and lack of intellectual ability), since if you tell someone what to do it will only create a power dynamic of dependency which is unhealthy for all concerned. And what is true in childhood education extends to personal relations and political and social life.

For Rousseau, salutary illusions are necessary for the majority of human beings to do what is best for all, as in the case of Plato's Socrates' "golden lie" in *The Republic*, which provided a mythical basis for political hierarchy. For Rousseau, the idea of individual choice and autonomy for most people is a salutary lie necessary to create a viable republic, which depends on the hidden conditioning of the majority of citizens by philosophy and civil religion, in order that they "choose" a republican form of constitution and government.³ Similarly, in personal relations, Rousseau says that although love is an illusion, it is a salutary one, since the illusion of love leads people to be their better selves in order to make them worthy of being loved by another. (Such a relationship apparently avoids personal dependency, since on Rousseau's account what one is loving is an idealized version of oneself in the spatial location of another body).⁴ Rousseau also supports the idea of duplicity as the best strategy for control of women over men, a viewpoint attacked by feminists ever since Mary Wollstonecraft.

Now, there are many aspects of all this, especially the emphasis on the autonomy of the genuine philosopher and scientist, which Dewey rejects, but, in my view, Dewey implicitly accepts Rousseau's account of the necessity of the "hidden hand" in bringing about radical political and cultural change. An excellent example of this is Dewey's 1898 article "The Primary-Education Fetish" arguing against high literacy as an educational goal for children, where Dewey cautions the need to proceed incrementally with such a policy, in order to avoid violent reaction by parents and traditional educators:

Change must come gradually. *To force it* unduly would compromise its final success *by favoring a violent reaction* ... the New Education ... is a compromise and a transition ... (emphasis added)

In my view, this is not hyperbole on Dewey's part. If perceived, a project to *displace* cognitive learning (the 3 "R's" of "reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic.") in literacy and numeracy in primary public education (ages 4-9) *with collective projects* to foster motor and sensory skills, could arguably have led to a violent reaction on the part of those who perceived its potential negative effects on future cognitive development for masses of people (on this, much more below in section III on the Deweyan project to lower cognitive abilities *en mass* as a step in equalization and collectivization of an entire population). At this point, I simply want to suggest that Dewey's intellect showed (like Rousseau's) an unusual mixture of political realism and utopian hopes. Another instance of Dewey's political prudence and use of the "hidden hand" is in his treatment of religion and especially Christianity. This is not the place to go into that subject, except to note that in the 1890s he was still trying to show that the meaning of the Christian message was the conception of "God incarnate" in all of humanity (not simply in Jesus) and was realized in modern democracy's "community of action". Yet by 1916 (*Democracy and Education*), Dewey could simply come out and say there was something "rotten" about all religion and non-collectivist philosophy such as that of Plato, Hegel, and Bradley since it implied an attempt to have a realm of experience exclusively one's own, and not shared with others.⁵ And yet another instance of Dewey's rhetorical prudence was his instinctive distancing of his own position from the "hedonistic behaviorism" of Wundt, Watson and Thorndike (pleasure-pain, stimulus-response conditioning)⁶ apparent in Dewey's Hegelian-like attempts to synthesize apparent polarities such as "stimulus vs response", traditional vs progressive education," and so on.

II: PRIMARY EDUCATION AND “NATURAL” DEVELOPMENT

Rousseau’s *The Emile* (1762) can be taken as a child-rearing manual for the average person, as an allegory for the evolution of the human species, or a mixture of both. Since it has been widely taken as a child-rearing manual, and it had concrete effects on school curriculum by way of writings of thinkers such as Herbert Spencer, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget, I think we are justified in treating it as such especially in the theme of its correspondence with the “natural” evolution of the species (carefully speaking, there can be no human nature for Rousseau, only earlier and more recent human history, but he sometimes refers to early humans as the “natural man”).

The sinews of Rousseau’s argument in the 1st and 2nd Discourses, *The Emile*, and *The Social Contract* is that primitive (pre-urban) human beings were naturally good in the sense that they tried to preserve themselves with as little harm to other humans consistent with that aim (*contra* Thomas Hobbes and St. Augustine). However, owing to some historical accidents such as static agriculture and the invention of metallurgy, huge inequalities and dependencies had arisen among them, driven by the passion for social status and power, leading to corruption in the realm of appearances. This bourgeois culture flourished in large urban centers such as Paris and London with “role players” displacing more “natural” human types such as mother, father, soldier, etc. In brief, the source of human corruption for Rousseau was not in the moral short-comings of human beings (*a la* Plato and the Bible) but in the contradictions of social life in large urban centers (*vs* rural communities), with the new human type (*the bourgeois*) hopelessly alienated (splintered between self and others) in a way the ancient Spartans in their dedication to the city were not.⁷ Rousseau proposes in *The Social Contract* a strategy for avoidance of this extreme, corrupting dependency of the majority of human beings on the rich and powerful in large urban centers. In brief, the solution is a republic in which the people as the sovereign power, avoid the effects of dependency and natural human inequalities by becoming civic equals as part of the sovereign General Will, obeying laws which they helped create, and thereby remain independent (to obey a law which you give yourself is to remain free, in theory, according to Rousseau and the ancient Stoics).

Now, the project of *The Emile* is to propose a curriculum for the education of an average person which inures him and her (different curriculum for women), from the alienation of bourgeois existence, without attempting to make them into philosophers (an impossibility) through reliance instead on inculcated habits of common sense grounded in sensory experience, and practical particulars *vs* philosophic generalities and abstractions which are irrelevant in this project for the happiness of the common man and woman. Here we start to see the parallels with Dewey—both thinkers want to rely upon natural and spontaneous childhood impulses to distance children for as long as possible from formal reasoning, literacy, and numeracy, and undermine a classical and a biblical heritage, in order to move toward a new political culture (different goals for Dewey than Rousseau).

Let us take a moment to inspect the cogency of this strategy of both thinkers to “starve” children during their first ten years or so of logical reasoning, mathematical reasoning, rules of grammar, ethical reasoning, history, concepts of duty (a subject of Section III) and so on, by way an odd, counter-intuitive claim that school curricula should follow or mirror the evolution of the discoveries of the human species from more primitive times to the present. Rousseau’s project is to make people more *independent* as individuals by giving them (non-philosophic) standards by which to escape the corrupting bourgeois radical dependency on social status; Dewey’s project is to make children even more mutually dependent on one another through collective exercises geared to training of appropriate motor skills, but both thinkers want to minimize teaching children aspects of the culture they are born into. For example, the only book Rousseau will allow the pre-adolescent Emile to read is Dafoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* which teaches him necessary physical survival, and motor skills, useful for judging the follies of modern cities without buying unknowingly into their bourgeois value system.

In Dewey’s 1915 book *Schools of To-morrow*, the first chapter is entitled “Education as Natural Development”, and includes lengthy quotations from certain passages in Rousseau’s *Emile* (though *noth-*

ing about the tutor's hidden control over the child's learning environment). Dewey chooses themes from *The Emile* which emphasize that the child's "native capacities" for its own creative growth (as defined by Dewey or Rousseau) rather than on a stultifying formal teaching of the "three R's"—"reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic." He quotes Rousseau that "our real teachers are experience and emotion" and that "the child should remain in complete ignorance of those ideas that are beyond his grasp." He praises Rousseau as well for the idea that the teacher is *guiding* natural growth (not imposing adult accomplishments), by inculcating firsthand acquaintance with the real relations of things themselves, including bodily development (and motor skills) as part of that educative experience. Without comment yet on the wisdom of this approach to early education, my point thus far is that both Dewey and Rousseau emphasize a teaching method for children which follows the child's "natural development" and respect for the child's natural creative impulses and growth, *as defined by the teacher/tutor*. For Dewey the ultimate aim of this "natural" education is greater sharing and dependency with/on one another (his definition of "democracy"); for Rousseau the aim is greater individual independence from the values of urban, bourgeois culture. Yet both saw the advantage for purposes of comprehensive cultural change, of using the idea of a natural process of development as a reason for minimizing knowledge in the young of the dominant culture, in particular its classical (Greek and Roman) and biblical inheritance. And I note here that for neither Rousseau nor Dewey, is there any attempt to acquaint young children with any *general* ideas, even in the form of parables or myths. All early education is focused on practical engagement with the *particulars* of the sensory world, a good beginning for initiation into the worldview of modern, empirical science, and behavioral psychology.

III: COGNITIVE EFFECTS OF PEDAGOGIC DELAY OF LITERACY, NUMERACY AND HISTORY

We have seen Dewey's project (on the grounds that people are shaped by experience and environment), to reduce cognitive learning in early school years as a way of remedying the inequalities of the "rugged individualist" ethos for the new age of industrial democracy. Unlike 19th century liberals such as J. S. Mill who hoped to raise those on the bottom of the social ladder to the middle, Dewey's more collectivist project aimed (in the name of fairness) to lower the middle and upper as a way of equalizing and collectivizing popular consciousness and behavior. Non-collectivist philosophy and religion, and its early pedagogic focus on literacy and *general* ideas, led to self-reliance and individualism, and would have to be gradually displaced with an emphasis on conditioning motor skills through cooperative group projects inculcating habits of service and sharing. It is instructive at this point to look in some detail at Dewey's arguments in his 1898 article, "The Primary—Education Fetich" (*sic*).

Dewey begins this article by *calling* the practice of spending the first three years of primary education primarily on the study of the English language, *the equivalent of a religious cult* or fetish, which needs to be gradually changed in the name of progress, on the grounds that it is not natural or inevitable but simply a response to past environmental conditions which have changed.

Arguments Dewey makes in advancing this claim are: (1) book learning was more necessary in previous centuries when reliance on the works of the great minds was the only avenue available to understanding the natural world prior to development of the collective project of scientific investigation; (2) as a consequence, learning to read and write, in the curriculum of the three R's, was interesting and exciting, and this is still true (1898) in rural areas; (3) but now universal urban access to cheap and easy news makes civilization no longer dependent on books but rather on the existing circulation of ideas, which requires a new educational model if it is not to become a dead, mechanical formality; (4) it is now possible to initiate the child from the beginning into experiments making direct contact with nature, rather than in abstract and symbolic ways (very similar to Rousseau's methods in *The Emile!*); (5) as a consequence there is no longer a need for the study of history and literature of the past, when the child can gain insight into the scientific method through direct access in group experiments; (6) this kind of practical training in schools is more necessary in urban populations than in rural setting in which the problems of daily life provided naturally

for practical insight and learning, and motor skills; (7) early urban learning now needs to focus primarily on training sensory and motor centers in individuals through group projects; (8) any specialization in literacy and numeracy before the age of eight or nine is crippling of further intellectual development as in time will be established by physiological and psychological discoveries; (9) it is more important for the child to grasp the “idea” of texts, (reminiscent of contemporary debates over phonic vs “whole language” approaches to reading)⁸ rather than achieve cognitive mastery of the content; and (10) the *primary* aim of education from the ages of four to nine should be on group projects inculcating efficient and orderly motor skills, not on cognitive learning of subject matters.

Now, all of these claims are problematic and have consequences for the ability to read and reason. Given children’s natural aptitude for language learning, the question arises about the future costs of minimizing the emphasis on cognitive achievement at this critical stage of development. To take a dramatic example, Laurence Rockefeller, who attended a Dewey Lincoln primary school funded by his family foundation complained that he never learned to read properly, and was never able to master reading owing to the Dewey school’s early pedagogic techniques.⁹ As a way of getting to a more systematic critique of this issue, let us look at some of the arguments of the Canadian educator Kieran Egan, in his 2002 book *“Getting it Wrong From The Beginning”: Our Progressivist Inheritance from Herbert Spencer, John Dewey and Jean Piaget*. Egan argues that the progressivist arguments about stages of learning development are simply mistaken for the most part, and that they are a costly mistake for public education to make. Let us look at some of his arguments.

Egan addresses his criticisms against the founders of progressive education (Herbert Spencer, John Dewey and Jean Piaget) at two levels, based on both his own experience as an educator and on contemporary scholarly research. At a *general* level, his argument is that it has been a mistake to think that schools can be responsible and useful for “complete living” at “the expense of traditional intellectual education”:

The trouble is that schools can be quite good institutions when they concentrate sensibly on intellectual education, but they are less good at developing the whole person or producing good citizens or ensuring parenting skills ... (Egan 2002, p. 135).

Egan quotes John Locke on the point that the principles “of justice, generosity... sobriety ... and industry ... are qualities ... which school boys do not learn from one another,” and goes on to argue that unless a school has enormous power and authority over children (which democracy does not allow, in spite of progressive hopes), the values and norms will be “those which children bring to school; and that the “teachers of democratic virtues are those of the family and society”. In brief, Egan’s judgement on the goals of progressives such as Dewey is that they simply went too far for a (political) democracy to achieve (hence, by implication, the preference of many progressive educators such as Dewey, for incremental achievement of political socialism and collectivization as the real meaning of “democracy” as “growth” (Egan 2002, p. 135).

The second level of Egan’s criticism is pedagogic and empirical, and it suggests that progressivism has been mistaken about the stages of learning, and that there are good reasons why children should continue to learn the principles of grammar and mathematics as well as study history and even Latin. Among his noteworthy, supportive insights and arguments for these recommendations are the following:

The assumption of early progressivists such as Spencer and Dewey that the path to knowledge of primitive human beings to contemporary children will be similar, ignores the fact that “the cognitive universe of the modern child is quite unlike that of primitive children” and gives us “no guidance on how to design a sensible curriculum” (Egan 2002, p. 121).

That the progressive practice was wrong in arguing that the teaching of grammar and grammatical rules was “stupid”—“grammar is still our best description of the rules by which whole language works, and contemporary research shows that “children begin to reflect on these rules almost as soon as they begin to speak” (Egan 2002, p. 127). Progressive educators have confused methods of teaching with the educational

value of grammar—instead of ignoring it, the problem is to work out ways grammar can be made more accessible and meaningful to children.

Experience with young children shows that study of history is not “developmentally inappropriate” when it is about the achievement of great leaders (“heroes”), but since Spencer and Dewey thought that social change occurred through aggregate social and economic forces, they either ignored history entirely or treated it obliquely in a bland mixture of sociology and biology called “social studies” (apparently, the child’s instincts are to be trusted *unless* they go against the progressivist ideological canon that the only history worth inclusion in primary *curricula* is that which has contemporary “social worth”) (Egan 2002, pp. 130-131).

A final noteworthy point Egan makes, largely by implication in this case, is the moral problem with the emphasis by Spencer and Dewey on the worth of a curriculum as related to whether it induces “pleasurable excitement in the pupils” (up to an ideological limit as we just saw). The implied danger here is that this approach borders on the kind of “hedonistic behaviorism” one finds in the behaviorists Wundt, Watson and Thorndike, in which students are taught (or conditioned) to see the *good* as pleasurable and the *bad* as painful or boring. What happens to students so conditioned in circumstances where the good is painful (Egan 2002, p. 130)?¹⁰

One could cite many more of Egan’s arguments on the pedagogic mistakes of progressivist educators, but my point here is that he thinks the appropriate role for primary and all public education in a democracy is cognitive achievement in the subject being taught, in my view, a very sound judgment.

IV: IMPLICATIONS OF DEWEY’S PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION FOR LIBERAL LEARNING

Whatever the changes in the meaning of Liberal Arts education since the Middle Ages, a meaningful distinction it still makes is the idea that it is *general* education suited for a person free (*liberales*) enough to have some choice over their life path, and hence requiring knowledge of the relations among various occupations and life spheres, and enough self-knowledge to evaluate their own suitability for one of these. (And when I say *general* ideas and concepts, I mean general enough that they do not specify any single, particular course of action)¹¹ I have been trying to show in this paper that the (especially early) education models of both Rousseau and Dewey are not going to achieve these kinds of outcomes, nor were they intended to. The early schooling for both is “intellectually barren” and intended to stifle formation of general concepts though concentration on sensual particulars and motor skills. In the case of Dewey, this is for the sake of diminished literacy and numeracy as a step in the way to greater social equality; in the case of Rousseau’s *Emile*, for the sake of a set of common-sense standards for recognizing and avoiding the follies of 18th century bourgeois cultural values. The intent of both strategies was arguably to undermine both the classical (Greek and Roman) and biblical inheritances in Western civilization in the interest of more egalitarian political and social arrangements, and at the expense of a demonstrable decline in individual cognitive achievements of populations where they have been influential. And also, at the expense of a decline in the availability and depth of *general* learning.

I’ll finish the paper with the suggestion that the widespread effect of Information Technology (IT) has been to exacerbate two bad tendencies in the progressivist education model of Dewey and others. The first is that their attack upon rote memorization is magnified in the extent to which students and adults are “outsourcing their memories” to their computers. The result is arguably an aggregate decline in intelligent, creative problem solving, since creative solutions tend to come during sleep when the unconscious mind works on data stored in the conscious mind (which is now increasingly stored on the computer).

The second bad progressivist tendency intensified by widespread computer use is its hostility to teaching *general* ideas and the arts of *judgment* in subsuming particulars under general ideas and adverbial qualifications. Computers do not need to make judgments issuing in general advice. In the twinkling of an eye, IT can perform millions of computations and give one a specific answer to a specific question, evident for

example in navigation by GPS. This is changing what people want from the knowledge industry (and arguably changing the human brain itself, especially its memory capacity). As relations between and among human beings depend less on implicit general ideas and practices, and more on explicit particular role performances, the taste and opportunity for liberal learning will likely also become more rare, and with it the taste and opportunity for activities and practices which require acts of *general* judgment, such as the art of politics (vs. mere governance and central administration of populations) which Aristotle says was an invention of middling kinds of peoples as an alternative situated between Asian despotism and Celtic anarchy.

As for remedies to the combination (in both higher and primary education) of progressivism, Information Technology (IT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) combatting what is left in schooling of liberal learning, it is important to see what Rousseau, Dewey and IT all have in common. As I have been trying to show in this paper, for different reasons, they are all hostile to teaching both the young and old general ideas as a basis for a comprehensive outlook on a human life. For Rousseau and Dewey, this is to prevent learning of cultural baggage they mean to discard, at the “justifiable” loss of individual and collective cognitive skills essential for preserving a national meritocracy in a world of nations.

In the case of IT, its very internal “logic” is to bypass human judgment bridging from general ideas to particular cases and actions (as in a law court deciding whether starting a particular fire belongs to the general, adverbial qualification of lighting a fire in an arsonous manner). What IT and AI have made clear is that acts of judgment subsuming particulars under general ideas are a kind of short-hand of the limited human mind, and that computers which can sort millions of cases in seconds do not need general ideas.

In my view the “logic” of IT tends to support the goals of political progressivism in public education at all levels, especially its argument that the academy is now a part of society, not an ivory tower above it, as a recent President of Harvard University characterized it in her resignation remarks. If these are the prevailing academic winds, those who would preserve liberal learning’s focus on general ideas in acts of human judgment would do well to see all that they are up against and how long it has been germinating since its inception in Rousseau’s *Emile* (1762). Only individuals who can think in generalities and employ them imaginatively to evoke their own individual place in the whole, can conceive of themselves as ends in themselves, and structure their lives politically and socially in such a way that they are treated as such, as much as is practically possible in their particular circumstance.

NOTES

- 1 See Gerdil (2011).
- 2 For development of this theme, see Melzer (1990, pp. 244-49).
- 3 For this theme, see BK II, Ch. 7 of Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*, any edition
- 4 For this rendering of Rousseau’s teaching on love, see Charvet (1975, pp. 114-115).
- 5 Dewey’s teaching on the complete social construction of the individual is curious. It could be seen as a confused rendering of Hegel’s claim that the “truth is the whole”; it could be seen as simply another version the Marxian claim that society is made up of relationships, not individuals; or it could be seen as an example of Nietzsche’s claim that the source of the passion for equality is resentment and self-hatred.
- 6 Here is a statement from Dewey’s former student, J. B. Watson in 1913 on the view of behavioral psychology: “Psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science ... The behaviorist, in his efforts to set a unitary scheme of animal response, recognizing no dividing line between man and bruts” For a fascinating account of the influence of 19th century German behavioral psychology on U.S. public education, see Lionni (1980), *The Leipzig Connection*. See also Dewey’s colleague, Edward Thorndike, *The Principles of Teaching* (1906, p. 7): “The art of teaching (is) giving and withholding stimuli with the result of producing or preventing certain responses.”
- 7 Rousseau was fascinated with the case of ancient Sparta (during its healthy period) since he believed it overcame the tension between private and civic interest so characteristic of the modern, urban bourgeoisie.

- 8 For a critical account of Dewey's influence on the 20th century movement to teach "whole language" learning vs the phonetic alphabet approach, see Samuel Blumenfeld, *The Whole Language/OBE Fraud* (1996).
- 9 Cited in Lionni (1993, p. 80). One goal which Dewey shared with his corporate benefactor, J. D. Rockefeller (who wanted "workers, not thinkers") was the avoidance of high literacy for the masses.
- 10 The basic indictment by Egan and others of this approach to learning is that it conditions motivation to learn on excitement and gratification rather than on reason and responsibility. It would appear that it is only in athletics that the maxim of "no pain, no gain" still has any traction in U.S. public education.
- 11 This is an important point for this paper's argument. A culture based on general ideas is a subtle one, like the ancient Roman allegiance to the "old ways" or *mos maiorem*. It requires the ability to make judgments bridging from general ideas to particular actions and creates and preserves a realm of freedom arising in that gap. General ideas such as "freedom" or "equality" cannot be definitively achieved in any single, particular action, in the way that a particular idea such as "getting in the harvest" can be. Dewey's eschewal of teaching general ideas to the young is intended to turn them into role performers in a common enterprise. This is a possible form of human association, but not as free and creative as one based on allegiance to a set of implicit (and codified) general practices.

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