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From Deliberation to Participation:

John Dewey's Challenge to Contemporary Democratic Theory

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Political Science

by

Jeffrey Charles Jackson

2014

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

From Deliberation to Participation:

John Dewey's Challenge to Contemporary Democratic Theory

by

Jeffrey Charles Jackson

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Joshua Dienstag, Chair

This dissertation uses John Dewey's democratic theory to lead contemporary democratic thought away from the principles endorsed by deliberative democracy. I argue against the widely-accepted view that Dewey should be classified as a forefather of deliberative democracy, and I show instead that Dewey's theory effectively exposes shortcomings in deliberative theory. Dewey associates democracy with the possibilities for individuals to participate in the governing of their lives, and he highlights how these possibilities are affected no less by social and economic inequality than by political institutions, and how political institutions themselves cannot be isolated from the effects of social and economic inequality. On Dewey's terms, then, democracy involves a continuous process of overcoming interrelated social and political obstacles to individual self-government, rather than the achievement of a particular kind of deliberation within political forums. Deliberative theorists, by contrast, must isolate the political

and social realms when they indicate that deliberative reason-giving in political forums will neutralize the effects of unequal social status. Dewey's theory in fact illustrates the need for democracy itself to evolve in its methods for achieving self-government, rather than being solely equated with deliberative reason-giving. Dewey shows us that, under conditions of structural social inequality, the practice of deliberation may produce undemocratic effects, and that non-deliberative practices such as broad-based social movements may be necessary to overcome such inequality. Dewey's position also would make the process of overcoming social inequality into a central aim of democratic theory. Some deliberative theorists do note (as an addendum to their focus on deliberation) that such inequality must be reduced, but they fail to explain how such a requirement could be attained through the deliberative practices they describe. Finally, Dewey can also demonstrate the potential value of "participatory democracy" (now widely assumed to be incorporated by deliberative democracy) to contemporary democratic thought. Participatory theory primarily advocates the democratization of both political and non-political authority structures, and Dewey's focus on continuously overcoming interrelated political and social obstacles to individual self-government can cogently illustrate the insights of participatory theory which are independent of deliberative theory.

The dissertation of Jeffrey Charles Jackson is approved.

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2014

For Victor Wolfenstein, my late friend and mentor.

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Introduction

The dominant contemporary discussion among political theorists on achieving democracy has been centered on the question of how to improve the quality of policy debate. Deliberative democracy, the most prominent model of contemporary democratic thought, is based on the notion that policy decisions will have democratic quality if those who take part in the policy debate engage in genuine "reason-giving." In essence, the theory holds that all deliberators should be equally willing to give reasons for their policy positions, and should be equally willing to change their positions based on the strength of their opponents' arguments. By upholding such a model, political theorists have sought to make political debate more rational, more intelligent, more organized, and more oriented to the common good. If the standard of "reason-giving" is maintained, the theory goes, then all deliberators involved in a debate will have the opportunity to articulate reasons for their positions, all will have to give reasons that consider the views of others, and the policy decisions that result will be justified to all involved because the debate has proceeded along terms that are acceptable to everyone. Contemporary democratic theory, therefore, has focused itself on the task of creating deliberative forums in which the discourse will treat all views equally and will be equally acceptable to all who take part. The creation of such forums would then signify the achievement of democracy, because these forums would effectively nullify the impact of any unequal power relations prevailing in the broader society, and would ensure that any viewpoint with convincing reasons behind it can influence the direction of policymaking.

This dissertation will challenge the preeminent position of deliberative democracy within contemporary democratic thought, through an exploration of the democratic theory of a thinker

who is considered to be one of the historical pillars of deliberative democracy, John Dewey. Over the course of its two to three decades of existence, deliberative democracy has been deemed by political theorists as an appropriate model for democratizing our political decision-making structures, because it would create more forums for ordinary citizens to deliberate on policy proposals. Over the past decade and a half, in fact, the study of deliberative democracy has to a significant extent transitioned into empirical testing of the theory, rather than continued debate over the suitability of the theory as a model of democracy. However, despite his being one of the most frequently named intellectual forebears of deliberative democracy,[1] I will use Dewey's democratic theory to argue that a commitment to deliberative practices diminishes democratic theory's capacity to account for the effects of unequal social status on political interactions. It is central to Dewey's thought that *political democracy* (i.e., a democratic process for evaluating and selecting policies to be enacted by a people's government) cannot be achieved in isolation from the presence of vast social and economic inequality. Dewey also notes that, even apart from its effect on political processes, this inequality is also simply a direct threat to the foundational purpose of democracy: allowing all individuals, as much as possible, to exercise some control over their lives. I will show, then, that Dewey should not be considered a forefather of deliberative democracy, and I will employ his theory to argue that deliberative democrats are guilty of abstracting from social inequality by indicating that fair policy deliberations can neutralize the effects of unequal social status among the deliberators. In so doing, I aim to bring the process of overcoming structural social inequality into the focus in democratic theory, rather than leaving this matter (as is typically the case with deliberative

[1] For example, see James Bohman, "Democracy as Inquiry, Inquiry as Democratic: Pragmatism, Social Science, and the Cognitive Division of Labor", *American Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 2 (1999): 590; John Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2; Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 9.

theory) as a footnote to the achievement of deliberation within political forums.

In particular, I will claim that deliberative democracy's central commitment to reason-giving represents an abstraction from social inequality because it implies that the various iniquities in our broader social relations (economic, racial, gender inequality, alienating workplaces, religious discrimination, etc.) can be prevented from influencing which reasons are seen as most legitimate and persuasive in the deliberative forum. Some deliberative theorists do in fact acknowledge such *social* problems, and seek to account for them by insisting that significant reduction of social and economic inequality is required by deliberative democracy. I will argue that deliberative democrats cannot maintain this claim without compromising the principles of deliberation, and without conceding the necessity, under unequal social conditions, of specifically *non*-deliberative methods and practices for achieving democratization—i.e., methods and practices which hold social inequality to be so pervasive that it cannot be simply bracketed through certain rules of discourse. With this argument, I will not be rejecting the use of deliberation, but I will imply, through my analysis of Dewey's democratic theory, that non-deliberative practices warrant significant attention in democratic theory under unequal social conditions. For Dewey, we must be aware of constantly changing threats to the capacity of individuals to exercise control over their lives, and of how these threats relate not only to the quality of political, policymaking debates, but also to our broader social relations. Dewey does want honest deliberation characterized by fair inquiry into different policy proposals, but he criticizes the attempt to focus primarily on the quality of policy debate in the face of structural social inequality[2]; and further, he himself supported and even participated in such practices as marches, protests, and strikes (i.e., non-deliberative practices) aimed at redressing the various social inequalities he confronted in his time, and this exhibits a recognition that deliberative

[2] John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935), 70-73.

reason-giving should not be automatically equated with democratization.

While deliberative democracy is the main democratic model that I will challenge in this dissertation, I will also use Dewey's principles to question the democratic credentials of the contemporary "agonistic" and "communitarian" traditions. Agonistic democracy has been held up as a genuine alternative to deliberative democracy, and communitarianism has been linked with Dewey by various scholars (though not by as many as have linked him with deliberative democracy). I will show, though, that agonistic democracy is vulnerable to a similar Deweyan critique—related to the significance of structural social inequality—as is deliberative democracy, and that communitarian principles work against Dewey's democratic aim of allowing individuals to exercise control over their lives. Furthermore, I will demonstrate not only that Dewey's democratic theory does not support deliberative democracy, but that his theory can help highlight the potential value of "participatory democracy" to contemporary democratic thought. Participatory democracy is a democratic model that has been widely seen as incorporated within deliberative democracy, but I will show that participatory democracy (as opposed to deliberative democracy) can better account for Dewey's point about the interrelatedness of *social* and *political* threats to self-government, and that participatory democrats can draw on Dewey to show their lack of commitment to specific deliberative practices to be a virtue of their theory. Dewey, therefore, can help us cut straight to the heart of major shortcomings in deliberative democracy, and can help illustrate why the democratic model which deliberative democracy is seen as subsuming—participatory democracy—is in fact a more suitable democratic theory for our current social conditions.

Deliberative and Deweyan Democratic Theory

One deliberative theorist has recently proclaimed that "Deliberative democracy now

constitutes the most active area of political theory in its entirety (not just democratic theory)."[3] Rather than associating democracy with a process in which the people's aggregate preferences are simply weighed against each other in a vote, deliberative democrats connect democracy with a policy debate in which those involved in the debate exchange reasons for their various policy positions. Within such a debate, the deliberators are to give reasons that could be endorsed by their opponents in the debate. To the extent that deliberators exchange these types of reasons, the theory goes, the resulting policy decisions will have democratic quality because everyone involved has been treated respectfully, has had the opportunity to articulate their views and to challenge others', and has had the policy decisions justified to them with reasons they can accept. According to deliberative theorists, this use of reason-giving can ensure that policy decisions are not affected by broader power relations prevailing outside the deliberative forum, and that policy decisions are determined simply by who makes the most convincing argument. Reason-giving is also meant to ensure equality of opportunity to influence policy outcomes, in that all deliberators are equally required to give reasons for their policy proposals, and all proposals are equally subject to being challenged by others. And, reason-giving is meant to lead deliberators to think more about the common good, because the requirement of giving reasons that can be accepted by others will force deliberators to consider more than what merely serves their own self-interest.

There are many different accounts of deliberative democracy, and there is some divergence among its advocates regarding certain aspects of the theory. For example, there is not unanimity on whether deliberative democracy is better suited for ordinary citizens or for elected representatives. Empirical tests of deliberative democracy in particular have focused

[3] John Dryzek, "Theory, Evidence, and the Tasks of Deliberation", in *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy: Can the People Govern?*, ed. Shawn Rosenberg (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 237.

more on experimental forums created for ordinary citizens, but at the same time, several prominent theorists have asserted that elected representatives will more likely have the experience and the time necessary to truly deliberate on policy questions.[4] What is still common to these viewpoints, though, is the association of democracy with reason-giving. Through the practice of honest, open debate, with all perspectives being welcome as long as each deliberator is willing to give reasons that can be acceptable to others (and is willing to change his or her position based on the strength of opposing arguments), deliberative democracy aims to ensure that policy decisions are acceptable and justified to all who are affected. Democracy would then be achieved because no one has been summarily shut out of the policy debate, and all have an equal chance to articulate reasons and influence the outcome of the debate.

One Dewey scholar has stated that "A consensus appears to be forming among political theorists that John Dewey's political thought can be subsumed under the rubric of deliberative democracy."[5] I will be disputing that depiction of Dewey, and I will demonstrate that Dewey's thought actually undermines deliberative democracy, and would push democratic theory into a different direction. For Dewey, we have democracy to the extent that individuals can exercise control over their lives, or, can participate in the governing of their lives. I will explain below in further detail what precisely Dewey means by this, but essentially, this refers to individuals being able to effectively exercise some control over their experience of work life, family life, religious life, political life, etc. This capacity to exercise some self-conscious control over our lives, in Dewey's view, is the distinctly human capacity, the quality that separates human beings from

[4] Joseph Bessette, *The Mild Voice of Reason: Deliberative Democracy and American National Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5, 212; Gutmann and Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?*, 31; Stefan Rummens, "Staging Deliberation: The Role of Representative Institutions in the Deliberative Democratic Process", *Journal of Political Philosophy* 20, no. 1 (2012): 25.

[5] Jason Kosnoski, "Artful Discussion: John Dewey's Classroom as a Model of Deliberative Association", *Political Theory* 33, no. 5 (2005): 654.

animals that act merely on instinct. But, as this participation in the governance of our lives relates not only to political life but also to social matters in realms such as the workplace, Dewey's democratic theory identifies the presence of both political and social obstacles to the possibilities for individual self-government. Dewey emphasizes "the distinction between democracy as a social idea and political democracy as a system of government. The two are, of course, connected…Yet in discussion they must be distinguished. The idea of democracy is a wider and fuller idea than can be exemplified in the state even at its best. To be realized it must affect all modes of human association, the family, the school, industry, religion."[6] In Dewey's theory, then, there are political obstacles to democracy, such as the disproportionate influence of powerful economic interests over the candidates who are selected to hold office, and over the policies produced by government. And, there are also threats to self-government coming from the quality of our social relations, such as vast economic inequality and undemocratic relationships in the workplace. Dewey holds that these social threats to self-government affect individuals' capacity to govern their lives at least as much as political institutions do, and that these social threats also inevitably affect political institutions in an undemocratic way. The political and social obstacles to self-government that Dewey identifies are interrelated. He endorses measures aimed at reducing the effect of wealth on political processes, but he also notes that the democratic effects of such measures will be limited if the broader society is still ridden with poverty, and if certain individuals have to work two jobs to survive while others have the leisure time to get involved in politics. At the same time, he recognizes that poverty and other instances of social inequality are affected by policy outputs from political forums, and that if the policymaking process is effectively controlled by wealth, then there will not likely be policies that benefit the poor. Dewey conceives democracy as being both a social and political concept,

[6] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chicago: Swallow Press, [1927] 1954), 143.

and therefore, he insists that democracy's achievement requires that we concurrently overcome both the social and political obstacles to self-government.

The issue of granting individuals control over their lives would seem to be the central matter of any legitimate theory of democracy, including deliberative democracy. But from a Deweyan perspective, deliberative theory is guilty of inappropriately narrowing and simplifying the task of achieving self-government. More specifically, the focus on deliberation isolates the political and social realms by indicating that a fair policy debate, based on reason-giving, can itself neutralize the effects of unequal social status. Deliberative democracy relies on the notion that equal status among individuals can be achieved within the deliberative forum as long as all involved are given an equal chance to speak; the theory also suggests that such an opportunity to articulate reasons for their policy positions is sufficient to allow individuals to exercise control over their lives. In order to uphold these principles, we have to dismiss the possibility that the way the viewpoints of certain individuals (e.g., the wealthy) tend to be given greater legitimacy in broader social life would give those viewpoints an advantage within policy deliberations. We also have to maintain that some individuals' lack of opportunity to govern their lives in *non-political* realms (e.g., the workplace) is not an essential problem for achieving the type of self-government signified by democracy. To be fair, some deliberative theorists do attempt to connect the social and political realms by applying their conception of deliberation to the interaction of different associations in the broader society, in addition to the policymaking assembly.[7] But, this ultimately amounts to calling for social groups to engage in deliberative reason-giving, without sufficiently accounting for how structural social inequality can effectively

[7] Jurgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 275, 368; Seyla Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy", in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 73-74; Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, 162, 171.

exclude certain elements of society (the poor, women, racial minorities, etc.) from that "public conversation," even if everyone has an equal formal opportunity to participate.

It should also be noted that there are some deliberative theorists who do insist that social and economic inequality be reduced, and that such a reduction is encompassed by deliberative democracy.[8] The problem here, though, is that this insistence ultimately compromises the principles of deliberation. If the claim being made by these theorists is that proper deliberation will specifically result in policies that reduce social and economic inequality, then they are determining the correct outcome of the deliberation before the deliberation has even taken place. The outcome of deliberation is supposed to be completely indeterminate, and if deliberative theorists maintain that we only have proper deliberation if it produces policies that redistribute wealth, for instance, then there is no reason to deliberate because we already know what policies we need. On the other hand, if the claim being made is that the reduction in social and economic inequality is simply a necessary prerequisite that we just have to somehow achieve before genuine deliberation can take place, then it has to be conceded that, under unequal social conditions, deliberation itself is not the key to democratization. The work of democratization, under such conditions, would have to focus on the (rather monumental) task of reducing social and economic inequality—and that task will apparently require practices that are quite different from deliberation, because the deliberative theorists would have to acknowledge that an equal debate over policy is not really democratic when there are those broader social inequalities.

While there are points in Dewey's work where he does discuss the importance of improving the quality of political debate, he also emphasizes that this matter cannot be

[8] James Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 21; Jack Knight and James Johnson, "What Sort of Political Equality Does Deliberative Democracy Require?", in *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*, eds. James Bohman and William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 307.

considered the whole of the democratic task in the midst of vastly unequal social conditions, because it cannot be assumed that an equal policy debate could even be instituted against an unequal social background. In fact, Dewey stressed the need, under unequal social conditions, for non-deliberative methods and practices for achieving democracy, methods and practices that specifically aim at highlighting and rectifying social inequality. His effort in the 1930s (during the Great Depression) to organize a new radical political party in the United States was an attempt to both stimulate, and give voice to, a broader social movement that would highlight and rectify the structural inequality prevailing between advantaged elements of society (e.g., the wealthy) and the majority of individuals. Dewey was not aiming to simply create a debate where, for instance, the wealthy and the non-wealthy would just be equally able to try to convince each other to change their views; as such, he avoids the assumption that—in a policy debate between the wealthy and those who have to struggle every day to survive—the conditions are necessarily present for the debate to be fair and equal, and for all individuals' viewpoints to begin the debate with equal legitimacy. Dewey's support of, and participation in, marches, protests, and strikes aimed at achieving women's suffrage, and at increasing the wages and self-determination of workers, further illustrates his recognition of the need for practices that go beyond an exchange of reasons that are acceptable to all involved. Dewey did indeed march in the streets for women's suffrage in the early 20th century (he was even said to have once marched while unknowingly carrying a sign which read "Men Can Vote, Why Can't I?"), and during the 1894 Pullman workers' strike in Chicago (which took place at the start of Dewey's ten-year stint at the University of Chicago), Dewey's personal correspondence exhibits his strong support for the workers and his belief that such strikes were progressive conflicts.[9] In the face of social

[9] Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 86, 167; Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 111,

inequality, Dewey associates the development of democracy with actions and policies that specifically aim at overcoming the inequality. This is again not to say he is at all against deliberation and the exchange of reasons, but his thought challenges the notion that deliberation can be held up as *the* democratic practice under unequal social conditions. Dewey criticizes the attempt to abstract from social inequality by presuming that a fair exchange of reasons can bracket the effects of unequal social status among the deliberators, and he holds that unequal social conditions actually warrant granting greater attention to non-deliberative practices. Hence, Dewey should not be considered a forefather of deliberative democracy.

Democracy as a Personal Way of Individual Life

For Dewey, the development of democracy requires alertness to the interrelated political and social obstacles to the opportunities for individuals to participate in the governing of their lives. However, his depiction of democracy does not simply conceive of individual self-government as something which is automatically achieved to the extent that those political and social obstacles to self-government are overcome. Dewey recognizes that democracy—in order for it to actually be *democracy*—cannot involve determining for individuals how exactly they are supposed to act in the various social and political situations they experience. He further recognizes that individuals, therefore, may act in ways that hinder the achievement of the social and political elements of democracy's development. For example, if individuals themselves largely cling to ideas of natural inequality along racial and gender lines, and if they commit to principles which hold that poverty and wealth are the just outcomes of a fair economic competition, then the social aspect of democracy is directly inhibited. Even if there are attempted measures to ameliorate the various forms of social inequality, it is still in large part the responsibility of individuals to actualize democratic social relations in their everyday

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interactions. The persistence of racist and sexist attitudes, for instance, can keep minorities and women in a subordinate position in social life (in work, family, religion, etc.), and this subordination cannot but affect the capacity of minorities and women to exercise influence over political institutions. Deweyan democracy, then, is not only political and social, but also *individual*. The development of this democracy requires the continuous overcoming of the exclusive control of political institutions by powerful interests, and of social and economic inequality, but such tasks are themselves interrelated with individuals' own everyday behaviors.

This individual aspect of Deweyan democracy is reflected in Dewey's famous statement that "democracy is a *personal* way of individual life…it signifies the possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life."[10] Dewey's concept of a democratic individual way of life will be central to this dissertation, for I will identify this as the essential concept for understanding what Deweyan *participation* signifies—i.e., what it means for individuals to participate in the governing of their lives, and how such participation is both dependent on, and contributes to, the development of democratic participation in the social and political realms. In so doing, I aim to shed new light on the meaning of the democratic individual way of life, and on how this idea of democratic individuality fits within Dewey's broader democratic theory. I will specifically do this by reading Deweyan democratic individuality in relation to the two thinkers that Dewey, in an autobiographical essay in his later life, refers to as his philosophical heroes: Plato and Hegel.[11]

Despite the admiration he expresses for Plato, Dewey's relationship to Plato has not received significant attention in Dewey scholarship. I will show that, even with Plato's anti-

[10] John Dewey, "Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us", in *John Dewey: The Political Writings*, eds. Debra Morris and Ian Shapiro (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, [1939] 1993), 241.

[11] John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", in *Contemporary American Philosophy,* Vol. II, eds. George P. Adams and Wm. Pepperell Montague (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), 21.

democratic commitments, Dewey still holds in high regard Plato's recognition of the importance of an ideal individual disposition for the establishment of an ideal political order. Plato's ideal individual disposition is aristocratic, a strictly ordered individual "soul" which firmly subordinates one's appetites to one's "reason" in order to allow the individual to access eternal knowledge. Interrelated with this ideal individual character-type, then, is the presence of an ideal, strictly ordered state which firmly separates the few who are capable of true knowledge from the many who are not, giving political rule only to the truly wise, and limiting the majority of individuals to the practical function that each one is best suited for. In Dewey's view, Plato's conception of the parallel quality of a political order and a dominant individual character-type is a great insight, and one that is still valuable under modern conditions. However, Dewey also notes that modern conditions have effectively undone the epistemological and ontological principles underlying Plato's call for a specifically aristocratic state and aristocratic individual. For Dewey, scientific advancements in particular have progressively shown the untenable quality of past claims to eternal truth that only a select few are capable of grasping; and, both scientific and economic changes have so thoroughly intertwined the peoples of the world, such that human relations can no longer be conceived as so ordered that individuals may be placed in strictly defined classes and narrow functional roles. In contrast with his aristocratic individual, Plato condemns the "democratic" individual for failing to hold anything to be sacred and unchanging, for neglecting to stick with a single function, and for leading a life characterized by variety, diversity, and multiplicity, including interaction with diverse others from different corners of society which should be kept separate. Under modern circumstances, though, Dewey contends that democratic individuality is the key to individual fulfillment. He reasons that individuals can no longer rely on supposedly eternally wise principles, or eternally wise individuals, to direct

their lives in the way that will be most fulfilling to them personally and most valuable to their society. Modern circumstances have brought down claims to eternal knowledge, and have instead shown the pursuit of knowledge to be a continuous, never-ending task to be tackled through full engagement with the constantly changing qualities of ordinary experience; Dewey thus attests that conditions should be provided for individuals to determine their own paths in life as much as possible, and for individuals to be able to adapt to their constantly changing world in self-directed ways. Furthermore, such democratic individuality for Dewey can allow a society to more wisely regulate its collective affairs, because without a select few who possess eternal knowledge, the interaction of diverse elements of society may progressively generate greater wisdom regarding the most suitable ways to serve the best interests of all individuals, and may supply that wisdom to democratic governing institutions.

Dewey's relationship to Hegel has received considerable scholarly attention, though only over the last decade has the view become prevalent that Dewey remained a Hegelian beyond his early career. I will extend the discussion of Dewey's Hegelianism to the concept of the democratic individual way of life, in order to further elucidate the implications of the continuous individual development and diversified individual experience that Dewey describes. Because, under modern conditions, individuals face a world that has undergone, and continues to undergo, rapid development, Dewey affirms that individuals are constantly confronted by (in Hegelian language) novel *objects* of experience. As *subjects* of experience, individuals cannot avoid unique situations, and in particular they cannot avoid the impact of actions by diverse others with whom they have been interconnected by modern conditions. And, because we can no longer accept that there are any eternally true principles which can determine for individuals how they should act in response to unique objects of experience, there must then be room for individuals to

exercise their own self-chosen effect on the situations they experience. Deweyan democratic individuality, therefore, is associated with the capacity of individuals, as unique subjects of experience, to exercise a distinct, self-directed impact on the novel objects of experience they inevitably confront—i.e., with the capacity of individuals to participate in the governing of their lives. The influence of Hegel on Dewey helps illuminate how democratic individuals must engage in the often-painful process of reconstructing their past habits and beliefs when those habits and beliefs have been "negated" (i.e., rendered irrelevant) by unique objects of experience. By intelligently reconstructing past principles in the face of the ever-changing, never-finished situations of experience, individuals may increase their capacity to exercise some control over their future uncertain experience, rather than becoming effectively paralyzed when past principles no longer pertain to new circumstances. On Dewey's terms, these Hegelian considerations should lead individuals, for example, to put any past beliefs about other groups of individuals up for potential revision; any discriminatory beliefs are not only harmful to those other individuals, but under increasingly interconnected modern conditions, one will not likely be able to maintain such beliefs in peace. Dewey also employs these considerations to display the threat to democratic self-government represented by alienating workplaces, for when individuals must merely execute the will of another when working, they are clearly obstructed from exercising any unique, self-chosen effect on the objects of experience they confront, and are prevented from using their experience to develop new principles for carrying out that work.

It is evident here how Dewey's democratic theory coheres with his pragmatist philosophy. Pragmatism, as Dewey presents it, signifies that there are no eternally true ideas and principles, but that ideas and principles gain provisional truth to the extent that they can be put into practice in the situations that individuals experience, and that they produce the effects on

those situations that the individuals intend. Whereas many earlier philosophical systems sought to provide a sense of control and stability to the world by upholding the possibility of static knowledge of eternal truth, pragmatism aims at allowing individuals to exercise the greatest possible control over their development in a world beset by transience and instability. Through the intelligent reconstruction of ideas and principles in response to constantly changing circumstances, individuals may then increase their capacity to exercise (provisional, not perfect) control over the novel objects of experience produced by inevitably unique situations. Democratic individuals are thus exhibiting precisely this pragmatist quality of responding to the varied situations of experience with self-directed change of past ideas and habits.

This is not the entirety of the connection between Dewey's pragmatism and his democratic theory, though, for his pragmatist principles are further reflected in his conception of the political (or *governmental*) element of democracy, an element which I will also show in this dissertation to bear Hegelian influence. For Dewey, a democratic political institution may become undemocratic if it is not adequately reconstructed in the face of novel circumstances. A free election, for example, represented a genuine democratic advance in response to the problem of control of governance by dynastic interests; but in response to the newer problem of control of governance by powerful economic interests, a free election by itself is not necessarily democratic. Dewey points out that a free election is not sufficient to achieve democratic governance if wealthy interests can exercise a profound effect on the outcome of elections, and on the policies that elected officials end up producing. In essence, if vast social inequality is manifesting itself within political processes, and if governing institutions are therefore used more to buttress, rather than reduce, that social inequality, then we cannot declare a government to be "democratic" simply because of the presence of free elections which effectively combated

dynastic control of governance. As is the case with the democratic individual way of life, Dewey's pragmatism allows for our conception of political democracy to further develop its earlier ideas and principles in the face of unique threats to self-government.

Because a major aspect of democratic individuality's continuous engagement with novel objects of experience is active interaction with diverse others, it may appear that such individuality is accounted for by deliberative theory's call for deliberation with others. However, the democratic individuality that Dewey describes represents a far thicker conception of self-government than that provided by deliberative democracy. The democratic individual way of life is not simply engagement in deliberative reason-giving, but the continuous process of self-government in a broader social, as well as political, sense. It signifies that the opportunity of individuals to exercise control over their social experience (e.g., in their work) is at least as crucial to their self-government as is the opportunity to exercise control over political processes. Dewey illustrates how the development of democratic individuality is interrelated with the amelioration of both social and political threats to self-government—i.e., how self-directed continuous growth both requires, and is required by, the continuous overcoming of social inequality and of undemocratic control of governance. Deliberative reason-giving, on the other hand, is a practice that is meant to define democratic policy discussions, and is meant to produce policies that can be justified to all individuals who are affected by those policies. In committing to this practice, deliberative democracy must accept whatever policy outcomes are produced by that exchange of reasons, for as long as there is such reason-giving, all individuals affected will be given reasons for policies that they could accept, and thus democracy will be achieved. If deliberative theorists do claim that this deliberation is intimately bound up with a significant reduction of social inequality, then they must (for reasons noted above) concede that deliberative

reason-giving is not necessarily a democratic practice under unequal social conditions. Hence, by associating self-government with the opportunity to articulate reasons for one's policy positions, deliberative democracy creates a narrow notion of self-government which can inadequately account for threats to democracy located outside of deliberative forums. Deweyan democratic individuality does involve interaction with diverse others, and could include deliberative reason-giving on policy matters, but it does not glorify such reason-giving in a way that diminishes other factors involved in achieving self-government.

It will be useful here to provide further clarity on how exactly the individual aspect of Deweyan democracy is interrelated with the social and political aspects. I have already described how the social and political realms are interrelated, with political forums being inevitably influenced by the quality of broader social relations, and social relations being affected by policy outputs from political forums. With respect to democratic individuality, it is critical to note that for Dewey, individuals are so heavily defined by their social relations that the categories of individual and social—while they can be distinguished analytically—are essentially inseparable. What is said about democratic individuality, therefore, inevitably bears on the discussion of democratic society, and vice versa. The opportunity of individuals to exercise control over their development depends upon a social realm that is free of undemocratic workplaces and of various forms of inequality along lines of class, race, gender, etc. At the same time, the emergence of such a social realm depends upon the individuals who make up society moving beyond prejudiced ideas about others, and actualizing social relations in which continuously developing individuals interact without subordinating the development of any of the individuals involved. Such individual behaviors are affected by the social (and political) world they see around them, but social and political democracy also depend upon the capacity of

individuals to grow past outdated beliefs and to challenge unequal social relations.

The key point here is that Dewey identifies democracy with participation by individuals in the governance of their lives, and he presents this as a notion which is simultaneously individual, social, and political. Democracy is thus constituted by these various interrelated elements, elements which are not in immediate harmony with one another, and likely will never be in complete harmony in terms of each element reaching perfect democratic fulfillment. As Dewey puts it, "Since things do not attain such fulfillment but are in actuality distracted and interfered with, democracy in this sense is not a fact and never will be."[12] To bring democracy further into existence, though, we must be aware of democracy's multiple, mutually influencing elements, and of how democracy's development depends largely on the indeterminate actions—and particularly the interactions—of individuals. If individuals recognize their interdependency with others under modern conditions, and if they actualize democratic social relations in their everyday interactions, they can contribute to the realization of the social and political aspects of Deweyan democracy. In doing so, they will also directly aid their own self-government, because on Dewey's terms, upholding the subordination of others, and clinging rigidly to past habits and principles in a general sense, will not grant individuals control over their own lives under constantly changing, increasingly interconnected circumstances. In other words, the capacity of individuals to participate in the governing of their lives—to exercise some control over the novel objects of experience they confront—depends on the opportunities for such participation within governing institutions and social spheres such as the workplace; but, individuals concurrently contribute to their own self-government by challenging the lack of participatory opportunities for others, thereby promoting social and political democratization in their everyday interactions.

The Direction of Current Democratic Theory

[12] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 148.

This dissertation will use the analysis of Dewey's democratic theory to argue that contemporary democratic thought would be well-served by turning away from deliberative democracy and toward participatory democracy, which is a model of democratic thought that was prominent in the 1960s and 1970s, and is now widely taken as having been incorporated within deliberative democracy. Rather than being a forefather of deliberative democracy, I will demonstrate that Dewey can prove useful for upholding the independence of participatory democracy from deliberative democracy, and for allowing participatory democracy to emerge as a genuine challenger to deliberative democracy. Deliberative democrats themselves have commonly made the claim that their theory does account for the principles and concerns of participatory democracy.[13] For instance, one assertion has been that participatory democrats had the initial idea about creating forums in which individuals could become better citizens and improve their capacities to deliberate with others, and that deliberative democrats have extended this idea by actually describing the types of forums that should be created, and what should happen within those forums. This depiction of the deliberative-participatory relation has even been used to suggest that deliberative democracy is an improvement on participatory democracy, with the reasoning being that deliberative democrats take the step of clearly detailing the types of forums that participatory democrats seem to endorse in merely general terms.[14]

In the major works on participatory democracy, however, the emphasis is not actually on creating new forums for citizens to become better deliberators. Instead, participatory theorists

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[13] Robert Goodin, *Innovating Democracy: Democratic Theory and Practice After the Deliberative Turn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 266; Dennis Thompson, "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science", *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008): 511-512; Archon Fung, "Minipublics: Deliberative Designs and Their Consequences", in *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy: Can the People Govern?*, ed. Shawn Rosenberg (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 169; Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, "Thinking about Empowered Participatory Governance", in *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, eds. Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright (New York: Verso, 2003), 40.

[14] Denise Vitale, "Between Deliberative and Participatory Democracy: A Contribution on Habermas", *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 32, no. 6 (2006): 753-754.

have focused on democratizing existing non-political authority structures, and on reducing social and economic inequality in general. The workplace has received particular attention as such an authority structure, with the argument being made that individuals' capacity to participate in political debate and political decision-making is affected by the extent to which those individuals can participate in decision-making in their work.[15] Participatory theorists have further contended that we cannot expect to have a more genuinely democratic politics without a great reduction of the present social and economic inequality, because those who are socially disadvantaged know they face profound limitations—relative to the well-off—in being able to exercise an effect on political processes, and thus tend to become apathetic.[16] Participatory democracy, therefore, puts its emphasis on how an apparently equal political debate may be affected by the different ways that individuals experience their lives in the broader society.

The principal works on participatory democracy have contained little or no discussion of Dewey. When Dewey has been addressed in these works, the discussion has been mostly critical, with Dewey being portrayed as someone who was unaware that government had become the tool of powerful economic interests.[17] I will show, though, that Dewey's conception of the interrelated social and political threats to individual self-government captures participatory democracy's focal concern with the effect on political debate of undemocratic non-political authority structures; and, that Dewey in fact advocates policies that are practically identical to those offered by participatory democrats. He stresses the need, for example, for greater control by workers over their work, for guaranteed economic security for all individuals, and for restricting the capacity of the wealthy to drastically influence political campaigns and processes

[15] Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 53.

[16] C.B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 88.

[17] Ibid., 74-76.

with their wealth. There should then be no disconnect between Dewey and participatory democracy, because Dewey's theory would indicate that participatory democracy—better than deliberative democracy—captures the various elements of democracy and supplies appropriate policy guidelines for bringing democracy further into existence.

Furthermore, there is an individual aspect of participatory democracy that can receive fuller treatment through being connected with Dewey's notion of the democratic individual way of life. Participatory theorists have noted that the type of social and political democratization they describe must rely heavily on individuals themselves—in particular, individuals must move away from primarily seeing themselves as isolated consumers in a market, and toward recognizing their interdependency with others.[18] Dewey augments the significance of this individual aspect of democracy with his conception of democratic individuality. He illustrates how, if individuals stick to a "consumer" consciousness, they will more likely cling to old ideas of economic outcomes resulting purely from isolated individual effort (unaffected by one's social circumstances), and will thus uphold the type of inequality which hinders the social and political aspects of democracy. He also points to this "market" mindset as a major factor in leading individuals to focus their energies on finding the quickest path to sufficient material wealth, such that they can somehow isolate themselves from the vicissitudes of experience and the influence of other individuals.[19] Dewey's democratic individual way of life, therefore, accounts for, and draws out the importance of, the individual aspect of participatory democracy by showing how individuals' adherence to market ideology can reinforce various forms of social (and political) inequality, and can simultaneously lead individuals away from actively exercising control over their constantly changing experience.

[18] Ibid., 99-100.

[19] John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (New York: Capricorn Books, [1930] 1962), 18, 55, 136.

If participatory theory has been unclear on any particular point, it would be on the topic of methods for achieving democratization. Participatory democrats have established what type of democratization is demanded by our current conditions, and that this democratization cannot be limited only to political institutions. But, while there has been some association of participatory democracy with "broadly based social movements,"[20] there has been room for deliberative democrats to imply that their theory's specific commitment to the method of deliberation should be preferred to participatory theory's apparent lack of precision on what practices are required to effect democratization. This is where Dewey's theory, and the Deweyan critique of deliberation, can be particularly useful to participatory democrats for exhibiting how their theory can differ from deliberative democracy. Dewey is not against deliberation, but he does show why a sole commitment to deliberation is problematic under unequal social conditions, because such a commitment abstracts from social inequality. Participatory democrats could thus show it to be a virtue of their theory that they have not specifically bound themselves to deliberative practices, and that they can more comfortably accommodate practices that do not presume social inequality will be neutralized through rules of discourse. Dewey's efforts to form a radical U.S. political party that would combat the social and political advantages of wealth, and his involvement with practices which took to the streets to secure workers' rights and women's suffrage, represent instances of taking direct action toward overcoming forms of social inequality, as opposed to simply creating a debate where the socially disadvantaged would merely have the chance to exchange reasons with the advantaged. The importance of these examples of non-deliberative action to my analysis will be that they can further exhibit the divide between participatory and deliberative democracy, by illustrating the

[20] Jack Walker, "A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy", *American Political Science Review* 60, no. 2 (1966): 293.

types of practices that participatory theory can endorse in a much more consistent fashion than can deliberative theory. By establishing its connection to such practices, participatory democracy can show its methods of action to be founded on the very recognition of the pernicious effect of social inequality on the ordinary discourse surrounding a particular issue; deliberative democracy, on the other hand, must again assume the possibility of creating a discourse that is thoroughly sheltered from the impact of undemocratic social relations. Overall, then, Dewey provides a theoretical apparatus that—with its emphasis on interrelated individual, social, and political aspects of democracy—buttresses the principles of participatory democracy, and he also provides a diagnosis for why a commitment to the method of deliberation discounts the significance of social inequality and the effect of social inequality on political interactions. By taking Dewey away from his current categorization as a deliberative democrat, participatory democrats can help uphold the independence of their theory from deliberative democracy, and can help lead contemporary democratic theory more in the direction of participatory democracy.

This use of Dewey to support participatory democracy does not, again, suggest that deliberation is not something we should ultimately like to see, and neither does it suggest that any action which takes to the streets is automatically democratic. A march by the Ku Klux Klan, for example, directly contravenes the principles of democratic individuality by advocating a message of racist oppression, and thus could not be deemed democratic on the terms I have laid out. But my analysis of Dewey and participatory democracy does imply that democracy should not be associated exclusively with one particular practice, and that our unequal social conditions warrant giving greater attention to the use of non-deliberative methods by socially disadvantaged individuals to overcome their subordinate social status. Unlike deliberative democracy, Dewey's democratic theory has the quality (demanded by his pragmatist philosophy) of adapting its

methods of action to present conditions, which is a quality that participatory democracy can accommodate more effectively than can deliberative democracy. Dewey's theory does not rigidly commit to marches or strikes, but he can make room for these methods in his theory, and can show why they deserve attention in democratic theory under unequal social conditions. A sole focus on deliberation, by contrast, is particularly unsuited to our unequal conditions.

While the critique of deliberative democracy, and the argument that democratic thought should turn in the direction of participatory democracy, are the main purposes of my exploration of Dewey's democratic theory, I will also address two other models of contemporary democratic thought. One is agonistic democracy, which has challenged deliberative democracy on the idea that reason-giving can produce policies that are acceptable to all who are affected by those policies. For agonistic democrats, this notion merely covers over the exclusion that is inherent in any policy decision by positing the existence of an impossible unity between different political actors. These thinkers instead argue that democracy comes through recognizing the exclusionary quality of all policy decisions, and making sure that the political contest remains open so that previous decisions are always open to challenge.[21] And, they further argue that democracy comes when those engaged in political contest treat each other as "adversaries" to debate rather than as "enemies" to be potentially fought with violence; when political contest proceeds in this manner, it is an "agonistic" conflict, rather than an "antagonistic" conflict.[22] Despite this divergence from deliberative theory, I will show that agonistic theory is vulnerable to a similar critique from a Deweyan perspective as is deliberative theory, in the sense that the principles of agonism abstract from social inequality by implying that the effects of unequal social status can be neutralized through this open political conflict between adversarial positions. Under unequal

[21] Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 3, 10.

[22] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), 102-103.

social conditions, there can be space for open political contest, with the contestants treating each other as adversaries rather than enemies, and yet the effects of social inequality can give far greater power to certain elements of society over others for determining the outcome of the conflict. These effects can include, again, the far greater time that the wealthy have to devote to politics than the poor, and the greater legitimacy that the viewpoints of the wealthy are given over the poor's in everyday social life. Interestingly, some agonistic democrats do insist that social and economic inequality be reduced,[23] as do some deliberative democrats. But like with deliberation, such an insistence compromises the principles of agonism. If these agonistic theorists are claiming that the reduction in social and economic inequality will result from agonistic conflict, then they are determining the correct outcome of this supposedly "open" conflict before it even takes place. If they instead mean that the reduction in inequality is a prerequisite to proper agonistic conflict, then they must concede that agonistic conflict is not the key to democratization under our current unequal circumstances. To maintain their commitment to agonism, these thinkers must focus on encouraging the open contest of political positions, and accept whatever outcomes the contest produces as democratic; if they recognize that the contest would not be democratic under unequal social conditions, then they cannot equate agonistic conflict with democracy, and must instead focus their attention specifically on improving the social position of disadvantaged elements of society.

The other model of democratic thought I will discuss in this dissertation is communitarianism, which has been deemed to reflect Dewey's democratic principles by several

[23] Ibid., 126; William Connolly, *Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 212.

scholars[24] (though not by as many as have associated Dewey with deliberative democracy). Communitarians are not directly opposed to deliberative democracy, but they do challenge the liberal principle that individuals should be ready to revise their fundamental tenets through deliberation with others. Through such a principle, communitarians believe that liberals ask individuals to impossibly separate themselves from the identities they acquire from the type of communal roles that all individuals inhabit. Communitarian political thought has thus focused on maintaining traditional communal identities, and allowing individuals to flourish within their constitutive roles.[25] When this communitarian position has been connected with democracy, the argument has been that democratic self-government demands that traditional communal norms and practices be upheld if they are essential to the self-understanding of individuals, even if those norms and practices subordinate certain individuals within the community.[26] However, while Dewey does stress the inevitable impact of social upbringing on individuals' lives, the problem with linking Dewey with communitarianism is that his theory does not aim simply at bolstering traditional communal ties, but at inquiring into the degree to which different social practices uphold the "subject" side of "subject-object" interaction. Dewey's democratic individual way of life, again, is defined by individuals—as subjects of experience—exercising their own unique effect on their development, or, exercising their own unique effect on the objects of experience they confront. Communal identities cannot then be uncritically upheld, for if those identities plainly prevent individuals from having any opportunity to alter their own path of development,

[24] Michael Sandel, "Dewey Rides Again", *New York Review of Books*, May 9, 1996; Daniel Savage, *John Dewey's Liberalism: Individual, Community, and Self-Development* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 27, 176; Robert Talisse, "Can Democracy Be a Way of Life? Deweyan Democracy and the Problem of Pluralism", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 39, no. 1 (2003): 1-21.

[25] Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 59.

[26] Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983), 312-316.

then those identities cannot reasonably be deemed democratic. To be fair, some communitarians have stated, as an addendum to their emphasis on traditional communal practices, that their theory does not endorse practices which forbid individuals altogether from revising their identities.[27] But, in order to maintain this claim, communitarianism must effectively endorse the principle that individuals, above all else, should be able to freely revise their own identities. To oppose oppressive social customs, and thus to become acceptably democratic (particularly from a Deweyan perspective), communitarianism must downgrade communitarian principles.

Outline of the Argument

My investigation of the potential significance of Dewey's theory of democracy for contemporary democratic thought will consist of five chapters. The first three chapters will address important scholarly debates surrounding Dewey's democratic theory, while also elucidating the political, social, and individual aspects of that theory. The last two chapters will draw on the analysis in the first three chapters to show where Dewey stands in relation to contemporary models in democratic theory, and in particular how Dewey is not a forefather of deliberative democracy but rather a potentially effective voice for turning democratic theory toward participatory, rather than deliberative, principles.

In Chapter 1, I will explore the specifically *political* aspect of Deweyan democracy, by demonstrating how Dewey conceives of an unending process of democratizing political institutions, a process which requires that we—in pragmatist fashion—continuously overcome the evolving problems of exclusive control of those institutions by powerful interests. Furthermore, in response to Sheldon Wolin's claim that Dewey's theory is blind to the effects of power inequities on politics, I will argue that radical democratic thought would be well-served by turning in a Deweyan direction, as opposed to the thoroughly anti-institutional approach

[27] Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 180.

offered by thinkers such as Wolin and Jacques Ranciere. More specifically, I will show that Dewey's theory accounts for the necessity of the temporary uprisings against established institutions valued by Wolin and Ranciere, without also forcing us to forgo everything that takes place between such uprisings within institutions as inevitably devoid of any democracy. I will also begin to illustrate the Hegelian influence on Dewey, by tracing the divide between Deweyan and Wolinian thought to Hegel's critique of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's anti-institutionalism, and by using Hegelian principles to exhibit how anti-institutional thinkers tend to conceive of institutions and democratic actors as essentially fixed entities which completely escape the influence of the other. Dewey's Hegelian conception of political democracy, by contrast, allows us to reside between these extremes, by identifying how institutions and individuals may continuously develop through the unavoidable influence of the other.

In Chapter 2, I will analyze Dewey's claim that "democracy is a *personal* way of individual life" by exploring his philosophical relationship to Plato. I will explain Dewey's admiration for Plato by pointing to the importance Dewey sees in Plato's principle that an ideal state cannot exist without the parallel presence of an ideal individual character-type. As Dewey, unlike Plato, finds human relations to lack strict order, and as he considers modern scientific advancements to have progressively brought down claims of exclusive access to an eternal truth, he upholds *democratic individuality* as the key to individual fulfillment in a modern world—democratic individuality being defined, for Dewey (and for Plato as well, though in an unflattering light), by unending growth through engagement with the changeful qualities of ordinary experience, and in particular through interaction with the diverse others with whom individuals are interconnected by modern conditions. This Platonic interpretation of Dewey's democratic individual way of life will help illuminate Dewey's claim that democracy cannot

exist in political machinery alone, particularly if iniquitous social conditions effectively prevent many individuals from exercising control over their own development. This interpretation of democratic individuality will also be used to show the weakness of the anti-Deweyan arguments recently made by Robert Talisse, who erroneously claims that the democratic way of life represents a denial of pluralism and of a diversity of worldviews.

Chapter 3 will draw a synthesis of Dewey's notions of democratic individuality and democratic governance, by delving further into Dewey's relationship to Hegel. Using a Hegelian lens, I will expand on how democratic individuality entails continuous reconstruction of one's habits in response to inevitably unique threats to one's self-development. And, I will demonstrate how such individuality also requires the concurrent, unending development of democratic governance. Even when governing institutions are free of undemocratic control by exclusive interests, government is still hindered from functioning democratically if it is confined to old solutions (e.g., liberal negative freedoms) for coping with unique threats to individual self-government. For Dewey, negative liberties are to be preserved, but a government which merely seeks to leave individuals alone by upholding only those liberties is ignoring the increasing interconnectedness of modern conditions, and is effectively sustaining iniquitous social and economic inequality. This Hegelian analysis will be further used to exhibit the contrast between the democratic theories, and pragmatist philosophies, of Dewey and Richard Rorty. Rorty has been more responsible than anyone for the revival of interest in Dewey (and in pragmatism more generally) over the last three decades, but, because of a misreading of Dewey, he inadvertently produces a fixed, unchanging conception of liberal democracy, which cannot adequately account for the possibility that a government may need to evolve beyond the protection of negative liberties alone if it is to maintain a genuinely democratic character.

In Chapter 4, I will draw on the discussion of Dewey's democratic theory in the first three chapters in order to demonstrate why Dewey should not be considered a forefather of deliberative democracy (as is widely believed). I will show how Dewey's theory focuses on the unending task of overcoming interlocking political and social threats to self-government—in particular, he stresses the need for overcoming exclusive control of political institutions by powerful interests, and for overcoming social and economic inequality. Deliberative theory, by equating democracy with deliberative practices within political forums, must presume the effects of social and economic inequality can be neutralized through those practices. And, when certain deliberative theorists do insist on the reduction of social and economic inequality, they must then concede the Deweyan point that democracy is not achieved through deliberation, but through movement toward overcoming that social and economic inequality. I will further argue in this chapter that Dewey can effectively illustrate the value of participatory democracy to contemporary democratic theory, independently of deliberative democracy. Participatory theorists have advocated the democratization of both political and non-political authority structures, and I will show that Dewey's theory indeed buttresses participatory, rather than deliberative, principles. This chapter will also contain my discussions of Deweyan objections to agonistic democracy and communitarianism. I will show that agonistic democracy (in a similar fashion to deliberative democracy) isolates the political and social realms with its equation of democracy with agonistic conflict, and that communitarianism's focus on maintaining traditional communal identities denies the essentials of individual self-government signified by Dewey's democratic individual way of life.

Walter Lippmann, one of Dewey's own intellectual rivals in democratic thought, remarks that "education has furnished the thesis of the last chapter of every optimistic book on

democracy written for one hundred and fifty years."[28] I would not describe this dissertation as "optimistic,"[29] but my final chapter will indeed focus on education, Dewey's favorite topic. The issue of education emerges in each of the first four chapters, and in Chapter 5, I will provide a thorough analysis of the role of Dewey's educational theory within the democratic theory I have outlined, and of how that educational theory can further divide participatory democracy from deliberative democracy. Education has been identified by deliberative theorists Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson as the most important institution, outside of government, for enacting deliberative democracy[30]; I will use Dewey's analysis of education to show the types of educational principles that participatory democrats should uphold, and to argue that such a participatory perspective on education accounts for shortcomings of prevalent schooling practices that are overlooked by the deliberative perspective. The discussion of education in this chapter will specifically explore the manner in which individuals, on Dewey's terms, can contribute to democracy's unending development. Drawing on the discussion of the democratic individual way of life in Chapters 2 and 3, I will show how Dewey challenges prevalent educational practices which lead individuals toward seeking to end their growth as quickly as possible, and toward viewing themselves as isolated consumers in a market. In contrast with much current scholarship on Dewey's educational theory, I will emphasize the importance of Dewey's critique of "external aims" (grades, standardized test scores, etc.) for grasping the implications of Dewey's conception of democratic education. While many current scholars focus on Dewey's calls for presenting students with open-ended projects, and for allowing

[28] Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1925), 22.

[29] Dewey in fact criticizes both "optimistic" and "pessimistic" philosophies, and explains that his own arguments are *melioristic*, which means that present conditions can be improved through intelligent endeavor, but also that such improvement is never guaranteed; see John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, enl. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, [1948] 1957), 178.

[30] Gutmann and Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?*, 61.

students greater opportunities to interact with one another, I claim we must give due attention to Dewey's reasoning for why the chase for grades and test scores can diminish students' capacities for continuous growth and for critical thought toward current economic relations—capacities which are essential to Dewey's depiction of a democratic individual way of life. This analysis will then be used to contrast Dewey's educational theory with the deliberative educational theory offered by Gutmann, who associates the democratization of education with improved deliberations over educational policy, and with teaching students to deliberate with each other. This deliberative theory, in contrast with Dewey's theory, does not account for how prevalent educational policies and practices are already reflective of social inequality and of the dominance of certain social interests (e.g., the wealthy's) over others, and it instead presumes that proper debate can itself give equal standing to all positions on education, and can adequately prepare students to become self-governing. By drawing on Dewey, participatory democrats can construct an educational theory that effectively accounts for how undemocratic social relations already impact educational policy debates, and that accounts for how a focus on cultivating deliberative skills among students may overlook the role of common school practices in buttressing social inequality.

There are a couple final points to note before we begin. Many of the references to Dewey's works in this dissertation will be to *The Collected Works of John Dewey*, which comprises *The Early Works* (EW), *1882-1898*, *The Middle Works* (MW), *1899-1924*, and *The Later Works* (LW), *1925-1953*, the 37 volumes edited by Jo Ann Boydston and published by Southern Illinois University Press. In line with common practice in Dewey scholarship, I will cite these works by referencing the volume number and page number from the early, middle, or later works—i.e., a citation of page 300 of volume 5 of the *The Later Works* would be referenced

as LW5: 300. It should also be noted that I will be drawing on works from throughout Dewey's seventy-year writing career. This is important because, I would argue, there is no shortcut to grasping Dewey's thought, and there is no particular section of his corpus that can be isolated and considered sufficient unto itself for conveying the full meaning of his work. This is also important because I do maintain that my depiction of Dewey's democratic theory is supported by his writings on democracy from his earliest to his latest works. This does not mean that Dewey never changed his mind about anything,[31] but it does mean that we can construct a consistent theory of democracy by drawing on pieces throughout Dewey's body of work, and we can then explore what value the theory may hold for contemporary democratic thought.

[31] He did change his mind, for instance, on the value of organized religious beliefs for philosophy, and on the proper extent of American involvement in overseas conflicts; see George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), 73-74, 100, 165-166, 218-220, 291.

Democratizing Institutions: Dewey and Radical Democracy

John Dewey has many admirers, but Sheldon Wolin is not one of them. Wolin characterizes Dewey's democratic theory as a platitude-filled theory which is insufficiently political, ill-equipped to analyze the effects of power inequities, and inadequately focused on moving the exercise of political power away from exclusive, entrenched interests and toward the demos. In *Politics and Vision*, Wolin writes that "Dewey never squarely associated democracy, local or otherwise, with participation in the exercise of power or self-government. His definitions of democracy were surprisingly pallid."[32] With his own democratic theory, Wolin highlights the limits he sees on democratic self-government wherever modern political institutions are present, rejecting "The common assumption…that the extent and degree of democratization…is a function of, the extent to which democracy has been embodied in the 'core' political institutions of that society."[33] For Wolin, the political institutionalization indicated by constitutions inevitably separates an exclusive group of professional politicians from the vast majority of citizens, and strictly regulates the opportunities for the demos to exercise power. Democracy, then, must not be associated with a constitution but rather with extra-institutional transgressions of established political forms by the demos. And because institutionalization is an inescapable feature of modern politics, democracy in Wolin's view is doomed to be a temporary, momentary phenomenon: "Democracy thus seems destined to be a

[32] Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, exp. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 517.

[33] Sheldon Wolin, "Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy", in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*, eds. J. Peter Euben, John R. Wallach, and Josiah Ober (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 40.

moment rather than a form."[34] By conceiving democracy in this way, Wolin contends that he accurately perceives the extent to which the demos can gain control of modern governance, as opposed to those who do not associate democracy with such a radical attitude toward institutions. On Wolin's terms, then, someone like Dewey is simply too placid to be a real democrat.

In this chapter, I will examine the *political* aspect of Deweyan democracy, and I will use Wolin's democratic theory as a useful foil for illustrating the insights of Dewey's stance on political democratization. As Dewey puts it, "Definite contrasts are an important, perhaps indispensable, means of making any view sharp in outline and definite in content,"[35] and I will contrast Dewey with Wolin in order to argue that a radical theory of democracy would be better served by turning in a more Deweyan rather than Wolinian direction. In particular, I will show that Dewey's pragmatism allows for continuous, critical evaluation of political institutions, and for effort to be put forward toward remedying the undemocratic qualities of institutions in the greatest possible democratic direction. This pragmatist approach, I claim, provides the tools for radical change to our current mechanisms for achieving political self-government, without also having to surrender (as Wolin's position essentially does) all manner of political control outside of what is feasible within temporary experiences of extra-institutional action.

This chapter will demonstrate that Dewey's democratic theory can adequately account for the temporary uprisings against established political forms emphasized by Wolin. In the essay, "Democracy is Radical," Dewey in fact specifically states that "*the end of democracy is a radical end*," and that democracy "is radical because it requires great change" in established

[34] Sheldon Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy", in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 39.

[35] LW14: 188.

institutions.[36] He further claims in *The Public and its Problems* that, for a populace to exercise control over its government, it often "has to break existing political forms."[37] Hence, Dewey displays similarly radical qualities to Wolin by holding that no institutional set-up can maintain the conditions for political democracy in perpetuity. There is a crucial divergence between the two thinkers, though. The "good" of democracy—as I present it in this exploration of Deweyan democracy—is that it allows individuals, as much as possible, to exercise control over their own development, or, to participate in the governing of their lives. A democratic government, then, would allow all sectors of society as much as possible to have access to governing institutions, and reduce the exclusive control of these institutions by a privileged minority; to the extent that certain elements of society (e.g., the wealthy) are able to exercise a disproportionate influence on the make-up of government, and on the policies produced by government, those left outside that social class are clearly hindered from participating in governing their lives. A government with completely equal access for all individuals across society, though, could not realistically be achieved once and for all, and Wolin undoubtedly takes the more "radical" anti-institutional position in response to this quandary. In fact, he immediately surrenders the possibility of consistent exercise of control by actors other than an exclusive few, due to the inevitable incompleteness of that control. He instead provides a notion of pure, undiluted democracy which wholly rejects established institutions, and which, again, can be only temporary due to the inevitability of new institutionalization following the "democratic moment" of institutional transgression by the excluded. For Dewey, institutionalization is equally assured, and he conceives of the democracy which might exist through political institutions as necessarily imperfect. But, his depiction of political democracy as in a process of continuous

[36] LW11: 298-299.

[37] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chicago: Swallow Press, [1927] 1954), 31.

actualization—which is never completely achieved—allows us to intelligently reconstruct our political institutions in a democratic direction in response to unique threats to self-government. On Dewey's terms, then, the development of new institutions which effectively combat the control of government by wealth can be taken as a democratization of our institutions, though such institutions would not themselves be considered eternally democratic, either. Dewey recognizes that political self-government cannot be fully realized through any particular set of institutions, but he also does not abandon this task because of its unavoidable incompletion.[38]

My analysis of Dewey's notion of political democracy will begin to exhibit his self-described "permanent deposit" of Hegelian influence.[39] I will specifically make use of Hegel's objection to the anti-institutional qualities of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's political thought in order to demonstrate the Hegelian character of Dewey's radical democratic politics, and how that character helps favorably divide Dewey's position from Wolin's. By doing this, I am not implying that Hegel's interpretation of Rousseau is undebatable, but I am suggesting that the Hegelian critique of Rousseauian principles provides valuable guidance for the discussion of Dewey and Wolin. The important Hegelian insight I will draw on in this chapter is Hegel's insistence that individuals cannot fully separate themselves from the institutions in which they have been constituted, but that it is possible for individuals to alter institutions in response to evolving conditions. In his account of the Rousseau-inspired methods of the French revolutionaries in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel argues that the type of complete, unmediated, undivided unity advocated by Rousseau in *The Social Contract* can produce only

[38] This chapter will focus on the distinctly political meaning of Deweyan democracy, though Dewey placed even greater emphasis on the *individual* and *social* meanings of democracy; these latter meanings will be explored in each of the subsequent chapters.

[39] John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", in *Contemporary American Philosophy*, Vol. II, eds. George P. Adams and Wm. Pepperell Montague (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), 21.

destruction. He claims further that if a polity is to produce positive legislation, institutionalization and the division of perfect unity must commence, and that this institutionalization cannot completely reject—though can substantially modify—previous institutions.[40] In essence, Hegel holds that individuals and institutions are inextricably linked, because individuals do possess the capacity for unique action that alters prior institutions, but the new institutions generated by individuals' action will still inevitably bear the influence of the institutions which came before.

I will show that the Hegelian critique of Rousseau helps make the case for Dewey's version of radical democratic politics over Wolin's. Although Wolin is not a disciple of Rousseau, he displays similarity with the Hegelian portrayal of Rousseau by focusing his democratic theory on a democratic experience which is necessarily temporary and doomed to fall to division or institutionalization, but which is still worth having despite its rareness and ephemerality. We can therefore, for the purposes of the analysis in this chapter, classify Wolin as being representative of an anti-institutional tradition in modern democratic thought. This tradition of radical anti-institutionalism would include Rousseau (as he is depicted by Hegel), and also a thinker like Jacques Ranciere, who exhibits anti-institutional qualities by claiming democracy "is not a set of institutions" but "a singular disruption" by excluded individuals of "the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution."[41] Again, this is not to say that Rousseau, Wolin, and Ranciere actually present identical democratic theories, but I do imply that the idea of democracy as rare, ephemeral, and

[40] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, [1807] 1977), 356-360.

[41] Jacques Ranciere, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, translated by Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 11, 22, 28, 99.

thoroughly anti-institutional is present in each of their theories, and that this idea can be taken as indicative of an anti-institutional tradition in radical democratic thought. For the purposes of my analysis, then, I will show that the conception of democracy provided by this tradition must hold political freedom to be available only when outside an established institutional context. In this tradition, established political forms are inexorably undemocratic, while democratic actors are wholly separate from the entrenched institutional set-up and work only to break it apart. This tradition, as a result, commits us to an ontology of institutions which depicts institutions and democratic political action as static, unchanging concepts which—though they may clash—never alter their identities through interaction with the other. By contrast, I argue that we can draw on the Hegelian quality of Dewey's ontology of institutions to take us to a place between these extremes. For Dewey (and Hegel), we are always a reflection of the institutions through which we have been constituted, but we are also capable of new, unique action which can alter our institutions. We thus always bear the imprint of our familiar institutions, but it is also possible for us to (in pragmatist fashion) self-consciously move institutions in a more democratic direction. Hence, we are not left restricting positive democratic political action to instances somehow unadulterated by any institutional foundation.

Furthermore, I will show that Dewey's Hegelian notion of political democracy accounts for the value of the type of temporary uprisings against institutions emphasized by Wolin, while not also forgoing all the time between these "moments" as inevitably bereft of democracy. On Dewey's terms, political self-government is never completely achieved, but is capable of continuous actualization through institutions if we do not get stuck in idolatry of *fixed* institutions. The types of disruptions highlighted by Wolin are often necessary to effect this development, but Dewey allows us to also theorize the extent to which the subsequent

institutionalization and division of legislative responsibility may be democratized.

This chapter will argue for Dewey's radical democratic politics over the thoroughly anti-institutional version represented by thinkers like Wolin. After a brief review of literature which has sought to characterize Dewey's political project, I will explore Wolin's critique of Dewey as well as Wolin's insistence that a proper democratic theory must maintain a subversive stance toward institutions. I will show how Wolin's claim that Dewey's democratic theory evades questions of power is unfounded, and how Dewey in fact accounts for Wolin's concerns over the tendencies of modern institutions to become effectively captured by powerful actors. I will then bring Hegel and Rousseau into the discussion to further illuminate the comparison between Dewey and the anti-institutional democrats, and to demonstrate how Hegel's critique of Rousseauian principles illustrates the divide between Dewey and Wolin. In particular, Wolin forces us to search for moments of pure democratic action which are removed from any institutional set-up, while Dewey provides the more coherent conception of political democracy as never perfectly achieved, but capable of continuous actualization through the reconstruction of institutions that have become exclusionary. With Deweyan radical democracy, institutions and democratic actors are developing entities whose identities are influenced by the other, rather than static entities which somehow interact without evolving. Finally, I will discuss current examples of potential institutional reconstruction which Dewey's works indicate he would endorse. Through this analysis, I hope to also clarify the vague qualities of Dewey's political strategy.

Recent Takes on Dewey's Political Strategy

Dewey's notorious vagueness has been an obstacle in the way of elucidating his political plan of action. William Caspary refers to "Dewey's failure to provide a concrete political

strategy,"[42] while Peter Manicas notes how "He is sometimes unclear, sometimes just where one wants a clear statement most of all."[43] And perhaps in large part due to this vagueness, interpretations of Dewey's political strategy have widely varied. One group of scholars sees Dewey as largely comfortable with existing institutions. Melvin Rogers, who has also taken on the Dewey/Wolin comparison, agrees with Wolin that Dewey does not provide a radical stance toward institutions, though while portraying Dewey in a more favorable light: "Dewey is sensitive to the fact that society's functioning will often require us to be habituated for its stability. This may include, in contrast to Wolin's view, reliance on hierarchical relationships such as we see, for example, in the management of schools and government agencies."[44] He thus presents Dewey as accepting the division of responsibility between "experts, political representatives, and the larger public," and as primarily seeking to prevent powerful experts and politicians from acting unchecked.[45] Similarly, David Fott asserts that Dewey's political theory does not require "the establishment of a new state or even a significant modification of the structure of the old one."[46] For Caspary, Dewey's theory embraces "representative institutions; participation is not identical with direct democracy,"[47] while Michael Eldridge argues that "For Dewey democracy was specific forms, including open deliberation, representative assemblies,

[42] William Caspary, *Dewey on Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 2-3.

[43] Peter Manicas, *Rescuing Dewey: Essays in Pragmatic Naturalism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 187.

[44] Melvin Rogers, *The Undiscovered Dewey: Religion, Morality, and the Ethos of Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 216.

[45] Ibid., 22, 195.

[46] David Fott, *John Dewey: America's Philosopher of Democracy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 41.

[47] Caspary, *Dewey on Democracy*, 15.

and frequent elections."[48] These analyses thus depict Dewey as basically a defender of the rationality of current institutions; as Keith Snider sums up, "Dewey's politics…would simply not allow merely experimental or casual treatment of constitutions or any other state institution."[49]

For other commentators, though, there is in fact a far more radical quality in Dewey's stance toward institutions. Manicas, for instance, labels Dewey as an anarchist, arguing that "Except for explicit anarchist thought—and even then, not all of it—no one saw more clearly than Dewey that for the modern age, the State was not part of the solution, but was, instead, an essential part of the problem."[50] Roger Ames highlights Dewey's skepticism of present-day political routines: "On Dewey's understanding, the familiar institutionalized forms of democracy—a constitution, the office of president, the polling station, the ballot box, and so on—far from being a guarantee of political order, can indeed become a source of just such coercion."[51] And James Stever describes how "Dewey made it quite clear that constitutions were merely historical artifacts to be cast aside when new circumstances, problems, and new political logic dictated."[52] On this view, then, present political institutions are a threat to Deweyan democracy, and must be cast aside once they become irrelevant to changing circumstances. James Campbell also holds to this position, though he sees Dewey as conceiving a two-step process where "experts" first develop ideas for institutional change, and then their ideas are democratically evaluated: "[Experts] can often understand and think and propose alternatives in

[48] Michael Eldridge, *Transforming Experience: John Dewey's Cultural Instrumentalism* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 96.

[49] Keith Snider, "Response to Stever and Garrison", *Administration & Society* 32, no. 4 (2000): 488.

[50] Manicas, *Rescuing Dewey*, 193.

[51] Roger Ames, "Tang Junyi and the Very 'Idea' of Confucian Democracy", in *Democracy as Culture: Deweyan Pragmatism in a Globalizing World*, eds. Sor-Hoon Tan and John Whalen-Bridge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 179.

[52] James Stever, "The Parallel Universes: Pragmatism and Public Administration", *Administration & Society* 32, no. 4 (2000): 457.

ways that the rest of us cannot."[53] Karen Evans similarly refers to "Dewey's portrait of the expert's role in community inquiry—that of providing facts and the context in which collective problem solving can be attempted."[54]

None of these particular analyses, which present Dewey as either more "institutional" or more "radical," are wholly inaccurate. But through my argument defending Dewey's self-proclaimed radical democratic thought against the Wolinian variety, I will aim to clarify how we may reconcile Dewey's institutionalism with his radicalism. Specifically, I will delineate how Dewey conceives a continuous process of democratization which requires that no single political form be deemed sacrosanct in the face of evolving circumstances, but also that no institutional change be taken as a wholesale rejection of previous institutions, and that the democratic aspects of previous institutions are preserved while the undemocratic aspects are rectified.

Dewey and Wolin on Political Institutions

In Wolin's view, genuine rule by the demos cannot be a persistent feature of modern politics. Unlike in ancient Athens (as he portrays it), modern politics for Wolin is defined by institutionalization, or, settled rules for governing practices which limit the more spontaneous action of the masses: "Institutionalization marks the attenuation of democracy: leaders begin to appear; hierarchies develop; experts of one kind or another cluster around the centers of decision; order, procedure, and precedent displace a more spontaneous politics."[55] Wolin argues that the frequent rotation of office and selection of officials by lot in the Athenian city-state limited

[53] James Campbell, *Understanding John Dewey: Nature and Cooperative Intelligence* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 206.

[54] Karen Evans, "Reclaiming John Dewey: Democracy, Inquiry, Pragmatism, and Public Management", *Administration & Society* 32, no. 3 (2000): 322-323.

[55] Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy", 39.

institutionalization,[56] but with such practices being hardly feasible in large-scale modern nation-states, it is inevitable that "distance is quickly established between knowledgeable professionals and ignorant citizens."[57] Rule by an exclusive group of professional politicians, rather than rule by the mass of ordinary citizens, is thus the inescapable, undemocratic norm for modern politics. Wolin further claims that a constitution, ostensibly set up to limit the power of governmental institutions over the people, cannot be assumed to instantiate democracy. He holds that constitutions set strict limits on the amount of democracy permitted, using rules which restrict the "voice of the people" to be heard only during periodic elections held every few years.[58] Far from establishing democracy, a constitution for Wolin rigidly confines the demos to narrow channels for the exercise of power, channels which are not significant enough to challenge the entrenched institutional set-up: "Constitutionalism and electoral democracy became complementary. Together they signified the destruction of the demos as actor, its marginalization as voter."[59] For Wolin, therefore, we can never deem *democratic* any situation where voting is the main governing responsibility of the majority of citizens.

If we are to find examples of genuine democracy, Wolin contends we must look for extra-institutional action on the part of the demos, action which takes place outside the limits set on the people by the constitution. He proposes "accepting the familiar charges that democracy is inherently unstable, inclined toward anarchy, and identified with revolution and using these traits as the basis for a different, *a*constitutional conception of democracy."[60] Although

[56] Wolin, "Norm and Form", 43.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy", 34.

[59] Sheldon Wolin, "Democracy: Electoral and Athenian", *PS: Political Science and Politics* 26, no. 3 (1993): 476.

[60] Wolin, "Norm and Form", 37.

institutionalization is the norm in modern politics, democracy may still seep through in "moments," certain instances where entrenched hierarchies and old political forms are brought down, and where those typically marginalized or excluded from politics temporarily gain access to political power.[61] Institutionalization inevitably follows the democratic moment, but that institutionalization is still not democratic; there was only democracy during the moment when entrenched political forms were brought down: "Democracy in the late modern world cannot be a complete political system…Democracy needs to be reconceived as something other than a form of government…doomed to succeed only temporarily…"[62] On Wolin's terms, the Athenian city-state did in fact achieve democratic governance where barriers to participation had been effectively overcome and there was "the practice of collective action on a continuing basis."[63] In large-scale modern nation-states, though, new barriers to participation unavoidably arise, and democracy is only achieved in the moment of transgressing such a barrier.

Wolin presents Dewey's democratic theory, by contrast, as a rather feeble attempt at conceiving self-government. He complains that, for Dewey, democracy "is communicated experience; or democracy consists of mutual interests; or democracy is the process of continuous adjustments to change. Had Dewey foreseen the future, his democracy might have found fulfillment in the Internet's paradox of intimate communication without face-to-face contact."[64] He further charges that "Dewey's most crucial concepts—experimentation, method, and culture—were ways of evading questions about power. His society appears fixated on the findings of method, the conduct of experiments, and the communication of results. Questions of

[61] Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy", 37-38.

[62] Wolin, "Norm and Form", 54-55.

[63] Sheldon Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice", in *Demokratia: A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern*, eds. Josiah Ober and Charles Hedrick (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 85.

[64] Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 517.

how problems become identified, who controls the communication of results, and who evaluates the consequences were all left indeterminate."[65] Wolin's account of the concepts (experimentation, continuous adjustment to change, etc.) which are central to Dewey's democratic theory is not inaccurate; however, his evaluation of these concepts is superficial and unfair, and this leads him to miss the political significance of Deweyan democracy.

Dewey's Wariness toward Institutions

Like Wolin, Dewey in fact emphasizes how modern institutions have tended to reflect iniquitous power relations, and how movements to expand liberty for excluded segments of society have typically fundamentally challenged those institutions. He claims "the great movements for human liberation have always been movements to change institutions and not to preserve them intact."[66] In *The Public and its Problems*, he also remarks that "Almost as soon as [the state's] form is stabilized, it needs to be re-made," and that "since conditions of action and of inquiry and of knowledge are always changing, the experiment must always be retried; the State must always be rediscovered."[67] Wolin's skepticism of an established set of "democratic" state institutions is thus mirrored in Dewey. Wolin should seemingly appreciate Dewey's approach, for it indeed displays that Wolinian doubt that political democracy can be presumed to exist through a set of fixed institutions.

Furthermore, Dewey objects to rigid adherence to a constitutional founding document. In *Freedom and Culture* he argues we must "get rid of the ideas that lead us to believe that democratic conditions automatically maintain themselves, or that they can be identified with fulfillment of prescriptions laid down in a constitution," and he ridicules the notion "that the

[65] Ibid.

[66] LW11: 362.

[67] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 31-32, 34.

observance of formulae that have become ritualistic are effective safeguards of our democratic heritage."[68] His reasoning here is that uncritical obedience to long-established constitutional forms can distract us from the way changing conditions have rendered those forms ineffective at generating democratic control of governance. As such, the rights, liberties, and electoral processes established in the U.S. Constitution cannot be considered eternal markers of democratic governance, because new circumstances call for new means to address unique threats to political self-government. Dewey laments that "It has even been regarded as unpatriotic to say or teach anything that would give pupils the idea that our Constitution and the system under which we live are not so perfect that any serious problems remain," and argues that students should be encouraged to question whether "a system adopted in the era of the stage-coach and candle light" is "perfectly adapted to the era of the railway, electricity, and airplane."[69] Without such critical thought, schools end up producing "a truly religious idealization of, and reverence for, established institutions."[70] As with Wolin, therefore, Dewey does not leave us merely abiding by customary political forms to achieve democratic governance.

Most importantly, Wolin's claim that Dewey's focus on concepts such as "experimentation" and "continuous adjustment to change" serves to evade questions of power is simply incorrect. For instance, Dewey stresses in many different works the importance of recognizing and fighting against the exclusive control of political institutions by powerful economic interests. He asks, "Why have power and rule passed from the people to a few? Everybody knows who the few are, and the class-status of the few answers the question…They are an oligarchy of wealth. They rule over us because they control banks, credit, the land, and

[68] John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), 34-35.

[69] LW9: 161.

[70] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 169-170.

big organized means of production…"[71] He thus perceives how "Economic privilege has taken possession of government,"[72] as well as the need for "a radical change in the forces which control our government—a change from reactionary standpattism in support of big business to support of the common people who are suffering."[73] This demand for radical change in fact drove Dewey's own efforts to form a new leftist political party in the United States, for the Democrats and Republicans are both too deeply entwined with dominant pecuniary interests: "The existing parties are the servants of those economic interests which use the government and which debauch governmental agencies to do their will at the expense of society."[74] The political aim of this new party, Dewey explains, was to progressively wrest control of government away from dominant exclusive interests, and to make government more genuinely accountable to the public as a whole: "The dominant issue is whether the people of the United States are to control our government, federal, state, and municipal, and to use it in behalf of the peace and welfare of society or whether control is to go on passing into the hands of small powerful economic groups who use all the machinery of administration and legislation to serve their own ends."[75] Dewey's "experimentation" and "continuous adjustment to change," which Wolin objects to, in fact highlight the need for continuous critical evaluation of political institutions, and rectification of their undemocratic qualities in response to changing obstacles to political self-government.

Dewey's Distinction from Wolin

This last point leads to a significant point of divergence between Dewey and Wolin.

[71] LW9: 76.

[72] LW6: 174.

[73] LW6: 253.

[74] LW6: 151.

[75] LW6: 149. Dewey's efforts at forming this new party will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

They agree that participation, self-government, exercise of control by the demos, etc. are not made actual simply through a set of institutions, but while Wolin searches for temporary experiences of pure democracy which are removed from modern institutionalization, Dewey advocates continuous, critical evaluation of institutions so that their undemocratic qualities can be identified and progressively remedied: "Extensive critical examination of our own practices provides the only way in which the adequacy of our claim to be genuinely democratic may be tested in the concrete. It is also the only way in which measures for correction of defects can be discovered and put into effect."[76] Both thinkers understand that modern politics requires institutional procedures of governance, and for Dewey, changing conditions continuously generate new undemocratic qualities in those institutions, which in turn necessitates the (never completely achieved) process of democratizing institutions. For Wolin, the inevitable incompleteness of democratic control of institutions renders that control necessarily illusory, and thus only temporary anti-institutional instances are genuinely "democratic." He claims "democracy is wayward, inchoate, unable to rule yet unwilling to be ruled."[77] I will argue, though, that if this search for undiluted democratic moments leaves democracy "unable to rule," then we are left with little effective notion of what Wolin's momentary transgressions aim for, so that we could have something to live with after the moment is over (assuming we even get to experience such a moment). Democracy—as I present it—allows individuals to exercise the greatest possible control over their lives; and if the purity of one's conception of democracy renders democratic *control* essentially nonexistent, then that conception is surely incomplete.

In Dewey's view, our constantly changing circumstances require that we keep a critical eye on political institutions in case institutions which once represented democratic growth

[76] LW16: 405.

[77] Wolin, "Norm and Form", 50.

become inadequate for allowing individuals to impact the policies which impact them. In general, democracy for Dewey entails "a responsible share on the part of each person, in proportion to capacity, in shaping the aims and policies of the social groups to which he belongs."[78] In its distinctly "political phase," then, democracy means that "government exists to serve its community, and that this purpose cannot be achieved unless the community itself shares in selecting its governors and determining their policies…"[79] Therefore, institutions must be reconstructed when they are shown to exclude perspectives and to hinder the capacity of certain individuals to become self-governing; and, this reconstruction aims at allowing individuals to impact the policies of the associations to which they belong, whereas Wolin confines democracy to "Significant political changes [that] are the product of transgressive actions. They disturb the power relations, interests, expectations, and taboos that typically cluster around all laws and institutions."[80] Again, for Wolin, any modern institutional set-up must be deemed undemocratic.

Dewey asserts that "The political and governmental phase of democracy is a means…for realizing ends that lie in the wide domain of human relationships and the development of human personality."[81] Political institutions are means which produce effects in people's lives, and when institutional processes are exclusive and undemocratic, the effects produced by those institutions are likely also to be undemocratic. He explains that "Legislation…can help unload the burdens that politicians subservient to great wealth have piled on the backs of the helpless consumer; it can assist the return of employment by taking away some of the favors that have been given to

[78] John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, enl. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, [1948] 1957), 209.

[79] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 146.

[80] Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice", 79.

[81] LW11: 217.

the privileged class."[82] Writing during the Great Depression, though, he points out "Why does not President Hoover face the real issue…? Is it because measures of relief would impose heavier surtaxes on the favored few and lessen contributions to campaign funds?"[83] Exclusive control of institutions by the wealthy allows for "policies that put the burden of debt and increased cost of living upon those least able to stand it, while refusing to use power to tax higher incomes and estates…"[84] But to the extent that governmental institutions are composed of voices beyond those of the wealthy, there is increasing possibility that we may "force the wealthy owners of the nation to surrender their control over the lives and destinies of the overwhelming majority of the American people…"[85] Hence, when wealthy legislators control the discussion of welfare policy, white legislators control the discussion of combating school segregation, or male legislators control the discussion of women's health, institutional changes which address these exclusive qualities can represent a democratic advance, because individuals affected by certain policies may exercise power over the policymaking process. If only extra-institutional transgression is democratic, though, such institutional reconstruction cannot provide more than a delusive advance in the opportunities for excluded individuals to govern themselves.

The primary reason that a Deweyan, in response to Wolin, would demand some measure of institutional stability is that the advancements sought during transgressions of institutional forms need to be installed if previously excluded individuals are to take advantage of them and influence the effects produced by government. Prior to the passage of the 19th amendment, Dewey argues that "woman's political enfranchisement is necessary…to complete the

[82] LW6: 345.

[83] LW6: 345.

[84] LW9: 278.

[85] LW6: 386.

democratic movement," and, on the notion of a property qualification for voting, he says "The propertied classes will protect themselves pretty well under any conditions…Hence it is the masses—the poor—that most need the protection of the ballot."[86] Democracy's association with "rule by the poor" goes back to Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, etc.; but it is Dewey who more effectively updates this Athenian notion of the poor *ruling* and exercising policymaking power with his focus on progressively democratizing institutions—Wolin's idealization of extra-institutional democratic moments, again, leaves typically excluded individuals "unable to rule." For Dewey, achieving suffrage for women and the poor are meaningful democratic advances, and the institutionalization of this right to vote in a constitution should not be excluded from democratic classification. At the same time, Dewey's principles still have us maintain a critical eye on voting processes and their undemocratic aspects. He mocks "the blessed opportunity to vote for a ticket of men mostly unknown to [citizens], and which is made up for them by an under-cover machine in a caucus whose operations constitute a kind of political predestination."[87] He also contends, "There is no sanctity in universal suffrage, frequent elections, majority rule, congressional and cabinet government…[their] purpose was rather that of meeting existing needs which had become too intense to be ignored…"[88] We must not become complacent, then, when universal suffrage is achieved, but Dewey still permits us to preserve and make use of the advancements in suffrage, which Wolin cannot do.

Thus, both Dewey and Wolin value fundamental challenges to entrenched political forms. But on Dewey's principles, when such a challenge leaves the outcomes of political processes less

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[86] MW6: 153.

[87] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 119-120. Dewey is writing prior to 1970s reforms to the presidential nomination process, though the notion that nominations are now substantially more democratic is highly questionable at best.

[88] Ibid., 144-145.

likely to be influenced exclusively by a particular group, then greater democratic control of governance has been achieved. For Wolin, modern institutions are inevitably undemocratic, and so democracy can only exist outside of institutions. In the rest of this chapter, I will be depicting Wolin's position as representative of an anti-institutional strand in modern democratic thought; this strand would include a thinker like Ranciere, who displays a Wolinian view of established institutional order by claiming that democracy is "what comes and interrupts the smooth working of this order," and that, while democratic actors "are in no way oblivious to the existence of elected assemblies, institutional guarantees of freedom of speech and expression, state control mechanisms…they do not identify with them."[89] I will also further argue, in the rest of this chapter, in favor of Dewey's notion of progressive political democratization over the position of this anti-institutional tradition, primarily by showing that Dewey's position allows us to better recognize the interrelation of individuals and institutions, and to conceive of how these two entities may each develop through the influence of the other. Dewey's notion of progressive democratization through institutional reconstruction is hardly guaranteed to transpire, for he concedes that the effort at democratization "bristles with unknowns."[90] But despite the uncertainty of achievement and the inescapable imperfection of democracy, the aim of democratizing institutions permits us to repudiate political forms when necessary, without also having to restrict democracy to momentary actions by individuals who are somehow fully removed from any established institutional context.

Dewey's Hegelian Radicalism vs. Anti-Institutional Radicalism

Dewey's relationship to Hegel has been the subject of considerable scholarly debate,

[89] Ranciere, *Disagreement*, 99-101.

[90] LW9: 67.

though the intricacies of that debate would take us too far afield here.[91] In addition to his affirmation of the "permanent deposit" left by Hegel on his thinking, Dewey declares that if he could be "a devotee of any system," it would be Hegel's because he finds "greater richness and variety of insight in Hegel than in any other single systematic philosopher…"[92] And as Shane Ralston has recently pointed out, "While Dewey's Hegel-influenced pragmatism dispenses with the *Absolute*, it retains a concern for how ideas and ideals influence the growth and reconstruction of institutions."[93] To further develop my exploration of Deweyan political democracy, and my argument elevating Dewey's radical democracy over that of the anti-institutional thinkers, I will emphasize the particularly Hegelian qualities of Dewey's aim of democratizing institutions. It may seem odd to turn to Hegel in this regard, for Hegel does endorse an undemocratically-organized institutional structure of governance in *The Philosophy of Right*. However, the classification of Hegel as an anti-democratic thinker is certainly not unchallenged,[94] and I will further show in Chapter 3 how Hegel's thought is quite compatible with democratic principles. In this chapter, I will specifically demonstrate how Hegel's objection to a Rousseauian focus on an experience of unmediated, undivided unity helps expose the incongruous institutional ontology implicit in Wolin's thought, an ontology which characterizes institutions and democratic political action as static concepts which clash without

[91] I will discuss the details of this debate in great detail in Chapter 3.

[92] Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", 21. Dewey does then go on to say he holds Plato in at least the same esteem as Hegel; his relationship to Plato will be explored in Chapter 2.

[93] Shane Ralston, "Can Pragmatists be Institutionalists? John Dewey Joins the Non-ideal/Ideal Theory Debate", *Human Studies* 33, no. 1 (2010): 76.

[94] Jeffrey Church effectively argues that Hegel is in fact a strong supporter of democracy in "economic associations," and that he can support democracy in "political association" as long as it recognizes individuals as members of social groups, as opposed to Rousseau's political thought which holds that individuals must come to the political assembly free of any prior social interest and unaffected by any prior social discussion; see Jeffrey Church, "G.W.F. Hegel on Self-Determination and Democratic Theory", *American Journal of Political Science* 56, no. 4 (2012): 1021-1039.

evolving—i.e., institutions are inescapably undemocratic, while democratic actors are wholly separate from, and engage in positive political enterprises which completely reject, established institutions. I will argue that Dewey's Hegelian notion of political democracy provides a more coherent conception of the relationship between institutions and democratic actors.

In Hegelian fashion, Dewey's conception of political democracy cannot be established in its final form once and for all. Rather, the conception only attains "actuality" through overcoming the inevitable negations it endures due to changing conditions. Dewey describes how democracy "is an ideal in the only intelligible sense of an ideal: namely, the tendency and movement of some thing which exists carried to its final limit, viewed as completed, perfected. Since things do not attain such fulfillment but are in actuality distracted and interfered with, democracy in this sense is not a fact and never will be."[95] Therefore, we may establish what democracy signifies as a bare abstract notion (self-government, freedom from arbitrary external direction, etc.), but what that notion entails in practice must evolve to meet new circumstances, in order to maintain relevancy in the face of unique threats to self-government and freedom. When past instantiations of political democracy thus meet novel conditions, our notion of political democracy is negated and requires further development to *negate the negation*, to overcome the "divisions, between attitudes emotionally and congenially attuned to the past and habits that are forced into existence because of the necessity of dealing with present conditions…"[96] For instance, Dewey holds that, in response to dynastic control of governance in past centuries, the emergence of free elections, formal rights and liberties, etc., represented a genuine democratic advance; but, as governing institutions have increasingly fallen under the disproportionate influence of powerful economic interests, a free election by itself—which does

[95] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 148.

[96] Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 49.

not account for the effect of wealth—cannot be considered democratic.[97]

This process of reconstructing institutions when they devolve in an undemocratic direction is no doubt formidable and bound to suffer delays and regressions.[98] But without this process, Dewey fears we may be left only with the illusion of democratic freedom, while in fact our institutions have become exclusive and undemocratic: "freedom is an eternal goal and has to be forever struggled for and won anew. It does not automatically perpetuate itself and, unless it is continually rewon in new effort against new foes, it is lost."[99] Adequately reconstructing political democracy in the face of unforeseen changing circumstances thus requires, what Hegel calls, "the strenuous effort of the Notion."[100] Hegel's "Notion" is the immediate abstract principle which can only attain actuality by being worked out, by being continuously filled with content from the ongoing process of negating the negations intrinsic to the principle's growth. Dewey, similarly, holds that "ideals take shape and gain a content as they operate in remaking conditions."[101] Dewey's progressive democratization mirrors Hegel's dialectical process, for Deweyan democratic growth is unending and demands overcoming the undemocratic aspects which are "immanent" in democracy's own development—i.e., the inevitable negation of democracy can be a stimulus to the further growth of democracy. Hence, while past forms of political democracy can be negated by changing circumstances, the intelligent reconstruction of those forms is a way of further actualizing political democracy by negating that negation.

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[97] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 77, 101.

[98] Ibid., 129.

[99] LW11: 247.

[100] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 35.

[101] John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (New York: Capricorn Books, [1930] 1962), 169.

Wolin is not himself an advocate of Rousseau's system,[102] but I will present Wolin here as exhibiting considerable compatibility with the anti-institutional qualities of Rousseau that are highlighted by Hegel. In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau provides his requirements for experiencing genuine freedom despite the manifold threats to freedom within modern society. Because the "natural liberty" of the state of nature has long been lost, he points us toward "moral freedom," which involves "obedience to a law one prescribes to oneself…"[103] To experience moral freedom, we must not then satisfy ourselves with representative legislative institutions, for freedom demands taking part in making the laws we live by.[104] All citizens must participate in the assembly, because that participation allows us to discover the "general will"—and while the general will does not require unanimity, it exists only because individuals do share meaningful common ground, and when individuals act as citizens (rather than as private individuals), Rousseau argues they will discover that common ground and make it the basis of law.[105]

This focus on social unity leads Rousseau to decry the existence of factions, or "sectional associations," to claim that greater harmony and unanimity in the assembly signifies moral freedom (while long debates and dissensions exhibit the decline of such freedom), and to argue that all institutions that "[destroy] social unity…are worthless."[106] He also concedes, though, that even if this experience of moral freedom through participation in the general will is attained, it is

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[102] Sheldon Wolin, "Democracy, Difference, and Re-Cognition", *Political Theory* 21, no. 3 (1993): 477-478. He does say Rousseau made "the most important modern attempt" at establishing an "integral notion of membership" and putting it "in the service of equality and democratization." But he complains that "A Rousseauist conception of incorporation not only refuses to recognize my differences, it suppresses them from my new identity, as though the notion of commonality, which citizenship claims to embody, can exist only if differences do not."

[103] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, translated and introduced by Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin Classics, [1762] 1968), 65.

[104] Ibid., 141-143.

[105] Ibid., 69.

[106] Ibid., 73, 151, 181.

inevitably temporary, for such a well-established state will degenerate without "a durability that does not belong to human things."[107] Specifically, he laments that the necessary division of responsibility in executing laws—i.e., the necessary establishment of executive institutions—inevitably leads the holders of such power to usurp the legislative power of all the citizens, and "This is the inherent and inescapable defect which, from the birth of the political body, tends relentlessly to destroy it…"[108] But despite the immense difficulty of achieving moral freedom, the inevitable dissolution of the undivided unity required by that freedom, and the fact that Rousseau's conditions for freedom are such that this experience could likely happen only once in an individual's lifetime, the experience is still worth having at least once in Rousseau's view, rather than being enslaved our whole lives by representative legislative institutions (and believing mistakenly that we are free).

This emphasis on a temporary experience of freedom, separate from the dominant political institutions of our time, coheres well with Wolin's conception of momentary democracy. Wolin in fact describes something akin to Rousseau's general will when he declares that "a free society composed of diversities can nonetheless enjoy moments of commonality when, through public deliberations, collective power is used to promote or protect the well-being of the collectivity."[109] He further gives a rather Rousseauian account of how representative institutions cannot be truly democratized, and how democratic action consists solely in temporary transgressions of institutional enslavement: "Democratic action…might be defined as collective action that initially gathers its power from outside the system…The demos becomes political, not simply when it seeks to make a system of governance more responsive to its needs,

[107] Ibid., 134.

[108] Ibid., 131.

[109] Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy", 31.

but when it attempts to shape the political system in order to enable itself to emerge, to make possible a new actor, collective in nature."[110] Wolin's depiction of democratic action as rare, temporary, and thoroughly anti-institutional is thus consonant with the elements of Rousseau I have described, for Wolin is uninterested in the goal of making current representative institutions more responsive to the public, and instead associates democracy with momentary transgressions of those established institutions' power.

I have previously identified Ranciere as another thinker who could be classified within this anti-institutional radical democratic tradition, and while he also does not endorse Rousseau's system specifically,[111] his objection to regimes of "consensus"—which give off the appearance of including all parts of society when many are effectively excluded from making their voice heard—resembles the Rousseauian charge that representative institutions indubitably make people believe they are free when they are not.[112] Ranciere also claims representation is "an oligarchic form" which allows a small minority to rule to the exclusion of others, and that, therefore, "Democracy can never be identified with a juridico-political form…the power of the people is always below and beyond these forms."[113] Then, referencing the activities of "plebeians," "nineteenth-century workers," and "demonstrators and those manning the barricades," he contends that "The people through which democracy occurs is a unity that…superimposes the effectiveness of a part of those who have no part…"[114] And like Wolin,

[110] Ibid., 34; Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice", 64.

[111] He specifically objects to any notion of a founding "social contract"; see *Disagreement,* 77-78; and "Democracy, Republic, Representation", *Constellations* 13, no. 3 (2006): 297.

[112] Jacques Ranciere, "Ten Theses on Politics", *Theory & Event* 5, no. 3 (2001): para. 32.

[113] Ranciere, "Democracy, Republic, Representation", 298-299.

[114] Ranciere, *Disagreement,* 30, 99.

he holds that such unified, democratic activity "is rare."[115]

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel highlights the anti-institutional elements of Rousseau's thought, and objects to Rousseau's depiction of temporary, anti-institutional unity as the pinnacle of modern freedom. Writing after the French Revolution, and after witnessing the Rousseau-inspired methods of the revolutionaries, Hegel presents this moment of "absolute freedom" as a necessary stage in human development—it is the stage where humanity sees the world as "its own will, and this is a general will…this will is not the empty thought of will which consists in silent assent, or assent by a representative, but a real general will, the will of all *individuals* as such."[116] The "undivided Substance of absolute freedom"[117] conceives the world as its own possession and no longer accepts any institutional structure as handed down by a divinity, and for Hegel, this is a vital stage in humanity's development toward making the world truly its own, as humans will no longer believe they must uncritically adhere to their current institutions. However, Hegel claims this moment of undivided, unmediated unity by itself "can produce neither a positive work nor a deed; there is left for it only *negative* action; it is merely the *fury* of destruction."[118] His argument is that if a polity is to produce positive legislation, groups must be allowed to form and divisions must be allowed to manifest themselves as a result of the irreducible diversity of individuals; positive action is then generated through the interaction of opposing social elements, an interaction which unifies those elements while preserving their differences within that unity.[119] With an unmediated unity like Rousseau's,

[115] Ibid., 139.

[116] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 356-357.

[117] Ibid., 357.

[118] Ibid., 359.

[119] Ibid., 358.

though, where there is (as with the French Revolution) an attempt at complete unified upheaval against established institutions, Hegel contends only negation of institutions can take place, without something new being regenerated out of the negation. To enact positive legislation, governmental institutions must be established which permit certain "specific wills" or "victorious factions" to legislate one particular way rather than another.[120] And while Hegel does see it within human power to develop uniquely new institutions, it is unreasonable in his view to expect that development to wholly reject the institutions which came before. On Hegel's terms, we can only build on what the prior movement of human development—or, what Hegel calls the prior work of Spirit—has already accomplished.

The Rousseauian principle to which Hegel primarily objects here is the idea that modern political freedom can and must be achieved in a manner completely removed from established institutions. Rousseau's depiction of freedom, for instance, demands that the process of self-legislating begin with a Lawgiver who lays down the appropriate framework of law from which citizens can then build. This Lawgiver is necessary because men will not have the social spirit necessary to create law until they have already lived under law.[121] But despite Rousseau's promise to "[take] men as they are,"[122] apparently meaning he will not pretend there are still any "natural" individuals, the requirement of a Lawgiver who establishes a brand new framework of law essentially presupposes a group of people who have not already been constituted through a set of laws and institutions. This principle in fact leads Rousseau to cast aside any nation where "customs are established," and to label Corsica alone the "one country in Europe which is fit to

[120] Ibid., 360.

[121] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 84-87.

[122] Ibid., 49.

receive laws."[123]

We have seen similar anti-institutional viewpoints in Wolin and Ranciere. For Ranciere, those who have no part in established institutions, such as plebeians or nineteenth-century workers, enact democracy from their place outside this established order by intruding on the territory of those who do have a part; for Wolin, "Individuals who concert their power for low-income housing, worker ownership of factories, better schools, better health care, safer water, controls over toxic waste disposals, and a thousand other common concerns of ordinary lives are experiencing a democratic moment."[124] Such democratic action gathers itself from outside institutions, and institutions (regardless of the outcome of democratic moments) remain eternally undemocratic. Dewey's position, though, which is informed by Hegelian insights, highlights how presenting these moments as truly "extra-institutional" transgression is dubious to begin with, for these individuals are in all likelihood responding to what institutions have done, and are driven by belief that these institutions should produce different effects and serve different aims. These individuals seek to move institutions toward their interests rather than others', and perhaps to alter those institutions' procedures so as to reform their exclusivity. This "extra-institutional" action, then, remains a reflection of the institutions with which these individuals are familiar.

Dewey's Hegelian Radicalism and Institutionalism

Dewey's Hegelian approach to political democracy accounts for the varying institutional contexts in which different peoples are constituted, and seeks the greatest possible democratic progress given those contexts. He stresses that "criticisms and plans of betterment are mere indulgences unless they are based upon taking existing conditions into account. But…these conditions are not fixed and final…they are both means of change and something to be changed

[123] Ibid., 88, 96.

[124] Wolin, "Norm and Form", 58.

by intelligently directed action."[125] Drawing on his pragmatist principles, Dewey does not simply dismiss (in Rousseauian fashion) settings where "customs are established," but instead shows how we may preserve what we have learned through observing how current political institutions have worked in practice, even as we seek to intelligently alter those institutions as necessary for achieving yet greater political self-government. He explains, "We are always dependent upon the experience that has accumulated in the past and yet there are always new forces coming in, new needs arising…We are always possessed by habits and customs, and this fact signifies that we are always influenced by the inertia and the momentum of forces temporally outgrown but nevertheless still present with us…But change is also with us and demands the constant remaking of old habits and old ways of thinking…"[126] With the French Revolution, for example, Wolin's principles would have us see the revolution as a democratic moment, but once the total unity was divided and institutions were established, the democracy was gone. For Dewey, the recognition (resulting from the revolution) that institutions are man-made rather than god-made represents an advance in democratic development, while the fact that the new French institutions were not a wholesale rejection of previous institutions demonstrates that we should not expect the impossible from a revolution.

Furthermore, in addition to rejecting the assumption that individuals can wholly separate themselves from their institutions, Dewey also avoids supposing that institutions are wholly unalterable by unique individual action. Dewey calls for action against institutions that have been shown to be undemocratic in their procedures and effects, while also noting that, if those previously excluded are to gain greater control over positive political action (rather than simply negating what came before), then that control requires institutions which have become further

[125] John Dewey and James Tufts, *Ethics*, rev. ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932), 382.

[126] John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935), 49.

democratized. The protests of the civil rights movement, for example, would certainly be necessary for Dewey, but the further advancement of political democracy requires altered institutions which reflect the overcoming of racial exclusion. Put in terms of Dewey's pragmatist philosophy, our "past most successful achievements" in achieving democratic governance, such as suffrage, must be intelligently reconstructed and "put in a form so as best to help sustain and promote" further democratization.[127] With Dewey's ontology of institutions, therefore, there is not simply a clash between institutions and radical democratic action which leaves both terms entirely unaltered. Rather, democratic actors are never wholly removed from familiar institutions, and the institutions themselves may take on a further democratic character from the influence of individuals like the civil rights protestors.

With the more current example of the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Wolinian "moment" emerges during the protests opposing exclusive control of political institutions by powerful economic interests. But when it comes to a positive plan of action, surely divided views must be expected, and thus the emergence of different groups with divergent ideas about how to serve the public good must also be anticipated. An institutional set-up is then required to provide order to the interaction of these contradictory views, and to allow for one group's plan to win out over others. The division of legislative control entailed by institutionalization represents the end of the democratic moment for Wolin, and the dissolution of undivided unity for Rousseau. On a Deweyan view, though, an institutional set-up which remedies the segregated quality of previous institutions, and allows for typically excluded voices to exercise power, signifies movement in the direction of political democracy. In Hegelian language, for Dewey the dissolution of undivided, unmediated unity is inevitable (as it is for Rousseau, Wolin, and Ranciere), but *not* to be regretted, for the fuller and freer interaction of divided social elements—

[127] MW4: 179.

within a more "rational" set of institutions—allows for new positive action that is mediated by diverse interests (i.e., action that bears the influence of diverse interests) which previously were kept separate. Hence, Dewey's Hegelian conception of an unending process of democratizing political institutions accounts for radical uprisings against political forms, and for the manner in which institutions may be democratized from the influence of those uprisings. Notions of pure democratic moments and undivided unity, by contrast, leave institutions and democratic political action as clashing terms which cannot evolve through the interaction.

Dewey establishes that "Politically, democracy means a form of government which does not esteem the well-being of one individual or class above another."[128] If we are to approach the democratic aim of allowing all individuals, as much as possible, to exercise control over their lives, then our political institutions cannot systematically work to benefit certain elements of society at the expense of others. Dewey does not, however, lay out exactly what form the perfect political democracy must take. He sets up a broad "notion" of a politics without exclusion, but that notion itself must evolve as it is filled with content from the ongoing process of bringing it into existence. As Hegel would say, we can set up a desired aim, but proper comprehension of that aim comes through the process of its actualization, the process of *negating the negations* which that aim endures in the midst of changing circumstances. I have shown how Dewey's Hegelian institutional ontology allows us to conceptualize how political institutions and the transgressions incited by those excluded from political power influence one another, so that we are not left searching for democratic action which is somehow non-institutional, or discarding any type of democratic governance wherever institutions are present. I will now explore how a Deweyan might go about negating the negations of our current political institutions.

Deweyan Institutional Reconstruction

[128] MW10: 137.

We cannot categorically delineate what Dewey's process of political democratization would look like, for he eschews any plan of action that could supposedly be adhered to at all times and places.[129] In fact, the defining characteristic of his desired institutional set-up is the way it must always be subject to change; he laments that "The creation of adequately flexible and responsive political and legal machinery has so far been beyond the wit of man," and that "The belief in political fixity, of the sanctity of some form of state consecrated by the efforts of our fathers and hallowed by tradition, is one of the stumbling-blocks in the way of orderly and directed change."[130] For instance, as he emphasizes the undemocratic consequences of clinging uncritically to the institutions established in a constitution, Dewey argues that the U.S. Constitution should be allowed to undergo meaningful change more freely than is permitted under the extremely difficult amendment process (which requires passage by 2/3 of both houses of Congress and 3/4 of the state legislatures). In his commentary on Thomas Jefferson, Dewey praises Jefferson's "belief in the necessity of periodic revisions of the constitution, one to take place every twenty years, and his belief that the process of ordinary amendment had been made too difficult…and that institutions must change with change of circumstances…Jefferson saw that periodic overhauling of the fundamental law was the alternative to change effected only by violence…"[131] As an example, with a majority of Americans growing to accept gay marriage, Dewey would evidently seek to allow a constitutional amendment striking down state laws banning marriage equality[132] to actually be feasible, since the current strict amendment process makes it presently unfeasible.

[129] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 146-147.

[130] Ibid., 31, 34.

[131] LW14: 215-216.

[132] Dewey's skepticism of adherence to centuries-old ideas of marriage is expressed in LW5: 271. I will further note the Deweyan significance of the growing social acceptance of gay marriage in Chapter 2.

We have seen Dewey maintain that any alteration in a nation's institutions cannot realistically represent a wholesale rejection of those institutions. With respect to China in the early 20th century, he writes that "China needs a system of national finance, of national taxation and revenues. But the effort to institute such a system…has to meet deeply entrenched local customs…the development must be a transforming growth from within, rather than either an external superimposition or a borrowing from foreign sources."[133] It would be problematic, therefore, for a nation to directly intervene in another nation's affairs, and impose institutions on that latter nation which are completely foreign to its own customs. Further, showing sensitivity to his American institutional context, Dewey does not seek to simply negate institutions such as the presidency and the Senate, and impose new bodies foreign to Americans' experience, but to reconstruct those American institutions in a democratic direction. With the presidency, he expresses support for moving presidential elections away from the electoral college (to allow voters who do not live in battleground states to have greater voice in those elections); with the Senate, he endorses popular election of senators (instituted by the 17th amendment), which in fact moved an institution originally intended to be undemocratic in a democratic direction.[134]

We have also seen Dewey note the threat to democracy posed by the effective control of political institutions by powerful economic interests. When wealthy donors can essentially dictate election and policy outcomes with their fortunes, Dewey insists we must "liberate men, women, and children from the enslavement of governmental agencies to selfish and predatory economic interests."[135] The U.S. Constitution does not either condone or forbid the use of wealth to drastically affect institutional procedures and outcomes, but it has become impossible—in

[133] MW11: 213.

[134] LW6: 233.

[135] LW6: 152.

Dewey's time and in ours—to avoid perceiving the oligarchic nature of American political processes, and Dewey thus demands "'radical' perception of the necessity of thoroughgoing changes in the set-up of institutions and corresponding activity to bring the changes to pass."[136] In other words, for Dewey, the institutions of popular elections and universal suffrage have been "negated" by changing circumstances—i.e., by the increasing effect of wealth on governance—and we must seek to negate this negation by reconstructing those institutions in a way that can account for the effect of wealth (e.g., through campaign finance laws). The oligarchical control of current institutions in fact leads Dewey to one of his few specific suggestions for an institutional design: "A coordinating and directive council in which captains of industry and finance would meet with representatives of labor and public officials to plan the regulation of industrial activity…"[137] An institution of this kind would allow workers a typically unavailable opportunity to exercise greater control over policies which impact their lives, thus representing an advance in democratic development. Dewey hoped his new political party in particular could successfully combat the problem of government controlled by wealth, and he made it clear that this party cannot address the problem with old solutions alone (e.g., extension of voting rights), but rather by seeking unique institutional changes that can help overcome the "enslavement of governmental agencies to selfish and predatory economic interests," as well as by whipping up support for a distribution of wealth which would uproot the foundation of that enslavement.[138]

Somewhat similarly to Rousseau, Dewey does emphasize how possibilities for participation in governance are greatest at the local level. He praises Jefferson for "the

[136] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, 62.

[137] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 118.

[138] LW6: 181. This more equitable distribution of wealth is an essential matter in the *social* aspect of Deweyan democracy; this will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

importance he attached to self-governing communities of much smaller size than the state or even the county,"[139] and also claims that "Democracy must begin at home, and its home is the neighborly community."[140] We have seen Dewey differ from Rousseau's view that any large-scale polity is inevitably devoid of freedom, but he still recognizes the unique opportunities offered by local political institutions. As a current example, the participatory budgeting institutions[141] which began in Brazil illustrate the potential benefits of such democratic governance at the municipal level. Most notably in the cities of Porto Alegre and Ipatinga,[142] participatory budgeting has had the effect of taking budgetary processes which previously benefited primarily upper and middle-class citizens, and moving these processes toward serving the interests of poorer citizens.[143] In these cities, typically excluded poor citizens have taken advantage of the opportunity to help shape the policies they must live under.[144] Not all cases of participatory budgeting have successfully transferred power to these historically-excluded citizens,[145] though, and for Dewey, this would demonstrate the need for continuous, critical evaluation of these institutions, in both their successful and unsuccessful cases, to determine how the democratic aspects of the former may be transferred to the latter. The manner in which disadvantaged citizens have achieved greater governing control in Porto Alegre and Ipatinga will therefore need to be preserved and extended.

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[139] LW14: 217.

[140] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 213.

[141] I will further present these institutions as examples of Deweyan institutions in Chapter 4.

[142] Brian Wampler, *Participatory Budgeting in Brazil: Contestation, Cooperation, and Accountability* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 7.

[143] Brian Wampler, "A Guide to Participatory Budgeting", in *Participatory Budgeting*, ed. Anwar Shah (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2007), 36, 51.

[144] Ibid., 51-52.

[145] Wampler, *Participatory Budgeting in Brazil*, 7-8.

It is thus clear that Dewey, in contrast with what some Dewey scholars (as noted above) have argued, does not identify democracy with any particular institution such as representative legislatures or frequent elections. Dewey stresses that "there is no sanctity" in such institutions, which indicates that overcoming exclusive control of governance cannot lie in shoring up current legislative bodies or the voting process in all times and places. Such institutional bolstering can be democratic, but it should not be deemed an eternal solution in the face of unique obstacles to achieving democratic governance (e.g., control of government by wealth). Instead, Dewey's conception of political democracy emphasizes the importance of radical challenges to existing institutions. At the same time, those who claim Dewey has something of an anarchistic attitude toward state institutions overlook how his pragmatist method builds on advancements in democratic governance which have already been instituted and put into practice, and renounces any ideas of positive political action which wholly rejects established institutions. It should also be noted that there is little if any evidence to suggest Dewey grants a special role to political experts or professionals in effecting continuous democratization, as opposed to what some scholars (noted above) have implied. Whether by imploring every reader of his *People's Lobby Bulletin* to demonstrate opposition to congressional legislation benefitting the wealthy,[146] by pointing out that nobody is wiser than "the individuals of the submerged mass" regarding "where the shoe pinches, the troubles they suffer from,"[147] or by claiming that "A class of experts is inevitably so removed from common interests as to become a class with private interests and private knowledge,"[148] it is evident that Dewey does not presume any group of individuals to be inherently more qualified than others to direct the growth of democratic governing institutions.

[146] LW6: 387.

[147] LW11: 219.

[148] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 207.

A brief word should also be said about the role played by education in Deweyan institutional reconstruction.[149] Education was Dewey's favorite topic, and his concern regarding specifically political education is that "current schooling…not only does little to make discriminating intelligence a safeguard against surrender to the invasion of bunk, especially in its most dangerous form—social and political bunk—but it does much to favor susceptibility to a welcoming reception to it."[150] He explains further how "there has been a temptation to idealize our institutions…keeping away from the students' minds, as they mature, a sense of what the problems are that make it difficult to carry on our government successfully. We need methods of teaching that will not merely give pupils a simple paper knowledge of government, but that will give them…a knowledge of what are the underlying tendencies and problems they must meet in government, local, state, and national."[151] If individuals are to be prepared to "criticize and re-make [democracy's] political manifestations,"[152] then schools must avoid merely encouraging youth to marvel at how well American political institutions work, and instead cultivate a critical attitude in evaluating how effectively current institutions are fulfilling democratic principles. Students must not simply memorize the content of the U.S. Constitution, for instance, but must be asked to critically investigate whether constitutional mechanisms are sufficient for actualizing democratic self-government under current conditions.

Dewey emphasizes that his process of democratization cannot maintain itself through "piecemeal policies undertaken *ad hoc*," and that "'reforms' that deal now with this abuse and now with that without having a social goal based upon an inclusive plan, differ entirely from

[149] There will be a thorough analysis of Dewey's educational theory in Chapter 5.

[150] MW13: 332.

[151] MW15: 160-161.

[152] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 144.

effort at re-forming, in its literal sense, the institutional scheme of things."[153] He thus upholds the necessity of positing a foundational "notion" (in the Hegelian sense) of political democracy in order to give direction to the reforms undertaken. We have seen that Dewey's notion of political democracy primarily involves a government where no individual or group's voice possesses a structurally privileged position over others'. And, we have seen that the actualization of this notion requires that we, in pragmatist fashion, intelligently reconstruct our governing institutions in response to "negation," or, the exclusive control of those institutions by powerful interests. This notion cannot be completely, eternally achieved in any particular set of institutions, but as Hegel would say, the continuous movement toward its achievement makes the notion actual.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to elevate Dewey's radical democratic thought over the more thoroughly anti-institutional version represented by Wolin. For Dewey, political self-government is never perfectly achieved, but is capable of continuous actualization to the extent the undemocratic qualities of governing institutions are identified and remedied. Wolin, on the other hand, seeks momentary instances of pure democratic action which is somehow non-institutional. Dewey's Hegelian approach to achieving political democracy avoids assuming that positive political action can be wholly removed from an established institutional context, while also exhibiting the need for continuous regeneration of democratic governance in response to "negation"—i.e., the undemocratic qualities which tend to emerge over time within established institutions. I have shown how anti-institutional thinkers such as Wolin, Ranciere, and Rousseau (as he is interpreted by Hegel) cling to an ontology of institutions in which institutions remain eternally un-democratizable regardless of any clash with democratic actors, and democratic political action—inevitably rare and temporary—remains eternally undiluted by any

[153] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, 62.

identification with institutions. Dewey's ontology, which conceives of institutions and individuals as never wholly separated from one another, allows us to preserve past advancements in democratic governance by stabilizing them within institutions, while avoiding the sanctification of any particular institution. His pragmatist philosophy allows us to *negate negation* by intelligently reconstructing past institutions in response to new circumstances. Hence, Deweyan democracy can account for the type of temporary uprisings emphasized by thinkers like Wolin, without forcing us to forgo everything that takes place between such instances within institutions as inevitably devoid of any democracy. The Wolinian approach is not entirely without value, for it highlights the tendencies within modern institutions toward professionalization and restriction of the influence of ordinary citizens; but, if we are to theorize the kind of change in institutions and in the division of political power that a democratic "moment" should aim for, we must go outside the thoroughly anti-institutional theory to find the necessary tools. I thus argue that radical democratic thinking would be well-served by moving in a Deweyan rather than Wolinian direction, for Wolin's approach is ultimately incomplete.

I have focused here on the distinctly *political* aspect of Dewey's democratic project of granting individuals the greatest possible control over their lives. Dewey maintains, though, that "Democracy is a word of many meanings. Some of them are of such a broad social and moral import as to be irrelevant to our immediate theme. But one of the meanings is distinctly political, for it denotes a mode of government…This is not the most inspiring of the different meanings of democracy; it is comparatively special in character. But it contains about all that is relevant to *political* democracy."[154] This political phase is crucial to Deweyan democracy, but for Dewey, allowing individuals to participate in the governing of their lives requires far more than adequate political machinery. It in fact demands that democracy be actualized in its

[154] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 82.

individual and *social* meanings, and I will now explore those meanings.

The Democratic Individual: Dewey's Back to Plato Movement[155]

We have seen in Chapter 1 how Deweyan political democracy involves a never-ending process of achieving democratic governance, one in which obstacles to such governance (e.g., control of government by wealth) inevitably emerge, and are progressively overcome. However, for Dewey, the effort to democratize governmental institutions alone is not sufficient for achieving meaningful democracy. He explains that there is a "distinction between democracy as a social idea and political democracy as a system of government…The idea of democracy is a wider and fuller idea than can be exemplified in the state even at its best."[156] The typical political bodies which exercise legislative, executive, administrative, and judicial power are not the only institutions that significantly impact how individuals live their lives. Political institutions could be deemed as meeting democratic standards, while "non-political" associations at the societal level (such as family, work, or religion) are substantially hindering the possibilities for individuals to exercise autonomous control over their own growth. Dewey's vision of democratic possibilities ultimately comes down to the individual level, and the course of an individual's life is determined at least as much by her social relations as by her political institutions.[157] As he puts it, "democracy cannot now depend upon or be expressed in political institutions alone…for democracy is expressed in the attitudes of human beings and is measured by consequences produced in their lives."[158]

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[155] This chapter is a modified version of an article originally published in *The Pluralist*, Volume 9, Issue 1.

[156] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chicago: Swallow Press, [1927] 1954), 143.

[157] Dewey often objects to any kind of individual/society dualism; I will discuss this in more detail later in the chapter.

[158] John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), 125.

On Dewey's terms, then, a democratic theory must not satisfy itself with anything less than an inquiry into individual disposition—thus Dewey's famous remark that "democracy is a *personal* way of individual life…it signifies the possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life."[159] Dewey's theory is indeed founded on its notion of a democratic individual way of life, for it is this exhibition of democratic behavior by individuals which is meant to be our primary standard for evaluating the presence of democracy.

In this chapter, I seek to elucidate the meaning of Dewey's democratic individual way of life by exploring his philosophical relationship to Plato. Dewey conveys his admiration for Plato when he declares that "Nothing could be more helpful to present philosophizing than a 'Back to Plato' movement."[160] This veneration may be puzzling—given Plato's status as an evident anti-democrat—but, as I will argue below, the great insight that Dewey sees in Plato is the latter's goal (sought most famously in *The Republic*) of "such a development of man's nature as brings him into complete harmony with the universe of spiritual relations, or, in Platonic language, the state."[161] In *The Republic*, Plato depicts five different states and the corresponding five types of individuals, with the aim of demonstrating the superiority of his ideal aristocratic state and aristocratic individual. For Dewey, we can no longer reasonably hold to the assumptions underlying Plato's "universe of spiritual relations"[162]—we can no longer cling to a notion of a

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[159] John Dewey, "Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us", in *John Dewey: The Political Writings*, eds. Debra Morris and Ian Shapiro (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, [1939] 1993), 241.

[160] John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", in *Contemporary American Philosophy*, Vol. II, eds. George P. Adams and Wm. Pepperell Montague (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), 21.

[161] EW1: 241.

[162] The precise meaning of this phrase is not made entirely clear. Because I emphasize the Hegelian qualities of Dewey's thought (I will provide a thorough investigation of Dewey's relationship to Hegel in Chapter 3), I interpret "spiritual relations" as signifying for Dewey the human relations which are engaged in self-consciously for the aim

static, eternal truth that only a select few are capable of grasping, nor to the idea that human relations are so ordered that individuals may be placed in strictly defined classes and narrow functional roles. In Dewey's view, human (especially, scientific) advancements have progressively knocked down claims to any type of unchanging knowledge, making the pursuit of knowledge a continuous, never-ending task which can only be tackled through full engagement with the utterly transient qualities of ordinary human experience. And, "a new age of human relations" has emerged which is primarily characterized by disorder, for scientific and economic changes have so thoroughly intertwined the peoples of the world such that all individuals are impacted by "indirect consequences" caused by remote forces beyond their immediate control.[163]

In *The Republic*, Plato describes the democratic state as one where virtually nothing is held to be unchanging and sacred, and where diverse individuals from different corners of society interact with each other and neglect to stay within their limits. He similarly condemns the democratic individual as failing to stick with a single function, and instead leading a life characterized by variety, diversity, and multiplicity. I will argue that Dewey's democratic way of life—like Plato's version of a democratic individual life—is chiefly defined by diversified experience which overcomes limits and engages with plural forms of life. It is not a standard that is ever achieved once and for all, but rather exhibits the continuous, active interaction with the unique, changing, often-unforeseen forces which inevitably confront modern individuals. On Dewey's terms, our universe of spiritual relations has shown itself to be fundamentally democratic—there is no way of life that can be said (to the exclusion of others) to attain "truth," we are stuck in a fundamentally uncertain world where there is no eternal knowledge, and we are

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of a rationally determined individual and community good, as opposed to relations which serve merely the aim of natural survival.

[163] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 96-109.

all inextricably connected with others by the indirect consequences of remote forces beyond anyone's immediate control. The democratic way of life aims at allowing individuals some measure of control over their lives and the opportunity to fulfill their unique potential in the face of such a world, rather than being passively impacted by external, uncontrollable forces in a futile attempt at isolation. Also, when individuals lead democratic lives, Dewey holds that it allows a society to more wisely regulate its collective affairs, for the interaction of diverse elements can make it less likely that collective decisions will emanate merely from the hollow, untested perspective of a dominant group, at the expense of the excluded voices of disadvantaged sectors of society. Reading Dewey's democratic way of life in a Platonic light can thus prove helpful in responding to arguments like those of Robert Talisse, who claims the standard of individual conduct represented by the democratic way of life is an oppressive denial of pluralism.[164] The democratic way of life is in fact defined by engagement with plural forms of life which unsettle one's own fixed habits and beliefs.

My purpose with this chapter is to both provide my own account of the Dewey-Plato connection, and to explore the implications of Dewey's characterization of democracy as an individual way of life when that characterization is read in relationship to Plato. I will first explore some of the previous depictions of Dewey's democratic way of life, as well as the previous attempts at explaining Dewey's connection to Plato. I will then make my own claim for identifying the connection in Dewey's "Platonic" attempt to harmonize the individual with a democratic (rather than aristocratic) "universe of spiritual relations." I will then discuss the practical manifestations of this reading of the democratic life, focusing on how this concept of interaction of diverse elements on a plane of equality might inform pressing present-day social

[164] See Robert Talisse, "Can Democracy Be a Way of Life? Deweyan Democracy and the Problem of Pluralism", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 39, no. 1 (2003): 1-21; and Robert Talisse, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

issues such as racial and gender inequity, while also exhibiting the weakness of Talisse's pluralist objection to Dewey's theory. Overall, I hope to show how going back to Plato sheds important light on the meaning of Dewey's democratic way of life, thus helping us to conceive of a democracy that extends beyond political machinery.

Defining Dewey's Democratic Way of Life

I will be discussing the democratic way of life in each of the remaining chapters, and so I will briefly address here how other Dewey scholars have interpreted this central concept in Dewey's democratic theory. A common feature in recent interpretations has been to equate the democratic life with engaging in deliberation with others on matters of common concern. This is found in William Caspary's argument that "public deliberation is essential for democratic life,"[165] as well as in Noelle McAfee's contention that being "open to the perspectives, concerns, and purposes of others…means making democracy a way of life and not just a rubber stamp."[166] Michael Eldridge, in his analysis of the democratic way of life, similarly claims that Dewey "thought that the seemingly mundane activity of everyday conversation could bear much of the weight of democracy, provided that this talking was characterized by free, informed exchange and that it was situated in mutual regard for one another."[167] These views correspond to the prevalent portrayal of Dewey as a forefather of deliberative democracy, a portrayal that I reject in Chapter 4. For now, I will just note my view that a focus on the type of conversation individuals engage in does not nearly capture the full significance of Dewey's concept of a democratic way of life. This concept actually requires exploration of how individuals may

[165] William Caspary, *Dewey on Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 153.

[166] Noelle McAfee, *Democracy and the Political Unconscious* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 156.

[167] Michael Eldridge, *Transforming Experience: John Dewey's Cultural Instrumentalism* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 99.

exercise some manner of control over their lives within a constantly changing world, as well as an exploration of the political, social, and economic conditions necessary to make this type of control possible.

Many attempts to elucidate Dewey's democratic life, while not necessarily incorrect, have been overly broad. Robert Westbrook, for instance, calls democratic life "a commitment to provide the conditions for the growth of every individual in a society."[168] Similarly broad descriptions are provided by James Campbell, who states that "Democracy as a way of life is tested by interactive living"[169]; by Alan Ryan, who focuses on "the idea of an experience of 'associated living' open to everyone on equal terms"[170]; by Steven Rockefeller, who claims "the democratic way of life has the capacity to transform experience…Communication and shared experience are values of a certain religious reverence for Dewey"[171]; and by Peter Manicas, who emphasizes individuals' capacity "to perceive the consequences of 'combined action'…to perceive shared goods and to act on them."[172]

There is greater clarity, though, in the recent work of John Stuhr and Gregory Pappas. Stuhr focuses on Dewey's notion of *inquiry*, explaining how "The roads to the kingdom of democratic life are inquiry and communication," and highlighting the danger of "conservative habits of belief and emotion; fear, greed, and selfishness; specialization and mediation; and, illusions of intellectual freedom in the absence of known external oppression. These are

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[168] Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 534.

[169] James Campbell, *Understanding John Dewey: Nature and Cooperative Intelligence* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 180.

[170] Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 314.

[171] Steven Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 245-246.

[172] Peter Manicas, *Rescuing Dewey: Essays in Pragmatic Naturalism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 178.

immense obstacles to a democratic way of life…"[173] Pappas puts the democratic way of life in terms of "democracy as experience," referencing a "character that welcomes untried situations and is capable of constant readjustment," and describing how the attempt "to transform everyday activity to make it richer and fuller relative to concrete present problems and possibilities is what we do in democracy as a way of life."[174] For my purposes, Stuhr's emphasis on the danger of clinging rigidly to old habits, and Pappas's focus on welcoming untried situations, are valuable insights for the analysis of Deweyan democratic individuality. Within a changing world, individuals cannot realistically avoid novel circumstances, and old habits cannot be presumed eternally valid for coping with untried situations. Democratic individuals, on my reading, actively interact with their uncertain, changing world, in order to develop, through experience, their capacity to exercise some manner of control over their future uncertain experience. I will expand on this reading in this chapter by exploring Dewey's relationship to Plato, and in the next chapter by exploring his relationship to Hegel.

Explaining the Dewey-Plato Relationship

The topic of Dewey's relationship to Plato has not been widely addressed in Dewey literature, and among the scholars who have discussed it, some have focused on the clear differences between the two. One such difference lies in the divergent ontological and epistemological value placed by Dewey and Plato on ordinary human experience. H.S. Thayer explains how Dewey saw in Plato the obnoxious idea that "there must be some ultimate end, or aim, to all action and desire, something intrinsically good, the Good. Without such a Good, the activities of life seem aimless, and ethically meaningless; experience is then conceived as the

[173] John Stuhr, *Pragmatism, Postmodernism, and the Future of Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 57-58.

[174] Gregory Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 191, 290.

labors of Sisyphus in the absence of a focal Good to deliver and consummate all action."[175] Similarly, Larry Hickman states that, for Dewey, "*The Republic* richly documents the consequences for social thought in general, and for democracy in particular, of this turn against experience in its full-bodied sense."[176] On this view, the Dewey-Plato relationship is defined by contrast between Plato's emphasis on a transcendental realm of unchanging Forms (the comprehension of which is necessary for true knowledge) and Dewey's focus on the never-ending pursuit of knowledge through engagement with the inescapable transience of ordinary experience. Thayer in fact contends that it was mainly in response to the Platonic approach that Dewey built his conception of "ends" as existing only in a process of continuous actualization, rather than as an eternal achievement separate from the hazards of experience.[177]

There is certainly ample evidence in Dewey to support these claims of fundamental dissimilarity from Plato. He remarks in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* that "in Plato change, altering or othering, has a direct ontological status. It is a sign of the defective ontological character of that which changes, its lack of full Being."[178] He also describes in *The Quest for Certainty* how both Plato and Aristotle "brought with them the idea of a higher realm of fixed reality of which alone true science is possible and of an inferior world of changing things with which experience and practical matters are concerned. They glorified the invariant at the

[175] H.S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), 399.

[176] Larry Hickman, *Pragmatism as Post-Postmodernism: Lessons from John Dewey* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 113.

[177] Thayer, *Meaning and Action*, 399.

[178] John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), 188.

expense of change, it being evident that all practical activity falls within the realm of change."[179] Dewey's concern is with how the Platonic view "translated into a rational form the doctrine of escape from the vicissitudes of existence by means of measures which do not demand an active coping with conditions."[180] Dewey, unlike Plato, conceives nothing outside the changeful realm of experience, and thus he reasons that "Since changes are going on anyway, the great thing is to learn enough about them so that we be able to lay hold of them and turn them in the direction of our desires."[181] The importance of scientific advancements, in Dewey's view, lies largely in how they have progressively broken down static, eternal beliefs arrived at through abstraction from concrete experience. As such, notions of rigid intellectual hierarchy, and of fixed, unchanging knowledge available only to an exclusive few, have been shown over time to be untenable. Dewey thus argues that philosophy must leave behind search for immutable truth, and accept the quest for necessarily imperfect knowledge which may aid individuals in their everyday experience.

If philosophy clings to its search for immutable principles which are safe from the transience of ordinary experience, Dewey warns "this subject-matter [of philosophy] becomes arbitrary, aloof—what is called 'abstract' when that word is used in a bad sense to designate something which exclusively occupies a realm of its own without contact with the things of ordinary experience."[182] Useful philosophic knowledge, therefore, comes through fully inquiring into the transitory qualities of experience and discovering how individuals may direct the

[179] John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1929), 16-17. Dewey is aware how some may argue that Aristotle gave "change" an ontological status more in line with modern thinkers than with Plato; he rejects this view explicitly in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, enl. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, [1948] 1957), 57-60, 107.

[180] Dewey, *Quest for Certainty*, 17.

[181] Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, 116.

[182] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, [1925] 1958), 6.

changes which are going on: "that is, a method of purposefully introducing changes which will alter the direction of the course of events…The quest for certainty by means of exact possession in mind of immutable reality is exchanged for search for security by means of active control of the changing course of events."[183] Undoubtedly, this exhibits substantial discrepancy between the ontological and epistemological principles of Dewey and Plato.

Richard Posner also focuses on the separation between Dewey and Plato, while providing a more distinctly political analysis of the relationship. He notes the difference between Deweyan and Platonic epistemology, and asserts that "Dewey's philosophical project of overturning Platonic epistemology provides support for making democracy the default rule of political governance in the same way that Platonic epistemology provides support for the authoritarian political system described in the *Republic*."[184] He thus concludes that "Dewey turned Plato on his head by accepting the linkage between knowledge and politics but arguing that knowledge is democratic and so should politics be."[185] Indeed, when referring to "the Platonic notion that philosophers should be kings," Dewey writes that "It is impossible for high-brows to secure a monopoly of such knowledge as must be used for the regulation of common affairs. In the degree in which they become a specialized class, they are shut off from knowledge of the needs which they are supposed to serve."[186] Clearly separating himself from any political scheme like that which is endorsed in *The Republic* (where only the exclusively wise philosophers are given political rule), Dewey's democratic view is that "the practical consequence of giving the few

[183] Dewey, *Quest for Certainty*, 100, 204.

[184] Richard Posner, *Law, Pragmatism, and Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 103, 104.

[185] Ibid., 104.

[186] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 205-206.

wise and good power is that they cease to remain wise and good."[187] Since we cannot trust that philosophers actually have epistemic access to any eternal Good, we cannot trust that they would exercise power wisely when unchecked by the public. Thinkers like Thayer, Hickman, and Posner thus highlight for us Dewey's divergence from Plato, primarily in Dewey's attempt to turn philosophy toward a quest for necessarily imperfect knowledge which may aid individuals in their everyday experience—a quest which cannot be limited to only a few "wise" individuals.

However, the argument has also been made that Dewey views Plato, in actuality, as an exemplar of the type of continuous, never-ending inquiry he advocates. When Dewey makes his call for a "Back to Plato" movement, he specifies that "it would have to be back to the dramatic, restless, co-operatively inquiring Plato of the Dialogues, trying one mode of attack after another to see what it might yield; back to the Plato whose highest flight of metaphysics always terminated with a social and practical turn…"[188] Thomas Alexander suggests Plato's work is in fact an example of Deweyan cooperative inquiry: "A Platonic dialogue can be just an exhibition of 'mutual coordination' in which each party genuinely participates with the other in trying to define the object of the quest, such as the definition of courage, justice, or friendship."[189] Along similar lines, David Fott maintains that "Socratic dialectic…aims to challenge all fixed tenets, so that any tenet advanced in an argument or used to justify one's action would be fortified, not merely asserted."[190]

To support this view, we might think in particular of Platonic dialogues in which the figure of Socrates does not reach any comprehensive answer to the questions under discussion,

[187] EW1: 242.

[188] Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", 21.

[189] Thomas Alexander, *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience, and Nature: The Horizons of Feeling* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 163.

[190] David Fott, *John Dewey: America's Philosopher of Democracy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 143.

but rather simply engages with others in an exhaustive inquiry which does not yield any certain conclusions. In the *Protagoras*, the dialogue begins with Socrates believing that virtue cannot be taught, and Protagoras believing virtue can be taught; by the end, the two have reversed their positions, and Socrates finishes by imploring, "I should like to carry on the discussion until we ascertain what virtue is, and whether capable of being taught or not…"[191] In the *Euthyphro*, the discussion of piety similarly does not lead to any clear conclusion, but rather ends with Socrates stating "we must begin again and ask, What is piety? That is an enquiry which I shall never be weary of pursuing…"[192] And in the *Apology*, Plato famously presents Socrates, not as illuminating any fixed truth, but as a "gadfly" who constantly pesters those who claim to be wise in order to discover whether their claims hold up under scrutiny.[193] This depiction of the Dewey-Plato connection in fact coheres with Gregory Vlastos's distinction between the "Socrates" of the early Platonic dialogues—including each of the dialogues just mentioned—in which Plato presents (according to Vlastos) the actual historical figure of Socrates, and the "Socrates" we find once we reach the middle dialogues, where Plato apparently begins to use Socrates as a mouthpiece for his own viewpoints. Vlastos claims that the Socrates of the early dialogues, as opposed to his later counterpart, is not so hostile to democracy, has no conception of unchanging Forms, and focuses on an unending pursuit of moral truth.[194] When Plato's works are read this way, it is justifiable to say that Dewey would admire this quality of continuous, never-ending inquiry in the dialogues.

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[191] Plato, "Protagoras", in *The Dialogues of Plato*, 3rd ed., Vol. I , translated into English, with analyses and introductions, by B. Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 186-187.

[192] Plato, "Euthyphro", in *The Dialogues of Plato*, 3rd ed., Vol. II , translated into English, with analyses and introductions, by B. Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 92.

[193] Plato, "Apology", in *The Dialogues of Plato*, 3rd ed., Vol. II , translated into English, with analyses and introductions, by B. Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 123-124.

[194] Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 46-50.

There is evidence of Dewey holding such a position, particularly when he contends that "the Platonic system is the most splendid fruit" of a revolution against unreflective reliance on custom for "directing action and belief," and that Plato recognized how "[while] it may be held that institutions and social regulations determine rightfully enough the beliefs of the great mass of men…the rightfulness of this approximate control depends upon the institutions themselves having already undergone criticism…"[195] Elsewhere, Dewey characterizes the primary contribution that philosophy can make to our lives as being that of "criticism," which creates "a heightened consciousness of deficiencies and corruptions in the scheme and distribution of values that obtains at any period."[196] One could surely argue that no one more effectively than Plato has exposed the conflicting qualities of a dominant (in Plato's case, Athenian) value system; and Dewey, in an apparent reference to the famous remark in the *Apology*, declares that "Conflict is the gadfly of thought. It stirs us to observation and memory. It instigates to invention. It shocks us out of sheep-like passivity, and sets us at noting and contriving."[197] This would suggest that Plato, in Dewey's view, was perhaps the most successful practitioner of philosophy there has been—for while he worked within a very different intellectual context from Dewey's (and ours), his commitment to exposing conflicting tendencies within any and all fixed, dogmatic beliefs fulfilled philosophy's function of unsettling his readers and forcing them to think.

It does appear reasonable to say that Dewey would admire the rigorous inquiry displayed particularly in the early Platonic dialogues. However, I will claim that the admiration which Dewey expresses for Plato carries implications that are not effectively accommodated by this

[195] MW6: 24-25.

[196] Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 412.

[197] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1922), 300.

depiction of the Dewey-Plato connection. In fact, Dewey's praise for Plato indicates the importance of *The Republic* (not an early dialogue) to Dewey, and in particular, the importance of Plato's ethical thought to Dewey's principle that democracy is "an ethical conception, and upon its ethical significance is based its significance as governmental."[198]

The Democratic Individual in Plato and Dewey

I argue that Dewey's relationship to Plato can—to a significant degree—be illuminated through focusing on Plato's aim in *The Republic* (as noted above) of "such a development of man's nature as brings him into complete harmony with the universe of spiritual relations, or, in Platonic language, the state." Dewey indicates the importance he sees in this Platonic task when he states that "If [the Platonic Republic] had no value for philosophical reasons, if its theory of morals, of reality and of knowledge had disappeared as utterly as the breezes which swept the grasses under the plane tree by which Plato and his disciples sat and talked, the Republic would be immortal as the summary of all that was best and most permanent in Greek life…"[199] Even if Plato's ontological and epistemological principles can no longer be reasonably upheld under modern circumstances, Dewey insists that *The Republic* remains "immortal" because "it seizes upon the heart of the ethical problem, the relation of the individual to the universal, and states a solution."[200] He thus argues that "Nothing could be more aside from the mark than to say that the Platonic ideal subordinates and sacrifices the individual to the state."[201] Though Plato does not have the right answer, Dewey sees him as identifying the right task: to discover how individuals may fulfill their unique potential while inextricably interconnected with others, and how they

[198] EW1: 240.

[199] EW1: 241.

[200] EW1: 241.

[201] EW1: 241.

may contribute at the same time to the collective well-being and wise functioning of their society.

This task is not terribly unique in the history of political thought, but I argue it is Plato's method for solving it that stands out to Dewey. In *The Republic*, Plato declares that "Constitutions cannot come out of stocks and stones; they must result from the preponderance of certain characters which draw the rest of the community in their wake. So if there are five forms of government, there must be five kinds of mental constitution among individuals."[202] Hence, any discussion of an ideal political structure must be founded on an inquiry into the ideal individual disposition—thus Plato's famous analysis in *The Republic* of different types of states and the corresponding dominant character-types in each of those states. And though the "democratic individual" is far from the ideal in Plato's analysis, I claim that Plato's move to the individual level helps clarify Dewey's admiration for Plato, as well as illuminating what Dewey means by a democratic individual way of life.

Plato's ideal aristocratic state requires that philosophers become rulers,[203] for only philosophers have knowledge of the eternal Forms, which are truly real because they are not subject to the transitory experiential world.[204] The philosophers, then, may comprehend what makes truly good statesmanship, rather than getting stuck in mere opinion or belief about wise management of public affairs. The mass of the people, on the other hand, are for Plato simply incapable of such unchanging knowledge: "the philosophers are those who can apprehend the eternal and unchanging, while those who cannot do so…are lost in the mazes of multiplicity and

[202] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, translated with introduction and notes by Francis Cornford (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), 267.

[203] Ibid., 207-208.

[204] Ibid., 183-190.

change…"[205] The best the majority can do, therefore, both for themselves and for the good of the state, is stick with the practical function they are suited for, and refrain from overstepping their limits into matters of political rule.[206] When this happens, a just state can emerge where the wise philosophers rule, the courageous warriors assist the philosophers in maintaining the health of the state, and the productive masses stay under control—a state with perfect order and no conflict across class boundaries.

For the aristocratic individual character-type corresponding to this state, Plato describes a strictly ordered individual "soul" in which the rational part of the soul (which is capable of true knowledge) is in charge, the spirited part of the soul assists the rational part in maintaining the health of the soul, and the appetites (the largest part of the soul) are kept under control.[207] However, because "the multitude can never be philosophical,"[208] most individuals are not capable of such an ordered soul. The ideal aristocratic disposition will inevitably be found only in the few wise philosophers, thus making the ideal aristocratic state dependent on a small minority retaining a politically dominant status. This is in large part the reason Plato has Socrates remark that such a state could only likely exist "in the heavens."[209]

A democratic state, by contrast, is for Plato one in which the masses (those dominated by appetite) exercise political power. As opposed to the strict order and hierarchy of the aristocratic state, where all individuals perform the function they are naturally suited for, the democratic state allows interaction of diverse elements of society which should be kept separate—thus

[205] Ibid., 190.

[206] Ibid., 128-129.

[207] Ibid., 130-141.

[208] Ibid., 201.

[209] Ibid., 319.

creating a "mixture of colours" which appeals to immature minds—and dictates equality "for equals and unequals alike."[210] Political victory, therefore, belongs to "anyone who merely calls himself the people's friend."[211] Furthermore, in the *Gorgias*, Plato has Socrates contend that democratic politics is when "an ignorant person is more convincing than the expert before an equally ignorant audience,"[212] and in the *Crito*, Socrates repeatedly dismisses "the opinion of the many" as without validity.[213] This condemnation of democracy extends to the analysis of the democratic individual character-type. Such individuals, in Plato's view, lead lives of varied experience rather than sticking to a single function, assume equality between necessary and unnecessary appetites, and are "subject to no order or restraint."[214] With no strict, hierarchical order and with constant change elevated over the eternal and unchanging, democracy fails at producing true goodness in either the individual or the state.[215]

Although Plato does suggest that the creation of his ideal state is far-fetched in the face of his Athenian democratic context, he holds out greater hope that an individual may still "found

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[210] Ibid., 282-283.

[211] Ibid., 283.

[212] Plato, *Gorgias*, rev. ed., translated by Walter Hamilton and Chris Emlyn-Jones (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), 23.

[213] Plato, "Crito", in *The Dialogues of Plato*, 3rd ed., Vol. II , translated into English, with analyses and introductions, by B. Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 145, 149.

[214] Plato, *Republic*, 284-286.

[215] The argument has been made that Plato is not in fact as hostile to democracy as commonly believed. Such an argument can be found in S. Sara Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements: Athenian Politics and the Practice of Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Monoson claims that Plato is not actually presenting a "decline" of regimes in Book 8 of *The Republic*, but rather a "typology"; she thus argues that Plato does not see democracy as the second worst regime after despotism, that he prefers the "pleasures and attractions" of democracy over the "misery and division" of oligarchy, that he does not elevate the wealthy over the poor, and that he approves of democratic life as "colorful, beautiful, attractive, easy, gentle" (pp. 115-116). Monoson's argument completely overlooks: how Plato elevates necessary over unnecessary appetites (which forms the basis of his elevation of oligarchy over democracy); how oligarchy maintains a kind of temperance lacking in democracy because oligarchy privileges those who are thrifty with their money over the pleasure-seeking; and how Plato dismisses the diverse, varied, "colorful" democratic existence as antithetical to both a good state and a good individual.

[the ideal state] in himself."[216] The commonwealth as a whole may be beyond saving, unable to comprehend the wisdom of his aristocratic government, but wise philosophers such as himself (and his teacher, Socrates) can nonetheless establish the ideal, ordered, harmonious state in their souls. The soul, for Plato, is eternal and unchanging, living beyond the death of the earthly body; the state, on the other hand, is earth-bound and thus inevitably corrupted, subject to the inescapable changes of earthly experience. Earlier, it was noted that Dewey praises "the Plato whose highest flight of metaphysics always terminated with a social and practical turn…" The ideal aristocratic state depicted in *The Republic* appears to be merely an impractical flight of metaphysics, but reason-driven individuality is the matter for practical inquiry.

For Dewey, the individual level holds similar priority. This is not to say Dewey dismisses *political* democracy[217] as unimportant; for one, he obviously would not condemn the earthly quality of political governance, and further (as noted in Chapter 1), he views any government controlled by exclusive interests as significantly hindering the opportunities of many individuals to exercise control over their lives—the continuous development of democratic political institutions (though never completely achieved) is thus essential to his philosophy. At the same time, Dewey insists that we can no longer "entertain the hope that given political freedom as the one thing necessary all other things will in time be added to it…"[218] He explains that "the ideal of democracy…roots itself ultimately in the principle of moral, self-directing individuality,"[219] and thus "the supreme test of all political institutions…shall be the contribution

[216] Plato, *Republic*, 319-320.

[217] The conditions for political democracy are central to the argument in *The Public and its Problems*. I have addressed the meaning of the "political phase" of democracy for Dewey in Chapter 1.

[218] Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 6.

[219] MW3: 235.

they make to the all-around growth of every member of society."[220] Governing institutions may meet certain nominal standards to be considered "democratic"—such as the presence of free elections and constitutional rights—but in the face of constantly changing conditions, Dewey argues we cannot assume such institutions are sufficient for allowing individuals to effectively direct their own growth free from arbitrary external direction. Hidden threats to democracy (more on this in the next section) concealed by nominally democratic political machinery may render the machinery irrelevant, which for Dewey means we must look at the individual level, at the predominant individual character-type in a society, to evaluate the presence of meaningful democracy: "powerful present enemies of democracy can be successfully met only by the creation of personal attitudes in individual human beings…we must get over our tendency to think that its defense can be found in any external means…if they are separated from individual attitudes so deep-seated as to constitute personal character."[221]

The clear differences between Dewey and Plato must still be noted. Dewey objects to Plato's notion that any individuals are so eternally wise that they must place other individuals in their correct functional roles, rather than allowing those others to determine their own paths.[222] He also contends that individual variation is evidently far more expansive than Plato presents, for individuals may develop in unique, unforeseen ways which do not neatly fit into any established class, which in turn shows how we cannot cling to fixed ideas of classes and how they rank in superiority.[223] Nonetheless, Dewey remains committed to the "immortal" task of *The Republic*, arguing that "The problem of constructing a new individuality consonant with the objective

[220] Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, 186.

[221] Dewey, "Creative Democracy", 242.

[222] EW1: 242-243.

[223] MW7: 317.

conditions under which we live is the deepest problem of our times."[224] He notes how, under modern conditions, no individual can act truly free of impact from remote, unforeseen forces beyond immediate control: "Recent inventions have so multiplied and cheapened the means of transportation, and of the circulation of ideas and news through books, magazines, and papers, that it is no longer physically possible for one nationality, race, class, or sect to be kept apart from others, impervious to their wishes and beliefs."[225] Hence, Plato's requirement that individuals remain in their own spheres and avoid diverse interaction (if they are to achieve harmony with an aristocratic universe of spiritual relations) will, under modern conditions, leave individuals at the passive mercy of those remote forces. The universe of spiritual relations brought about by modern advancements lacks strict order, has done away with any notions of exclusive, eternal knowledge, and is constantly changing because the component individuals unavoidably affect and are affected by diverse others in unforeseen ways. In other words, the modern universe of spiritual relations has demonstrated itself as democratic. Dewey, like Plato, seeks a harmony of individual disposition with the universe of spiritual relations facing the individual: "Individuals will refind themselves only as their ideas and ideals are brought into harmony with the realities of the age in which they act."[226] But, because the assumptions underlying Plato's universe of spiritual relations have been undone by modern conditions, it is the democratic, not the aristocratic, individual who may achieve such harmony.

For both Plato and Dewey, the democratic life is stuck in the world of constant change, and is defined by varied experience and interaction of diverse social elements. Given modern circumstances, though, Dewey insists this life is what is necessary for effective fulfillment of

[224] John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (New York: Capricorn Books, [1930] 1962), 32.

[225] MW2: 84.

[226] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 70.

individual potentiality. He explains how "It is because…autocracy means uniformity as surely as democracy means diversification that the great hope lies with the latter. The former strains human nature to the breaking point; the latter releases and relieves it…"[227] No group of individuals can any longer be assumed either to possess perfect knowledge of reality, or to be incapable of knowledge, which means "diverse interests [must] have a chance to articulate themselves."[228] Individuals may increase their wisdom, then, through varying their experience and interacting with diverse others: "Each contributes something distinctive from his own store of knowledge, ability, taste, while receiving at the same time elements of value contributed by others…in the degree in which there is genuine mutual give and take [ideas] are seen in a new light, deepened and extended in meaning, and there is the enjoyment of enlargement of experience, of growth of capacity."[229] In Dewey's view, this active interaction with otherness, and willingness to unsettle one's own fixed habits and beliefs, can allow individuals some measure of control over their lives, which are inevitably impacted by remote, unforeseen forces (more on this in the next section). Democratic individuals can more intelligently interact with the diverse ways of life they are confronted with because of their varied experience, as opposed to those who cannot "walk the earth freely" because they are "obsessed by the need of protecting some private possession of belief and taste."[230] Thus, "Variability, initiative, innovation, departure from routine, experimentation," which signify slavery to appetite for Plato, are what

[227] MW11: 105-106. Dewey's reference to "human nature" is a bit odd because he frequently objects to ahistorical notions of human nature separate from social/historical circumstances; "human nature" should perhaps be interpreted as "human development."

[228] Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 128.

[229] John Dewey and James Tufts, *Ethics*, rev. ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932), 383-384.

[230] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 162.

distinguish freedom from slavery for Dewey[231]—he even brings to mind Plato's depiction of the "colorful" quality of democratic life with his call for "a free, flexible and many-colored life."[232]

We must also recall that, in Plato's philosophy, the ideal individual is required not only for individual flourishing, but for the wise regulation of collective affairs. When those who are capable of living their life by the rational part of their soul are cultivated and given political power, political rule will serve the true good of the entire community. Dewey's democratic way of life aims at similar twin purposes: "The key-note of democracy as a way of life may be expressed…as the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate the living of men together:--which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals."[233] On the Deweyan view, the true good of the community could never be completely achieved, or even completely determined, for such a good must take account of the constantly developing, changing individuals who make up the community—thus it must be continuously discovered through the interaction of diverse individuals, none of whom possess a monopoly on truth. Dewey advocates "the idea of a plurality of interconnected meanings and purposes [replacing] that of *the* meaning and purpose. Search for a single, inclusive good is doomed to failure."[234] As there is no group with access to eternal knowledge, the wisdom necessary to intelligently regulate collective affairs depends on all individuals as much as possible fully and freely interacting with plural forms of life, thereby both contributing to, and benefiting from, the knowledge of others. A collectivity composed of fully developing individuals who are "learning

[231] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, 310-311.

[232] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 217.

[233] LW11: 217-218.

[234] LW5: 272.

from all the contacts of life"[235] may then display greater wisdom regarding the achievement of the collective good—the most suitable way to serve the best interests of all individuals—and can thus move democratic governing institutions to serve that collective good: "The foundation of democracy is…the power of pooled and cooperative experience…to generate progressively the knowledge and wisdom needed to guide collective action."[236] And, when a group's unique experience is effectively excluded from contributing to this wisdom, "the whole social body is deprived of the potential resources that should be at its service."[237]

For a final note in support of reading Dewey's admiration for Plato this way, I will make a quick point regarding education.[238] While disagreeing with the specific content of Plato's educational theory, Dewey still stresses Plato's importance in recognizing how a model social and political order must be founded upon educational practices which prepare young individuals to fulfill their potential in harmony with such an order: "Plato…realized that the foundation in any established political organized life was the child and the shaping and directing of the life of the child through educational instruments from his birth up to his full emergence into civic life."[239] He explains further that Plato's work has been critical to understanding "that social life was capable of intelligent direction. The first step in getting at this direction was to begin with the child and prepare him from the first for the type of social life held in view."[240] To be sure, the theory of education laid out in *The Republic* is based on rigid class boundaries, with the children

[235] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Free Press, [1916] 1966), 360.

[236] LW11: 219.

[237] LW11: 218-219.

[238] I will provide a thorough analysis of Dewey's educational theory in Chapter 5.

[239] EW5: 213.

[240] EW5: 214.

who show the capacity for true knowledge being given a philosophic education separate from the masses. Deweyan education rejects such strict separation, and seeks to develop the diverse intellectual capacities of all children, in large part through educating them to accept and affirm that they live in a constantly changing world and must adapt to unforeseen circumstances: "[The school] must provide at least part of that training which is necessary to keep the individual properly adjusted to a rapidly changing environment…It must make up to him in part for the decay of dogmatic and fixed methods of social discipline…it must provide means for bringing people and their ideas and beliefs together, in such ways as will lessen friction and instability…"[241]

But despite the divergent prescriptions, Dewey evidently appreciates Plato's recognition of education as the tool for "harmonizing" the individual with the "universe of spiritual relations." Dewey praises Plato's view that "The education that discovers and trains the peculiar powers of an individual is at the same time the method by which intrinsic, instead of coerced, harmony is achieved in the state."[242] While noting that "progress in knowledge has made us aware of the superficiality of Plato's lumping of individuals and their original powers into a few sharply marked-off classes," he insists that "We cannot better Plato's conviction that an individual is happy and society well organized when each individual engages in those activities for which he has a natural equipment, nor his conviction that it is the primary office of education to discover this equipment to its possessor and train him for its effective use."[243] Dewey further contends that, in contrast with Aristotle's mere description of existing regimes, "[Plato's] *Republic* is an attempt at least to sketch ideally the conditions under which politics and morals

[241] MW2: 90.

[242] MW7: 317.

[243] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 90.

might become truly rational,"[244] and that the importance of *The Republic* can be seen in how Plato's educational scheme "regards the period of immaturity…as an opportunity of progress to be taken advantage of in the process of creating a new and better society."[245] This type of praise for Plato is not effectively accounted for by the view that Dewey singles out only the inquiries in Plato's early dialogues as being worthy of attention.

I have made the case for viewing the Dewey-Plato relationship in light of their similar emphases on individual character-type above and beyond the establishment of particular political machinery. Dewey's democratic principle is that "If democracy is possible it is because every individual has a degree of power to govern himself,"[246] and as such, the development of democratic governing institutions apart from genuine self-government at the individual level leaves democracy as a hollow concept. I will now put this portrait of Dewey's democratic individual way of life in more concrete terms in order to illustrate the practical manifestations of this ideal for individual conduct.

Democratic Individuals in a Democratic Society

Before addressing some of the practical implications of this Platonic reading of Dewey's democratic way of life, it is important to note how there is a distinction between "state" and "society" in Dewey that is not really present in Plato. Dewey explains, "I mean by 'state' the organization of the resources of community life through governmental machinery of legislation and administration. I mean by 'society' the less definite and freer play of the forces of the community which goes on in the daily intercourse and contact of men in an endless variety of ways that have nothing to do with politics or government or the state in any institutional

[244] LW11: 72.

[245] MW13: 400.

[246] LW6: 431.

sense."[247] For Dewey, individual and society are wholly inseparable; he compares an opposition between individual and society to "[making] a problem out of the relation of the letters of an alphabet to the alphabet. An alphabet *is* letters, and 'society' is individuals in their connections with one another."[248] The governmental machinery of the state is not unconnected with the individual and societal levels—Dewey argues "The political and governmental phase of democracy is a means, the best means so far found, for realizing ends that lie in the wide domain of human relationships and the development of human personality. [Democracy] is…a way of life, social and individual."[249] The development of democratic political institutions (i.e., overcoming their exclusive control by structurally privileged interests) is thus important for ensuring that government does not merely serve the powerful elements of society at the expense of the many.[250] But, while taking part in governing functions is inevitably infrequent for most individuals in a large-scale modern polity, all individuals participate in, and are heavily influenced by, social relations. On Dewey's terms, then, the existence of democratic individuals is absolutely inseparable from the existence of a democratic society, because, as I will explain below, one cannot lead a democratic life without social connections which also meet "democratic" standards.

What would Dewey say constitutes democratic social relations? Like Plato, he focuses on the liberty and equality of the individuals involved. Regarding liberty, we have seen Plato deride democratic liberty as leaving individuals "subject to no order or restraint"; Dewey describes how "Plato gives a vivid illustration of what he means by democratic freedom. It is

[247] MW2: 81-82. One could look to Hannah Arendt for an account of how the "social" has arisen in the transition from ancient to modern politics; see *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

[248] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 69.

[249] LW11: 217.

[250] I have explored Deweyan political democracy in Chapter 1.

doing as one likes…Its result is loss of reverence and of order. It is the denial of moderation, of the principle of limit."[251] The liberty Dewey emphasizes, though, "is not mere self-assertion, nor unregulated desire."[252] Rather, democratic freedom for Dewey refers to an individual actualizing her unique development—that is, responding to changing conditions by actively interacting with the forces impacting her life and exercising some self-chosen effect upon them: "In the degree in which we become aware of possibilities of development and actively concerned to keep the avenues of growth open, in the degree in which we fight against induration and fixity, and thereby realize the possibilities of recreation of our selves, we are actually free."[253] Dewey thus commits himself to "positive freedom," for the negative freedom of merely "being left alone" does not by itself account for whether social conditions genuinely allow individuals to effectively, intelligently direct their own development in a changing—and increasingly interconnected—world.[254]

One might object here that if, for example, an individual wishes to simply be left alone to drink beer by herself, she is not free when she is forced to vary her experience. The problem with this view, though, is that this individual cannot fully control whether or not she gets her beer. She surely must rely on others to brew the beer, bottle it, and drive it in a truck to the market or restaurant where it will be made available to her. If, for whatever reason, any of the others involved in this process do not do their part, and this individual thus does not get her beer, will she be effectively paralyzed on account of having no way to respond to these varied circumstances? Can we really say she is free if she is so unable to adapt to occurrences beyond

[251] EW1: 244.

[252] EW1: 244.

[253] Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, 340. I will further explore this notion of continuous development entailed by Deweyan democratic freedom in Chapter 3, where I will investigate Dewey's relationship to Hegel.

[254] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 168.

her control? It would be difficult to hold that she is free—without even getting into the issue of how such an individual would support herself, and the type of varied experience that would likely be entailed by her efforts to support herself.

With equality, while Plato fears democracy imposes equality on "equals and unequals alike," Dewey insists democratic equality is not a mechanical obliteration of difference: "We do not mean that people are physiologically or psychologically equal, but we do mean that every human being who is normal has something so distinctive that no other individual can be substituted for him."[255] And because no human being's talents can be, a priori, subordinated to another's, Dewey espouses "The democratic faith in human equality…that every human being…has the right to equal opportunity with every other person for development of whatever gifts he has."[256]

Those skeptical of claims to equality (Nietzscheans, for example) may still object that this equality is antithetical to freedom, and that human distinctiveness is such that no principles of equality across individuals can be justified. For Dewey, though, the notion that freedom and equality are necessarily opposed is itself a vast assumption, one that typically serves the pecuniary interests of the capitalistic upper class.[257] And further, it is unfair to hold that Dewey's conception of equality is rigid. He does not assume we can account in advance for the ways unique individuality can develop, and thus he does not seek equality so thick that it restricts the directions in which free individuality may go. But at the same time, if all individuals are to be free, then that surely implies some idea of all individuals having equal access to freedom, or,

[255] MW15: 170-171. The use of the word "normal" may be striking, but Dewey simply means that "barring complete imbecility," we cannot assume any individual is completely without potential; see MW13: 294.

[256] Dewey, "Creative Democracy", 242.

[257] LW11: 370-371.

equal opportunity to actualize their freedom. If it is acceptable for some individuals to be less free than others, then freedom evidently cannot be a fundamental human value any more than equality can, for we must instead identify whatever it is that justifies some individuals possessing less freedom than others. Also, while it may appear to be a large metaphysical assumption to hold that distinct individuals are so generalizable that some type of equality could be posited among them, it is at least as large of a leap, from a Deweyan perspective, to accept that some enjoy greater opportunities for self-directed development than others. Surely the fact that no individuals are exactly identical does not prove that it is absolutely impossible to identify *any* common obstacles to individual freedom—such as, certain individuals having to grow up impoverished—and to build legitimate principles of equality aimed at overcoming those obstacles. Dewey recognizes that freely developing individuals will prove themselves superior or inferior to each other in an endless variety of ways; but he also contends that equalizing as much as possible the opportunities for free development is a form of admitting that we cannot know in advance who will turn out superior or inferior in however many ways.[258] If we merely accept that some have greater opportunity than others to actualize their unique development, we are accepting that some individuals deserve superior status from the start.

Without democratic social relations, one cannot become the democratic individual Dewey hopes for. When interactions are corrupted by social inequality, and by the inability of any participant to actualize her unique development, the potential distinctiveness offered by the disadvantaged party is curtailed. And, those who ostensibly benefit from such inequity suffer as well, for in order to reap the apparent advantages, they must (either consciously or not) uphold the subordination of the disadvantaged, and thus deny themselves the expansion of experience that may come from inviting the others' unique development. For example, white individuals

[258] MW13: 296.

who are moved to discomfort in the presence of racial minorities (because of prejudiced ideas about the latter) limit themselves—and thus hinder their own freedom—in interactions with those whom they consider to deserve unequal social status. Commenting at the onset of World War II, Dewey deems it insincere for Americans to "denounce Naziism…if, in our personal relations to other persons…we are moved by racial, color or other class prejudice,"[259] and explains how "Our anti-democratic heritage of Negro slavery has left us with habits of intolerance toward the colored race—habits which belie profession of democratic loyalty."[260] The democratic way of life, as an individual and social concept, highlights both the enormity of this bigoted subordination of otherness (even when it is no longer implanted in legal and political institutions), and how advantaged individuals themselves suffer from restricting the distinctive growth of others, due to the impossibility of interacting freely with individuals whom one believes are to blame for their unequal social status.

As noted earlier, Dewey also emphasizes how modern conditions often leave individuals unable to avoid otherness, even if they wish to. Given the unforeseen circumstances they must inevitably confront, individuals who attempt to shut others out are not likely to attain the control over their surroundings they seek: "Rapid transportation and communication have compelled men to live as members of an extensive and mainly unseen society…they have to have some notions about [that society] upon which to base their actions."[261] Hence, one who holds to the inferiority of certain others will not likely be able to peacefully maintain that commitment: "Bigotry, intolerance, or even an unswerving faith in the superiority of one's own religious and political creed, are much shaken when individuals are brought face-to-face with each other, or

[259] Dewey, "Creative Democracy", 242.

[260] LW14: 277.

[261] MW13: 329-330.

have the ideas of others continuously and forcibly placed before them."[262] The democratic individual, though, as we have seen, expands her experience and increases her wisdom through active interaction with the unique, unfamiliar forces impacting her life—she accepts the unsettlement of her beliefs and rejects suppression of difference. The discomfort that comes from confrontation with diverse individuals and ideas cannot realistically be avoided, and so the standard of democratic conduct leads individuals toward accepting that insecurity and building a "higher" security through effective interaction with a wider range of individuals and ideas. This democratic individual can thus maintain herself through a wider range of experiences, rather than essentially becoming "lost" in modern conditions because she cannot effectively cope with novel situations. This is a challenging standard, for "Most persons object to having their habits unsettled, their habits of belief no less than habits of overt action."[263] Nonetheless, this standard illustrates why a fully developing democratic individual requires a democratic society defined by the liberty and equality Dewey describes. To the extent that fully developing individuals interact without subordinating the development of any of the individuals involved, we approach a condition in which "all individuals may share in the discoveries and thoughts of others, to the liberation and enrichment of their own experience."[264]

As was also noted earlier, the suppression of certain elements of society serves to rob the "collective wisdom" of resources which should be at its disposal. On the subject of gender, Dewey highlights the imprudence of male-established social norms which effectively deny women the opportunity to supply the wisdom of their unique experiences: "Present ideas of love, marriage, and the family are almost exclusively masculine constructions. Like all idealizations

[262] MW2: 84.

[263] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 59.

[264] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 154.

of human interests that express a dominantly one-sided experience, they are romantic in theory and prosaic in operation…The growing freedom of women can hardly have any other outcome than the production of more realistic and more human morals."[265] Because women's development is often obstructed by social norms regarding their proper role in marriage and the family, men themselves are denied the expansion of experience that would result from interacting with freely growing women—which prevents men from becoming democratic individuals. And, because it has long been socially acceptable for men to essentially speak for women, we cannot currently know what women living with freedom and equality would contribute to a society's collective wisdom, which in turn hinders "the possibility of a public opinion intelligent enough to meet present social problems."[266] When Dewey then addresses a specific issue such as contraception, he exposes how the debate over the issue is itself "undemocratic,"[267] for unequal social status can render women's distinct wisdom on the matter unheeded.

In light of this analysis, we can see the invalidity of the anti-Deweyan arguments made by Talisse, who claims that Dewey's substantive ideal for leading a democratic life and contributing to a democratic society must necessarily be oppressive. Talisse's primary concern is that "if pluralism is correct, any conception of what a democratic citizen should be, or what values and virtues are most important to cultivate among a democratic citizenry, will be reasonably rejectable."[268] Given the fact of diverse approaches to human existence indicated by pluralism, any notion of *the* democratic way of life must, for Talisse, represent an arbitrary

[265] LW5: 276.

[266] Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 149.

[267] LW6: 389. Dewey also addresses birth control in LW6: 146-148.

[268] Talisse, *Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy*, 37.

imposition on reasonable individuals: "the recognition that there are reasonable persons who hold non-Deweyan and anti-Deweyan views exposes the incoherence of the Deweyan social ideal of democracy as a way of life: It is a democratic ideal that prescribes the oppression of reasonable persons."[269] Talisse thus concludes that "Deweyan democracy is anti-pluralist."[270]

As my argument has shown, though, Dewey's emphasis on the fundamental uncertainty of knowledge and reality is completely compatible with, and in fact requires, plural forms of life. His democratic way of life requires recognizing that "There are many meanings and many purposes in the situations with which we are confronted…Each offers its own challenge to thought and endeavor, and presents its own potential value."[271] My Platonic reading of Dewey's democratic way of life illustrates how democratic individuals willingly and actively unsettle themselves (rather than making a futile attempt at avoiding "disruptive" individuals and ideas altogether), and seek to increase their wisdom in a world lacking eternal truth by interacting with as many diverse perspectives as possible. Indeed, Dewey goes to great lengths to show the importance of preserving cultural pluralism in particular, and of preventing one-sided assimilation of difference, for when any of the "many sorts of independent vigorous life" in a diverse society are prevented from maintaining their way of life (provided they are not "dangerous to the welfare of other peoples or groups"), that society loses out on potential sources of wisdom which should be at its service.[272] Thus, contrary to Talisse's assertion that Dewey's democratic principles are exclusionary, oppressive, and dismissive of an inevitable plurality of

[269] Ibid., 51.

[270] Talisse, "Can Democracy Be a Way of Life?", 13.

[271] LW5: 272.

[272] MW10: 286-291. Shane Ralston, also responding to Talisse, has provided a Deweyan account of attempts to accommodate Muslim women wearing the niqab (veil) within Canadian law requiring voters to show their face when voting; see "In Defense of Democracy as a Way of Life: A Reply to Talisse's Pluralist Objection", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 44, no. 4 (2008): 645-646.

worldviews, Dewey "welcomes a clash of 'incompatible opinions'"[273] as integral to his democratic way of life: "giving differences a chance to show themselves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of the other persons but is a means of enriching one's own life-experience, is inherent in the democratic personal way of life."[274]

This analysis also helps illustrate why precisely Dewey insists democratic principles must apply to "the family, the school, industry, religion."[275] Familial or religious principles which promote gender inequity, schools which are still effectively segregated along class and racial lines, and workplaces which make employees the unreflective executors of the will of a superior,[276] are all "societal" threats to a democracy defined by "individual attitudes so deep-seated as to constitute personal character." When these associations suppress certain individuals and/or prohibit members from interacting with diverse others, mere "political freedom" and nominally democratic governing institutions are insufficient remedies. Political institutions may still play a role in achieving a democratic society—recall Dewey's statement regarding the "political and governmental phase of democracy" serving as an effective means for advancing democracy at the individual and societal levels (which, again, also requires governing institutions to be accessible to the voices of more than a privileged few): "When a state is a good state…It places a discount upon injurious groupings and renders their tenure of life precarious. In performing these services, it gives the individual members of valued associations greater liberty and security: it relieves them of hampering conditions which if they had to cope with personally

[273] Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 98.

[274] Dewey, "Creative Democracy", 244.

[275] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 143.

[276] Dewey also frequently refers to the lack of democratic individual development among the wealthy, due to their habit of being served by subordinate others—e.g., see *Democracy and Education*, 84-85, 317-318. I will discuss Dewey's advocacy of workplace democratization in Chapter 3.

would absorb their energies in mere negative struggle against evils."[277] But government (lacking a monopoly on wisdom) cannot act in a vacuum, for the interaction of democratic individuals is needed to generate a society's collective wisdom, which the government must draw upon if it is to help rectify the undemocratic aspects of the individual and societal levels. In Chapter 1, I noted how Deweyan political democracy would entail constitutional mechanisms that make it more feasible to annul individual states' laws banning gay marriage, and as we have seen in this chapter, Dewey's democratic theory would also emphasize how the possibility of a constitutional amendment ensuring marriage equality is made greater by the way in which gay individuals have been slowly but increasingly accepted by others in everyday social relations. As another example, civil rights legislation in the 1960s extended into normally "apolitical" realms such as housing and private business, but such legislation was influenced by alterations in society's collective wisdom on racial matters. Thus, while hindrances to democracy as an individual way of life should be removed by the state, democracy's actualization ultimately depends on individuals themselves demonstrating democratic behavior: "It is only by the choice and the active endeavor of many individuals that this result can be effected."[278]

For Dewey, the democratic way of life—and the democratic society implied by it—cannot be completely achieved once and for all: "Since things do not attain such fulfillment but are in actuality distracted and interfered with, democracy in this sense is not a fact and never will be."[279] We have seen, though, how democracy's continuous actualization can be effected through individuals' continuous engagement with plural forms of life, and how that engagement depends

[277] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 71-72. This also brings to mind Hegel's notion of the state altering civil society to "sublate" the latter's "contradictions"; I will address this Hegelian quality in Chapter 3.

[278] Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 151.

[279] Dewey, *Pubic and its Problems*, 148.

upon other ways of life besides one's own being permitted free and equal development. Dewey's democratic way of life accepts and affirms the existence of a plurality of worldviews and ideals, while also requiring that individuals not be held within a particular association such that they cannot interact with diverse others. When Dewey refers to Thomas Jefferson as "our first great democrat," he focuses not on Jefferson's political views (though he does endorse these[280]) but on how Jefferson's ideals were "developed, checked, and confirmed by extremely extensive and varied practical experience."[281] For Dewey, Jefferson responded to the changing conditions around him by actively interacting with those conditions and expanding his experience. Deweyan democracy does not require that everyone live exactly as Jefferson did, but rather that they not make an impractical attempt at isolated stasis within a shifting world.

Conclusion

This chapter has made the case for viewing Dewey's concept of a democratic individual way of life as a Platonic attempt to harmonize the individual with a democratic "universe of spiritual relations." Given the changing circumstances, impacts from remote forces, and lack of certain truth facing modern individuals, Dewey calls on individuals to live democratically by continuously growing through varied experience and active engagement with diverse others, which allows individuals to direct their own development rather than keeping up a futile attempt at isolation. By becoming democratic individuals, Dewey argues they can fulfill their unique potential and contribute to the wise functioning of society, two goals Plato aims to achieve through notions of fixed truth and of an exclusive few capable of accessing this truth. And, through this Platonic reading, I have shown how Dewey's democratic life does not serve to deny pluralism. The concept of democratic individuality in fact highlights the need to remedy

[280] I have addressed Dewey's support of Jeffersonian political principles in Chapter 1.

[281] LW14: 202.

oppression which has left groups of individuals unable to fulfill their unique potential and contribute their distinct experiences to society's collective wisdom. Hence, there is substantial theoretical purchase offered by interpreting the democratic individual way of life in the light of Dewey's admiration for how Plato "seizes upon the heart of the ethical problem, the relation of the individual to the universal, and states a solution."

On the subject of political democracy, Dewey writes that "Wherever it has fallen it was too exclusively political in nature. It had not become part of the bone and blood of the people in daily conduct of its life. Democratic forms were limited to Parliament, elections and combats between parties…unless democratic habits of thought and action are part of the fiber of a people, political democracy is insecure. It can not stand in isolation. It must be buttressed by the presence of democratic methods in all social relationships."[282] By bringing democracy down to the individual level, Dewey highlights the error in focusing exclusively on political machinery and ignoring other forces that affect whether or not individuals genuinely exercise control over their lives. Threats to democratic development at the societal level, manifested in such injustices as racial and gender discrimination, are still iniquitous even when they are no longer sanctioned by legal and political institutions. For Dewey, governmental intervention should help remove hindrances to individuals' liberty and equality, but democracy ultimately depends on the people at large exhibiting democratic character—expanding their experience through diverse interaction and inviting the unique development of others. There is much more to be said about the democratic individual way of life, though, and the next chapter will expand on this discussion by exploring Dewey's connection to his other philosophical hero: Hegel.

[282] LW11: 225.

The Hegelian Development of Deweyan Democracy

In the previous chapter, we explored the implications of Dewey's claims that "democracy is a *personal* way of individual life," and that "powerful present enemies of democracy can be successfully met only by the creation of personal attitudes in individual human beings,"[283] by investigating his philosophical relationship to Plato. We have seen how Dewey's democratic way of life arises as a response to a world lacking any eternal knowledge or truth, and lacking any fixed hierarchy in which certain individuals have access to a permanent wisdom unavailable to others. Democratic individuals continuously increase their knowledge and wisdom through full engagement with the transitory qualities of ordinary experience, which for Dewey allows those individuals to exercise at least a modicum of control over their inevitably uncertain development, and to contribute unique talents to their society. In this chapter, I aim to draw a clear synthesis of Dewey's notion of a democratic way of life with his conception of the *governmental* aspect of democracy. In particular, I will illustrate how the continuous growth entailed by Deweyan democratic individuality specifically requires a democratic government which can itself continuously evolve. Dewey asserts that "Democracy is the faith that the process of experience is more important than any special result attained,"[284] and on my reading, this signifies that democracy is uniquely justified by a constantly changing world, precisely because its various aspects are themselves in a process of unending development.

Dewey's pragmatist philosophy is indeed defined by the continuous testing of habits, ideas, and principles in response to changing circumstances. Within an evolving, uncertain

[283] John Dewey, "Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us", in *John Dewey: The Political Writings*, eds. Debra Morris and Ian Shapiro (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, [1939] 1993), 241-242.

[284] Ibid., 244.

world, notions of fixed, eternal truth must be abandoned, for they leave us unprepared to cope with the unique, unforeseen situations of experience. However, for Richard Rorty (the thinker most responsible for the revival in pragmatist thought over the last three decades), such a rejection of eternal truth does not necessarily justify democracy. Rorty argues that pragmatism is "compatible with both wholehearted enthusiasm and whole-hearted contempt for democracy."[285] On this view, one can reject eternal truth and commit oneself to democracy or to totalitarianism. And furthermore, Rorty claims that upholding a pragmatist justification of democracy ultimately harms both pragmatism and democracy: he sees the search for a philosophical justification (pragmatist or otherwise) of democracy as exactly the type of search for fixed truth that pragmatism must avoid; and, he contends that democracy is embroiled in unnecessary controversy when its defenders seek to provide it philosophical legitimation. He thus insists that democracy should be given "priority" over philosophy, and that pragmatist philosophy is simply useful for someone who is already committed to democracy.

Though Rorty frequently cites Dewey as a progenitor of his argument, he instead strays widely from Dewey in this depiction of the pragmatism-democracy connection. In claiming that we should give democracy priority to philosophy, Rorty must adhere to a fixed conception of "liberal democracy," and must tailor his version of pragmatism to merely suit that conception. His democratic theory essentially treats the existence of liberal negative freedoms as an inert standard of evaluation for democracy, regardless of any unique, unforeseen threats to self-government which negative freedom may not sufficiently address. He then also defines pragmatism primarily in the negative: it is *not* systematic, *not* constructive, *not* rigorous, and *not* scientific; philosophies which do possess these traits, in his view, must necessarily be aimed at

[285] Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism as Romantic Polytheism", in *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture*, ed. Morris Dickstein (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 25.

attaining knowledge of fixed reality, which leaves pragmatism's value in its capacity to obliterate such philosophies through the use of "satires, parodies, aphorisms."[286] But if we hold, as Rorty does, that pragmatism simply breaks down claims to eternal truth in a way that is useful to an already-committed democrat, then we are left with a static depiction of democracy itself.

In order to demonstrate precisely how Dewey's notion of continuously developing democracy differs from Rorty's fixed conception, I will focus in this chapter on the Hegelian features of Dewey's democratic theory (and concomitantly, of his pragmatism). Dewey's affirmation of the "permanent deposit"[287] left by Hegel on his thought has been drawing increasing attention from Dewey scholars; I will explain how the Hegelian quality of Dewey's democratic individual way of life accounts for the constantly changing world confronting individuals, and for the possibility that unique threats to individual self-government may emerge which old solutions may not rectify. Dewey indicates that under modern conditions in particular, individuals face a world that has undergone, and continues to undergo, rapid development. Under such conditions, individuals must cope with constantly changing situations of experience, not the least because the modern world has interconnected individuals in such a way that we are all unavoidably impacted by others who are well beyond our immediate circle of acquaintances. The capacity of negative freedom to "leave people alone" (as Rorty puts it) is by itself rather feeble in the face of such circumstances. Our lives are inevitably impacted by diverse others, and so we cannot truly be left alone. For Dewey, then, individuals exercise (necessarily imperfect) control over their lives under current conditions by actively interacting with the changing situations of experience in a self-directed way, rather than seeking in futility to avoid

[286] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 369.

[287] John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", in *Contemporary American Philosophy* (Vol. II), eds. George P. Adams and Wm. Pepperell Montague (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), 21.

all uniqueness, all "otherness." And on Hegel's terms, this rigorous, difficult interaction of a subject of experience with novel objects of experience is indeed characteristic of what he calls a genuinely "scientific" existence: "*Pure* self-recognition in absolute otherness, this Aether *as such*, is the ground and soil of Science or *knowledge in general*."[288]

This "scientific" aspect of Dewey's thought is critical for understanding his democratic theory and his pragmatism. Dewey states that "the future of democracy is allied with spread of the scientific attitude."[289] When seen in a Hegelian light, this claim is revealed as a call to avoid the assumption that old habits can be sanctified without continuous testing of the effectiveness of those habits in directing the ever-changing, never-finished situations of experience. Within the world of experience, Dewey reasons, we cannot presume ourselves free from the assault of constantly changing conditions and unforeseen obstacles, and "in a changing world, old habits must perforce need modification, no matter how good they have been."[290] When past, stable habits are shown by novel objects of experience to no longer be pragmatically effective, individuals must engage in the often-painful struggle of reconstructing their habits in order to reestablish effective interaction with the world. As Dewey explains it, "The scientific attitude may almost be defined as that which is capable of enjoying the doubtful."[291] If an individual can in fact see the doubtful as intrinsic to her own development, rather than as an inconvenience to somehow avoid, she can more likely develop "intelligent methods of regulation"[292] for effectively directing her inevitably changing circumstances in self-chosen directions. This is

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[288] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, [1807] 1977), 14.

[289] John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), 148.

[290] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1922), 56.

[291] John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1929), 228.

[292] Ibid., 36.

quite different from Rorty's unscientific pragmatism, in which the negating of claims to eternal truth is the ultimate task, rather than the development through experience of such intelligent methods of regulating uncertain future experience. When Dewey argues that "the ideal of democracy… roots itself ultimately in the principle of moral, self-directing individuality,"[293] this scientific attitude, this willingness to negate oneself and grow through inevitably difficult interaction with novel objects of experience, is essential to becoming such a self-governing, democratic individual.

Dewey's Hegelianism, furthermore, illuminates the concurrent continuous development of the governmental aspect of democracy, along with that of democratic individuality. While it is ultimately up to individuals to accept the challenge of marking a self-directed path through novel objects of experience, it is equally important for Dewey that we scrutinize whether any individuals may be unfairly hindered from exercising that control over their development. The existence of negative freedoms cannot then be an inert standard for evaluating the presence of democracy, for it cannot be assumed that such protections are eternally effective for combating hindrances to democratic individuality. And therefore, it should not be supposed that governing institutions are upholding individual self-government by simply maintaining negative liberties. For example, when social conditions are such that individuals can be forced by poverty to spend their lives in onerous occupations which are wholly controlled by others, they have little opportunity to direct their interaction with objects of experience in self-chosen ways. When confronted with such problems, a democratic government[294] must evolve beyond the protection

[293] MW3: 235.

[294] I have focused in Chapter 1 on how Dewey depicts the achievement of democratic government, which is itself an unending process of overcoming exclusive control of political institutions by powerful interests. In this chapter, I will bracket that issue in order to show how even a government free of undemocratic control is hindered from functioning democratically if it is confined to old measures for coping with unique threats to democratic individuality.

of formal rights and liberties alone if it is not to sustain these iniquitous conditions. This conception of a government's uncertain democratic character being determined by that government's responses to constantly changing social conditions in fact reveals further Hegelian qualities in Dewey's thought; as I will explain below, Hegel declares a state to be "actual" (rather than merely "existing") to the extent that it overcomes the evolving obstacles to freedom generated by an unregulated "civil society," which indicates that the state's actuality is in a process of continuous, indeterminate development. With Rorty, by contrast, there is adherence to a static notion of liberal democracy which must uphold the existence of negative freedom as a fixed standard, thus reifying the governmental aspect of democracy. Rorty's pragmatism cannot adequately account for the possibility that, in a changing world, negative freedom alone may fail to ensure that individuals can actually become self-governing.

After a brief sketch of the scholarly literature on Dewey's relationship to Hegel, this chapter will explore the meaning of Dewey's democratic way of life when read in a Hegelian light. Specifically, I will equate the democratic life with the reconstruction of one's habits in self-directed ways through *negating the negation* brought by changing circumstances and unforeseen objects of experience. I will then discuss the similar significance attributed by Dewey and Hegel to work as the activity by which individuals "objectify" themselves and exercise their own effect upon their environment. The democratization of work relations is indeed crucial to Dewey's democratic way of life—he contends both that workers' self-government is arrested when they must merely execute the will of another, and that it is senseless for society to exclude the wisdom of those actually engaged in an activity from influencing the methods and aims of the activity. Finally, I will contrast the implications of this Hegelian reading of Deweyan democracy with those of Rorty's democratic theory (and, necessarily, of

Rorty's faulty portrayal of Dewey), in order to exhibit how Deweyan democracy, in both its individual and governmental phases, is better suited to a changing, uncertain world than is Rortyan democracy. Dewey does not force us to surrender negative freedom, but he does account for how negative freedom alone may not represent an eternally effective solution in the face of evolving threats to individual self-government, and for why "socialized economy" and "material security" are justified by the unique threats we currently face.

Dewey's Permanent Hegelian Deposit

The notion that Dewey remained indebted to Hegel throughout his career has over the last decade become increasingly accepted by Dewey scholars. James Good has been at the forefront of this movement, arguing that Dewey's conception of individual experience mimics Hegel's dialectical interaction of subject and object in which both terms "are always changed in and by the process."[295] He rejects the long-held claim that Dewey abandoned Hegel in the 1890s, explaining that what Dewey actually rejected was the reading of Hegel by the British neo-Hegelians (e.g., T.H. Green) which emphasized the (impossible) attainment of a "transcendent absolute"; Dewey focused instead on the process of ordinary experience, and "Hegel not only gave Dewey a process philosophy, but the dialectic…gave him a very rich model of process."[296] Good thus contends that Dewey did not see Hegel as a "grand metaphysician"—but rather as a proto-pragmatist focused on "the extent that [ideas] have effects in the everyday world"[297]—and that there is "such a significant Hegelian deposit in his mature thought…it is misleading to speak

[295] James Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity: The "Permanent Hegelian Deposit" in the Philosophy of John Dewey* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 144.

[296] Ibid., 130, 183.

[297] John Shook and James Good, *John Dewey's Philosophy of Spirit, with the 1897 Lecture on Hegel* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 66.

of Dewey's break from Hegel at all."[298] John Shook provides a similar account of Dewey's break from the neo-Hegelians, rather than Hegel himself[299]; Larry Hickman describes how "Dewey's Hegel was historicist, instrumentalist, and functionalist"[300]; and Richard Bernstein states that, for both Hegel and Dewey, "Subject and object are…*functional* distinctions within the dynamics of a unified developing experience."[301] Jim Garrison focuses on their shared emphasis on continuously expanding experience,[302] while he and Good together stress Dewey and Hegel's common principle that diversity of individual development is the "engine of social development."[303] For Tom Rockmore, the important point is that both Hegel and Dewey "rejected Kant's a priori approach to knowledge in favor of an a posteriori epistemological strategy."[304] And for Torjus Midtgarden, we can use Dewey's Hegelian deposit to gain a solider understanding of Dewey's process of social reform, by viewing this process as proceeding through a stage of struggle/mediation and resulting in a wider resolution/unity.[305] Increasingly, the question for Dewey scholars is not whether Dewey remained a Hegelian, but in what ways

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[298] James Good, "Dewey's 'Permanent Hegelian Deposit': A Reply to Hickman and Alexander", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 44, no. 4 (2008): 581.

[299] John Shook, *Dewey's Empirical Theory of Knowledge and Reality* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 154.

[300] Larry Hickman, "Dewey's Hegel: A Search for Unity in Diversity, or Diversity as the Growth of Unity?", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 44, no. 4 (2008): 571.

[301] Richard Bernstein, *The Pragmatic Turn* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 92.

[302] Jim Garrison, "The 'Permanent Deposit' of Hegelian Thought in Dewey's Theory of Inquiry", *Educational Theory* 56, no. 1 (2006): 5.

[303] James Good and Jim Garrison, "Traces of Hegelian *Bildung* in Dewey's Philosophy", in *John Dewey and Continental Philosophy*, ed. Paul Fairfield (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 47.

[304] Tom Rockmore, "Dewey, Hegel, and Knowledge after Kant", in *John Dewey and Continental Philosophy*, ed. Paul Fairfield (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 38.

[305] Torjus Midtgarden, "The Hegelian Legacy in Dewey's Social and Political Philosophy, 1915-1920", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 47, no. 4 (2011): 372-373. I have also sought to contribute to the practical application of Dewey's Hegelianism, specifically in regard to education; see Jeff Jackson, "Reconstructing Dewey: Dialectics and Democratic Education", *Education and Culture* 28, no. 1 (2012): 62-77.

precisely his Hegelianism can illuminate his mature philosophy.

The contention that Dewey did indeed abandon Hegel in the 1890s goes at least as far back as Morton White's 1943 statement that Dewey decided to "throw Hegel overboard,"[306] and remained the dominant view through the 1990s. David Fott makes the claim that "In the two decades surrounding the turn of the [20th] century Dewey's thought made a gradual yet obvious shift away from Hegelian idealism and toward pragmatism"[307]; and in fact, this assertion that Dewey must have abandoned Hegel in order to arrive specifically at pragmatism is the dominant theme underlying the depictions of Dewey's break from Hegel. George Dykhuizen, D.C. Phillips, and Andrew Reck each declare that Dewey had to turn away from Hegel and toward William James to develop the idea of an empirical self actively adjusting to a precarious environment,[308] while H.S. Thayer points more toward Charles Sanders Peirce as the thinker who led Dewey to "free himself from Hegelianism."[309]

In this chapter, I will be arguing for conceiving the connection between pragmatism and democracy in Deweyan rather than Rortyan terms—because I see Dewey as more effectively accounting for a continuously changing world than does Rorty—and in doing so, I will be relying on a Hegelian interpretation of Dewey's pragmatism and democratic theory. Through the course of my argument, it should also become clear why the claims of Peirce and James that "the

[306] Morton White, *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 151.

[307] David Fott, *John Dewey: America's Philosopher of Democracy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 21-22.

[308] George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), 68; D.C. Phillips, "James, Dewey, and the Reflex Arc", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32, no. 4 (1971): 565, 567; Andrew Reck, "The Influence of William James on John Dewey in Psychology", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 20, no. 2 (1984): 87-88, 94, 102.

[309] H.S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), 166-167.

whole function of thought is to produce habits of action,"[310] and that "Pragmatism unstiffens all our theories, limbers them up and sets each one at work,"[311] are hardly incompatible with the core of Hegel's thought. There should then be no trouble in seeing how Dewey could have become a pragmatist without giving up Hegelianism.

Hegelian Dialectical Development

I will now briefly explore the core of Hegel's dialectical philosophy, an exploration which will necessitate engaging with the rather tortuous language employed by Hegel. Nonetheless, I will attempt to make Hegel's thought as clear as possible before I examine how the Hegelian dialectic can illuminate Dewey's democratic individual way of life. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* Hegel depicts experience as a dialectical process in which a being grows and advances by encountering a novel object—an obstacle which initially obstructs the development of that being—and overcoming the obstacle by merging itself with the object. The being grows because, by struggling with the object, it expands its own identity through the experience of that struggle. Hegel states that "experience is the name we give to just this movement, in which the immediate, the unexperienced, i.e., the abstract…becomes alienated from itself and then returns to itself from this alienation, and is only then revealed for the first time in its actuality and truth."[312] If we move from the abstract concept of "being" to the individual as a subject of experience, we would say that, on Hegel's terms, an individual cannot expect to go on interacting with the world without having her past, stable habits disrupted by alien circumstances which force the individual to reconstruct herself, and further actualize her

[310] Charles S. Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear", *Popular Science Monthly* 12 (1878): 286-302.

[311] William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907), 53.

[312] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 21.

individuality through that reconstruction. In other words, a conscious being "can find no peace. If it wishes to remain in a state of unthinking inertia, then thought troubles its thoughtlessness, and its own unrest disturbs its inertia."[313] The upshot here, then, is that once an individual's present self has been disrupted by alien conditions, by novel objects of experience, she can preserve herself only by regenerating a new version of herself out of this "negation"—this destruction of a previously stable identity—a version which has returned from the alienation with an expanded identity: "Life consists rather in being the self-developing whole which…in this movement simply preserves itself."[314]

This confrontation with a novel object of experience, in Hegel's view, takes the subject of experience out of an initial "simplicity" and stimulates it to more expanded development. An object of experience facing a conscious subject could be another individual, a task, an idea, or any situation which takes the subject out of simple, habitual interaction with its surroundings, and forces it to reconstruct itself by effectively merging with the alien object. An individual who is negated by such an object must then reflect on how her previous habits must change, and act on that change in order to overcome the negation. In *The Science of Logic*, Hegel connects the possibility for intelligent action with instances "when the content that motivates a subject to action is drawn out of its immediate unity with the subject and is made to stand before it as an object…"[315] When the individual finds the object to be alien and to obstruct, rather than promote, her development, then "consciousness must alter its knowledge to make it conform to the

[313] Ibid., 51.

[314] Ibid., 108.

[315] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, translated and edited by George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1812] 2010), 17.

object."[316] This confrontation can be expected to require significant struggle, though, as the subject cannot be expected to just easily, immediately determine how to maintain and expand itself in the face of a unique object. But that experience of struggle, for Hegel, is definitive of the subject's developing identity, which is why "negation is equally positive…[it] is a *determinate* negation, it has a *content*."[317] Under constantly changing circumstances, a subject has no eternally stable identity, for it finds itself inevitably interacting with objects of experience which alter its identity. The subject's preservation, then, depends on its capacity to expand itself through inevitable struggle—rather than futilely attempting to isolate itself from alien objects, in which case the subject would be passively molded by objects, and would essentially disappear.

When an individual overcomes inevitable negation, she can resume simple interaction with the world, only this simplicity is expanded as a result of the interaction, and unification, with the object.[318] And, it is important to note that for Hegel, not only is a subject's identity defined by continuous development through interaction with objects, but an object's identity is also defined by continuous development through interaction with subjects. In other words, objects themselves only have existence as they are cognized by subjects,[319] and therefore, when an object is experienced by a new subject, the object itself is negated and expanded through the particular subject's unique interaction with that object: "in the alteration of the knowledge, the object itself alters for it too, for the knowledge that was present was essentially a knowledge of

[316] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 54.

[317] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 33.

[318] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 12.

[319] This point might be a bit murky when we consider how, as I noted above, one example of an object of experience can be another individual. It may seem odd to say that individuals exist both as subjects only through continuous interaction with objects, and as objects only through continuous interaction with subjects. For Hegel, though, this is precisely what makes human-human interaction special, for each subject cognizes an object which cognizes them right back. As such, all individuals are simultaneously subjects for whom other individuals are objects, and objects for other individuals who are subjects. A fully developing individual is both a subject and an object, and that double-sided identity only exists through continuous interaction with others.

the object: as the knowledge changes, so too does the object, for it essentially belonged to this knowledge."[320] In Hegel's view, the genuinely human quality is the capacity to interact with objects in conscious, reflective, self-directed ways, and to "negate the negation" brought by the initial struggle between subject and object. In doing so, individuals do not merely change themselves, but may have their own unique effect on the objects of experience they confront.

A concrete example would be useful here. Dewey himself focuses a great deal on the experience of the teaching profession, and so we might consider how a teacher who is new to her work might be likely to struggle initially in her aim of effectively interacting with a classroom setting. In the beginning, she might feel the need to over-prepare in order to protect from the possibility of being presented with an unforeseen problem by her students, and she might engage in constant reflection and questioning of herself which, in turn, may hinder her from approaching a "unity" with her work—i.e., from attaining the capacity to confidently, effectively interact with the novel situations brought by the activity of teaching. But, if she negates this negation, if through her experience she develops that ability to engage in her work without excessive reflection and questioning, then she has returned to simplicity in expanded form, for her simple interaction with the world will now include the capacity to teach with relative ease. The struggle she initially experienced can then be recognized as an unavoidable consequence of her choice to engage the unique objects of experience generated by becoming a teacher; once she has achieved that greater unity with her work, she can look back at her earlier difficulties as having been essential to the development of her capacity to interact "simply" with the classroom setting. The subject has thus been changed through interaction with the object—she has essentially taken the object of teaching into herself and expanded her identity as a result. And because teaching as an object of experience only exists because subjects engage with it, the object (the activity of

[320] Ibid., 54.

teaching) has also been altered and expanded through interaction with the subject. The identity of this object expands ever-further through taking yet another unique subject of experience into itself, which illustrates how, on Hegelian terms, a subject can exercise a unique effect on the objects of experience it confronts.

Hegel declares that, in the face of changing conditions, the "commonest way" we deceive ourselves is "by assuming something as familiar, and accepting it on that account."[321] Prior interactions, and achieved unities, with objects can provide an individual with useful principles for future experience, useful because they have been tested by prior experience; such a principle "contains all [prior] moments as superseded within itself,"[322] "not only not losing anything through its dialectical advance…but, on the contrary, carrying with itself all that it has gained, inwardly enriched and compressed."[323] Previous experiences with negation, and lessons drawn from those experiences, are preserved by an individual, and in fact help to define her developing identity. Still, no principle gleaned through prior interaction with an object can be merely accepted as "familiar," for an individual's unity with her surroundings will inevitably be disrupted again by new alien objects. But, if she actively engages with the disruption brought by new objects, she approaches Hegel's standard of the *Scientific*: "Scientific cognition…demands surrender to the life of the object…"[324] Even the teacher with substantial prior teaching experience—if she assumes her teaching will bring no unique obstacles (i.e., if she avoids "surrender to the life of the object")—may become lost and ineffective in her work in the face of the changing circumstances and novel situations generated by her activity. Her past principles

[321] Ibid., 18.

[322] Ibid., 108.

[323] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 750.

[324] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 32.

may become hollow if they are not continuously tested through practical interaction with new objects of experience. If those principles fail to bring the subject into intended unities with the unique objects, then those principles must be suitably reconstructed in response to this "negation" of the principles. In Hegelian terms, a principle is filled with content from the ongoing process of negating the negations intrinsic to the principle's growth.

Before returning to Dewey, it is important to note the distinction Hegel draws between a "being *in-itself*" and a "being *for-itself*." The being in-itself cannot recognize itself in the objects which immediately oppose its development; the "other" is for this being only an external entity which has no essential connection to the being—i.e., this being is enclosed within itself and cuts off interaction with objects which obstruct its growth. Conversely, the being for-itself sees the objects which oppose it as intrinsic to its own development—the term "for itself" is used because, when this being sees itself in the objects which oppose its development, its own being exists "for itself" in that it can comprehend how the growth of its own being takes place in the encounter with alien objects. Hegel describes how for the being in-itself "life is indeed one of untroubled equality and unity with itself, for which otherness and alienation, and the overcoming of alienation, are not serious matters. But this *in-itself* is abstract universality, in which the nature of the divine life *to be for itself*, and so too the self-movement of the form, are altogether left out of account."[325] Rather than seeing negation as an inconvenience to avoid if possible, an individual who is a being for-itself sees the negation brought by novel objects of experience as essential to her own development. She generates her own development by putting herself into—exercising her own unique effect upon—the objects she interacts with, and by making the effort to direct those interactions toward self-chosen ends. As Hegel puts it, "being-for-itself consists

[325] Ibid., 10.

in having thus transcended limitation, its otherness…in its other it refers itself only to itself."[326] Such an individual does not lose herself in confronting that which is "other" to herself, that which immediately obstructs her development, but rather finds in that confrontation the path of her own further development.

Dewey's Hegelian Democratic Way of Life

When affirming the "permanent deposit" left by Hegel on his thought, Dewey further reports, "Were it possible for me to be a devotee of any system, I still should believe that there is greater richness and greater variety of insight in Hegel than in any other single systematic philosopher."[327] I will now elucidate Dewey's notion of a democratic individual way of life by exploring its Hegelian qualities, particularly how Dewey associates this way of life with unending growth through a "scientific" interaction with changing circumstances and unforeseen, unique objects of experience. This analysis will help form the basis for my differentiation of Dewey's and Rorty's democratic theories, where I will show that Dewey's theory conceives of the interlocking, never-ending development of democratic individuality and democratic governance in response to inevitably changing conditions, while Rorty ends up with a static conception of democracy which is based on the presence of liberal negative freedoms.

For Dewey, the effect of scientific advancement has been such that past notions of eternal truth and fixed social hierarchy have been progressively overthrown.[328] As a result, an individual cannot simply rely on any eternally sacred principles, or other eternally wise individuals, to direct her path in a way that will be most fulfilling for her personally, and most valuable to her

[326] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 127-128.

[327] Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", 21. Dewey does then go on to say he holds Plato in at least the same esteem as Hegel; his relationship to Plato has been explored in Chapter 2.

[328] This point is central to the argument of *The Quest for Certainty*; I have elaborated on this point in Chapter 2.

society as a whole. Dewey also emphasizes that modern conditions make it effectively impossible for individuals to isolate themselves from the indirect consequences of actions taken far outside their immediate control, and by other individuals far beyond their immediate circle of acquaintances: "Today the influences that affect the actions performed by individuals are so remote as to be unknown…The career of individuals, their lives and security as well as prosperity is now affected by events on the other side of the world."[329] Hence, with individuals unable to avoid dissimilar forces within a constantly changing world lacking eternal foundations, Dewey's call to live democratically and scientifically is essentially a challenge to direct one's own never-ending development, by actively interacting with—and having a distinct, self-chosen effect upon—the novel objects of experience one inevitably encounters.

In the face of a world substantially altered by scientific advancement, Dewey argues that individuals can more effectively interact with such a world by demonstrating a type of scientific mindset themselves, even if they do not engage in the typical "scientific" activities. He explains, "the term 'science' is likely to suggest those bodies of knowledge which are most familiar to us in physical matters; and thus to give the impression that what is sought is reduction of matters of conduct to similarly physical or even quasi-mathematical form. It is, however, analogy with the method of inquiry…which is intended."[330] We have seen Hegel's *Science* involve the rigorous work of a subject of experience to form provisional unities with objects which immediately oppose its development. With Dewey, such a scientific existence can allow an individual to exercise some measure of control over her development—by engaging in continuous *inquiry*, she may develop effective methods for intelligently regulating her interactions with novel objects of experience: "If the inquiry is adequately directed, the final issue is the unified situation that has

[329] Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 45, 165.

[330] MW3: 4-5.

been mentioned."[331] By taking action toward "unifying" herself with (rather than futilely seeking to avoid) the alien objects she inevitably confronts, this individual can "profit by [the changing world] instead of being at its mercy" by effecting "processes of change so directed that they achieve an intended consummation."[332] Like the teacher described above—who directs the inevitably unique objects of experience generated by her activity toward "intended consummations"—this individual can develop through experience the capacity to exercise a self-chosen effect on her changing circumstances. And, as with Hegel, such intelligent action for Dewey entails keeping principles gleaned through prior interaction with objects open to revision: "the principles which man projects as guides of reconstructive action, are not dogmas. They are hypotheses to be worked out in practice, and to be rejected, corrected and expanded as they fail or succeed in giving our present experience the guidance it requires."[333]

Furthermore, the type of subject-object interaction identified by Hegel is closely mirrored by Dewey. Dewey characterizes experience as when "things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through its intercourse with things previously external to it."[334] Subject and object interact, and through that interaction, "both of them acquire a form and order they did not at first possess."[335] The object with which a subject interacts could be "a stone," or "The creature operating may be a thinker in his study and the environment with which

[331] John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), 107.

[332] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, [1925] 1958), 70, 161.

[333] John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, enl. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, [1948] 1957), 116.

[334] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, [1934] 1980), 246.

[335] Ibid., 65.

he interacts may consist of ideas instead of a stone."[336] Regardless, the subject's identity is altered through the interaction, and the object's identity alters as well, for "every individual brings with him, when he exercises his individuality, a way of seeing and feeling that in its interaction with old material creates something new, something previously not existing in experience."[337] Of course, if an individual is to become unified with an object, and thus further her self-directed development, she will likely have to struggle through a period of substantial "negation," which requires "willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance"[338] brought by unfamiliarity with the object. Such engagement with negation "would not assure us against failure, but it would render failure a source of instruction,"[339] thus making the struggle a positive aspect of the process of growth. If an individual does then overcome the disparity between herself and the object, she can resume effective, "simple" interaction with the world, and it will be an expanded simplicity, because "in a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through which it has successfully passed."[340] And, again as with Hegel, this growing individual preserves what she has learned through prior interaction with objects as she continues her development: "things retained from past experience that would grow stale from routine or inert from lack of use, become coefficients in new adventures and put on a raiment of fresh meaning."[341]

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[336] Ibid., 44.

[337] Ibid., 108.

[338] John Dewey, *How We Think* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1910), 13.

[339] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, 12.

[340] Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 14.

[341] Ibid., 60-61.

We have seen how Hegel's being for-itself sees the objects of experience which negate it as intrinsic to its own development. For Dewey, similarly, "The growing, enlarging, liberated self…goes forth to meet new demands and occasions, and readapts and remakes itself in the process. It welcomes untried situations."[342] In part because of the way scientific advancement has progressively brought down claims to fixed truth, Dewey rejects the assumption that past principles or eternally wise individuals can be wholly relied upon to direct one's development. He therefore "places upon men the responsibility for…subjecting to the test of consequences their most cherished prejudices. Such a change involves a great change in the seat of authority and the methods of decision in society."[343] This is the democratizing effect science has already had, and Dewey presents the expansion of the scientific mindset as the way forward for individuals in the face of such an uncertain, changing world—thus his association of democracy (as noted above) with both "self-directing individuality" and "spread of the scientific attitude." He claims that "If democracy is possible it is because every individual has a degree of power to govern himself,"[344] and when individuals are inevitably confronted by unique objects of experience (and in particular, when they are inextricably interconnected, by modern scientific and economic changes, with other individuals beyond their immediate circle of acquaintances), they can lead the democratic way of life (i.e., govern themselves) by actively interacting with, and exercising some self-chosen effect upon, their constantly changing world.

The Threat Posed by Undemocratic Work

In Dewey's view, we must not simply assume the conditions are present for allowing individuals to lead such a democratic life. He maintains that "Democracy is a way of personal

[342] John Dewey and James Tufts, *Ethics*, rev. ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932), 341.

[343] Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, 160.

[344] LW6: 431.

life controlled…by faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and right action if proper conditions are furnished."[345] He also insists, though, that not only are these proper conditions not present, but the hindrances to such conditions are themselves subject to change. A prime example of this, for Dewey, is how the movement for *political democracy* emerged in response to particularly pressing problems regarding dynastic control of governance, which were effectively combated through the establishment of electoral processes, as well as of formal rights and liberties for individuals.[346] Dewey emphasizes that, despite this democratic development, new problems have still come to the fore—problems which are more *social* rather than exclusively *political* in quality.[347]

I will illustrate this point by focusing on *work*,[348] a central concept for both Dewey and Hegel. At the start, it is important to note how Dewey and Hegel provide parallel distinctions between the spheres of "state" and "society." Dewey explains, "I mean by 'state' the organization of the resources of community life through governmental machinery of legislation and administration. I mean by 'society' the less definite and freer play of the forces of the community which goes on in the daily intercourse and contact of men in an endless variety of ways that have nothing to do with politics or government or the state in any institutional sense."[349] In *The Philosophy of Right*, Hegel provides a similar account of "civil society" as the realm of general, widespread interaction between individuals (beyond the immediate comfort of

[345] Dewey, "Creative Democracy," 242.

[346] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chicago: Swallow Press [1927] 1954), 77.

[347] Ibid., 143.

[348] Tom Malleson, in an intelligent argument for workplace democracy under current economic conditions, notes that "For the average working person in today's advanced capitalist societies, there is little free choice about the governance structure under which one will work. True, one may exit a particular workplace, but it's very difficult to escape hierarchical work altogether"; see Tom Malleson, "Making the Case for Workplace Democracy: Exit and Voice as Mechanisms of Freedom in Social Life", *Polity* 45, no. 4 (2013): 627.

[349] MW2: 81-82.

the family), while identifying "the state as a political entity" with his particular conceptions of the legislature, the executive, and the crown.[350] Dewey and Hegel also similarly object to the individual/society dualism of "state of nature" theories, rejecting the assumption that it is either helpful or possible to analyze individuals separate from their social context.[351] And because all individuals participate in, and are heavily influenced by, social relations, Dewey stresses that democratizing government alone is a hollow endeavor unless society itself is democratized: "political democracy is not the whole of democracy…it can be effectively maintained only where democracy is social…where there is a wide and varied distribution of opportunities."[352]

Dewey points to the conditions of work in his time as a particularly pressing problem "which proceed[s] from social conditions"[353] rather than any exclusively political injustice. He reasons that "the ways in which activities are carried on for the greater part of the waking hours of the day…can only be a highly important factor in shaping personal dispositions."[354] For many individuals who live in poverty, the choice of work may be dictated primarily by the need for means of survival; in order to avoid starvation, individuals can be forced to engage in onerous occupations in which they "have no share…in directing the activities in which they physically participate."[355] As a result, "many persons have callings which make no appeal to them, which are pursued simply for the money reward that accrues…such callings constantly provoke one to

[350] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, translated with notes by T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1821] 1945), 122-123, 176.

[351] Ibid., 128; and, Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, 247-248.

[352] MW10: 138.

[353] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, 123.

[354] LW11: 221.

[355] John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (New York: Capricorn Books, [1930] 1962), 131.

aversion, ill will, and a desire to slight and evade."[356] Such work denies individuals the opportunity to mark a self-directed path through the objects of experience generated by their activities, for they often have the aims and methods of their activities dictated to them by superiors. It would be senseless to speak of subject-object interaction here, because the subject has essentially been eliminated; instead of a subject engaging with objects in its distinctly unique fashion, the subject's interaction with objects is wholly determined by others. The factor of poverty in particular displays the iniquity of this situation, for the individuals caught in such a situation have made no genuine choice to engage with such objects, but do so only to achieve necessary means of survival. It is not reasonable to then ask those individuals to "see themselves" in the objects involved in their work—they are forced to engage in the work for no purpose besides the wage which comes at the end, making novel objects of experience into merely needless difficulty in the way of finishing the activity and receiving that needed wage. Dewey concludes that, for those caught in such a situation, "minds are warped, frustrated, unnourished by their activities," and that a society discards significant potential wisdom "when multitudes are excluded from occasion for the use of thought and emotion in their daily occupations."[357] Such societal iniquity thus represents an obstacle to the democratic individual way of life, and the right to vote, protections from government, and other distinctly political measures cannot be presumed eternally sufficient for addressing such an obstacle.

We noted above Dewey's focus on the experience of the teaching profession, and teaching is indeed a frequent example of his for demonstrating the problem of undemocratic work. His description of the dictation of educational methods and aims to teachers still rings true today: "The dictation…of the subject-matter to be taught, to the teacher who is to engage in the

[356] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Free Press, [1916] 1966), 317.

[357] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 132-133.

actual work of instruction, and frequently, under the name of close supervision, the attempt to determine the methods which are to be used in teaching, mean nothing more or less than the deliberate restriction of intelligence, the imprisoning of the spirit."[358] When a teacher must merely execute the will of superintendents and politicians, she is then not a unique subject exercising a distinct, self-chosen effect on the objects of experience generated by teaching. As a result, the potential wisdom available from those who are actually engaged in practical application and concrete testing of educational ideas and methods is effectively suspended. As Dewey puts it, "since it is the teachers who make the final application, ought they not to play a large part in developing and making concrete and real the ideas which they are engaged in executing?"[359] If teachers cannot play a part in determining the educational principles to be pragmatically tested in the classroom, then their potential wisdom is lost to society, and they are hindered from exhibiting democratic individuality.

It should be noted that, for Dewey, work does not refer simply to an individual's employment. Rather, work encompasses any activity in which "continuous attention…[and] intelligence must be shown in selecting and shaping means" to an end,[360] and which aims at producing "an objective result."[361] This in fact mirrors Hegel's depiction of "free will" as the "objectification" of oneself according to one's self-chosen aims; for Hegel, leaving the pure subjectivity of mere reflection, and engaging in sustained, practical interaction with objects, transforms the subject's identity through that interaction, and allows the subject to exercise its

[358] MW3: 232.

[359] MW15: 185. It should be noted, though, that Dewey would not suggest giving teachers tyrannical control over the classroom, for students themselves must also be able to exercise an effect on the classroom experience; I will address this point in Chapter 5.

[360] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 204.

[361] Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 279.

own effect on the objects it confronts (i.e., objectification).[362] Work, therefore, is what we do when we engage in extended interaction with objects of experience, with the conscious aim of producing an intended objective result.[363] Hegel points out, however, that "By alienating the whole of my time, as crystallized in my work, and everything I produced, I would be making into another's property the substance of my being, my universal activity and actuality, my personality."[364] Under (as Dewey puts it) "unfree economic conditions,"[365] many are forced to alienate the entirety of their capacity to objectify themselves to the control of others. Individuals living in poverty may be forced to spend their lives employed within occupations that permit little to no opportunity to exhibit themselves as unique subjects exercising a distinct, self-chosen effect on objects of experience. Genuine "objectification" is then hardly a possibility, as the subjects are effectively not present in the objects encountered.[366]

This discussion of work helps illustrate why Deweyan democracy must become *social*

[362] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 23-33.

[363] This point may bring to mind the issue of housework, which does not have the status of a paid occupation. On Deweyan terms, housework would not qualify less as work than any occupation, but it is still clearly problematic when economic and/or customary circumstances move women disproportionately into housework and cut them off from opportunities for other kinds of "objectification." Dewey's support of gender equality in fact exhibits an important point of distinction between him and Hegel; see LW5: 276, and *Philosophy of Right*, 114.

[364] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 54. Jeffrey Church has further shown how Hegel's political philosophy in fact requires democracy in "economic associations" in order for individuals to become genuinely self-determining; see Jeffrey Church, "G.W.F. Hegel on Self-Determination and Democratic Theory", *American Journal of Political Science* 56, no. 4 (2012): 1029-1033.

[365] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 204.

[366] It should be noted that these conditions which leave many of the employed with "no concern with their occupation beyond the money return it brings," also can harm the employers, for their "outlook may be confined to profit and power" (Ibid., 317). Dewey suggests that because of "the hardening effects of a one-sided control of the affairs of others" (Ibid., 318), there can be a lack "of inner contentment on the part of those who form our pecuniary oligarchy…" (*Individualism Old and New*, 54). This of course closely mirrors Hegel's lord-bondsman narrative, in which the lord, despite controlling the labor of the bondsman, is stunted in his development because he can achieve no "objectivity and permanence" (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, 118). Hence, the wealthy who do not genuinely work for themselves also fall short of becoming Deweyan democratic individuals.

rather than exclusively *political*.[367] The capacity of individuals to lead democratic lives is affected no less by social conditions (such as the opportunity to exercise a unique, self-chosen effect on the objects of experience contained within one's work), as it is by the presence of any particular political machinery. Political institutions are undoubtedly still important, though, as Dewey claims that "factors of democratic government are means that have been found expedient for realizing democracy as the truly human way of living."[368] Government can be an effective means for rectifying ills found in society, and this requires *democratic* government so that no social elements are effectively excluded from having a voice in determining the ills to be addressed, and how to address them: "It is impossible for high-brows to secure a monopoly of such knowledge as must be used for the regulation of common affairs…No government by experts in which the masses do not have the chance to inform the experts as to their needs can be anything but an oligarchy managed in the interests of the few."[369] The permanent Hegelian deposit in fact comes through again here, for although Dewey objects to Hegel's rather undemocratic "internal organization of the state," calling it "the most artificial and the least satisfactory portion of his political philosophy,"[370] he adheres to Hegel's broader principle of the state "sublating" civil society. For Hegel, this sublation[371] (*aufheben*) refers to how the state becomes further "actual" to the extent that it *elevates* civil society by preserving the elements of civil society which promote freedom (e.g., opportunity for self-directed individuality), and

[367] Axel Honneth has also made a general connection of Deweyan democracy with individuals' contributions to society through their self-chosen activities (in a Hegelian sense); he goes wrong, however, in suggesting that this is exclusive to Dewey's early writings; see Axel Honneth, "Democracy as Reflexive Cooperation: John Dewey and the Theory of Democracy Today", *Political Theory* 26, no. 6 (1998): 763-783.

[368] LW11: 218.

[369] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 206, 208.

[370] From Dewey's 1897 Lecture on Hegel, printed in Shook and Good, *John Dewey's Philosophy of Spirit*, 159.

[371] For further explanation of the technical meaning of "sublation," see *Science of Logic*, 81-82.

negating those which hinder freedom (e.g., poverty).[372] When the state does not work to overcome the evolving defects generated by civil society, when it does nothing to address the disunities (e.g., economic disparities) between individuals that emerge within an unregulated civil society, then that state "merely exists": "The state is actual…Actuality is always the unity of universal and particular, the universal dismembered in the particulars which seem to be self-subsistent, although they really are upheld and contained only in the whole. Where this unity is not present, a thing is not actual even though it may have acquired existence. A bad state is one which merely exists; a sick body exists too, but it has no genuine reality."[373]

Dewey himself is vague on specific government policies for democratizing work relations, instead focusing on general statements regarding "a state of affairs in which the interest of each in his work is uncoerced and intelligent,"[374] while also warning us that the achievement of such an aim can only "come slowly and painfully."[375] It is evident, though, that a Deweyan cannot be satisfied with the presence of simple political freedoms (e.g., the right to vote), or deem any government "democratic" that permits social conditions which coerce individuals into spending their lives in occupations which rob them of any control over their own experience. Dewey's Hegelian position, that a government's uncertain democratic character is determined by that government's efforts to overcome the undemocratic aspects of the social realm, will be critical to the analysis in the rest of this chapter, and in the next chapter.

Dewey vs. Rorty, and Unending vs. Fixed Democracy

[372] Elsewhere, I have provided a detailed account of how Hegel's state may impose on civil society in order to both preserve and elevate civil society; see Jeff Jackson, "The Resolution of Poverty in Hegel's 'Actual' State", *Polity* (forthcoming, Fall 2014).

[373] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 283.

[374] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 316.

[375] LW17: 131.

I will now use the preceding analysis to demonstrate how Dewey's notion of democratic governance is in a process of continuous interlocking development with that of democratic individuality—in sharp contrast to Rorty who, in his zeal to rid democracy of any connection with fixed truths, actually formulates a fixed conception of democracy which lacks the pragmatist capacity for continuous development in response to changing circumstances. It was noted above that Rorty (who has been more responsible than anyone for the revival of interest in Dewey, and in pragmatism generally) maintains that Deweyan pragmatism does not necessarily lead us "either to democracy or antidemocracy."[376] The reason for this is Rorty's belief that "Those who share Dewey's pragmatism…[deny] there is any sense in which liberal democracy 'needs' philosophical justification at all," and that such thinkers are "putting politics first and tailoring a philosophy to suit."[377] According to such a viewpoint, "liberal institutions would be all the better if freed from the need to defend themselves in terms of [philosophical] foundations – all the better for not having to answer the question 'In what does the privileged status of freedom consist?'"[378] For Rorty (and according to Rorty, for Dewey as well), it is crucial that "democracy takes precedence over philosophy,"[379] because philosophical foundations necessarily aim at the type of fixed truth which excludes the unique vocabularies of certain individuals. Pragmatism does not then lead to democracy, because a commitment to democracy must come before a commitment to pragmatism.

Democracy, therefore, is Rorty's foundation, and it demands no further justification

[376] Rorty, "Pragmatism as Romantic Polytheism", 27.

[377] Richard Rorty, "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy", in *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History*, eds. Merrill Peterson and Robert Vaughan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 260.

[378] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 57.

[379] Rorty, "Priority of Democracy to Philosophy", 270.

because "liberal political freedoms…require no consensus on any topic more basic than their own desirability," and, more particularly, because without "the standard 'bourgeois freedoms'…people will be less able to work out their private salvations, create their private self-images…"[380] This is a democratic conception defined primarily by negative freedom—by the intrinsic desirability of ensuring all individuals enjoy the protections of liberal society, and leaving people alone to use that freedom as they wish. Referencing John Stuart Mill, Rorty insists "the only exception to democracy's commitment to honor the rights of individuals" is preventing harm to others' private self-images.[381] And, again presenting himself as a Deweyan, Rorty argues that such democratic principles need no further justification than the fact that they already exist, and have been shown to be desirable to those who live with them: "democratic institutions are…[not] to be measured by anything more specific than the moral intuitions of the particular historical community that has created those institutions."[382]

Rorty's pragmatist philosophy, then, is meant to reinforce his particular conception of democracy. On his terms, pragmatism does not justify democracy, but can still be useful for someone who is already committed to the type of liberal democracy he outlines. As his democratic theory focuses mainly on how liberal political freedoms successfully work against substantive conceptions of the good life, his "characterization of pragmatism is that it is simply anti-essentialism applied to notions like 'truth,' 'knowledge,' 'language,' 'morality,' and similar objects of philosophical theorizing."[383] He again uses Dewey to buttress his view, portraying Dewey as someone who sought merely to obliterate past philosophical claims, rather than

[380] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 84-85.

[381] Rorty, "Pragmatism as Romantic Polytheism", 33.

[382] Rorty, "Priority of Democracy to Philosophy", 269.

[383] Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 162.

constructing any new proposals for philosophy: "[Dewey's work] is therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic, designed to make the reader question his own motives for philosophizing rather than to supply him with a new philosophical program…Great systematic philosophers, like great scientists, build for eternity. Great edifying philosophers destroy for the sake of their own generation."[384] As such, the elements of Dewey's thought—which I have addressed above—that clearly do aim at a constructive philosophical program must be explained away. Rorty claims the "recurrent flaw in Dewey's work" is "his habit of announcing a bold new positive program when all he offers, and all he needs to offer, is criticism of the tradition."[385] The importance Dewey places on science, on rigorous construction—through interaction with objects of experience—of provisional principles of knowledge for effectively guiding future experience, is a particular problem for Rorty, and he responds by simply asserting that "his constant exaltation of something called 'the scientific method,' was an unfortunate legacy of Dewey's youth…"[386] Rorty insists that Dewey's pragmatism ultimately does rid itself of the "spirit of *seriousness*"[387] characteristic of philosophies which aim to be scientifically constructive, and thus becomes useful for one committed to a democracy based on obliterating any substantive notions of freedom and leaving individuals alone.

Several current pragmatist thinkers have critiqued Rorty's depiction of pragmatism, including Hilary Putnam,[388] Susan Haack,[389] and Joseph Margolis.[390] The particularly puzzling

[384] Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 5-6, 369.

[385] Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 78.

[386] Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 17.

[387] Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 87.

[388] Hilary Putnam, *Renewing Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 180.

aspect of Rorty's position and, even more so, of his portrayal of Dewey, is that it is difficult to discern exactly what is practical, or pragmatic, about his pragmatism. Rorty is correct that Dewey rejects "the quest for a certainty which shall be absolute and unshakeable" and the attempt to "grasp universal Being, and Being which is universal is fixed and immutable."[391] However, Dewey does not merely aim to expose the futility of the certainty sought through claims to eternal truth, but to explore how individuals may develop a more meaningful—though necessarily provisional—certainty through intelligently interacting with their changing conditions: "The quest for certainty by means of exact possession in mind of immutable reality is exchanged for search for security by means of active control of the changing course of events."[392] Through provisional, not eternal, principles gleaned from the practical interaction with objects of experience described above, individuals may achieve "active control of objects," by "purposefully introducing changes which will alter the direction of the course of events," thus becoming "a participator in [the world's] changes."[393] With Rorty, though, there is little that is practical about pragmatism, as he focuses mainly on the mere recognition that there is no truth independent of our linguistic descriptions of the world,[394] and on how "edifying" thinkers use this recognition to "prevent [philosophy] from attaining the secure path of a science."[395]

It is this Hegelian-"scientific" quality of Dewey's pragmatism that is conspicuously

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[389] Susan Haack, *Evidence and Inquiry: Towards Reconstruction in Epistemology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 182-183, 189, 193-194.

[390] Joseph Margolis, *Pragmatism without Foundations: Reconciling Realism and Relativism*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum International, 2007), 139, 153, 224, 267.

[391] Dewey, *Quest for Certainty*, 6-7.

[392] Ibid., 204.

[393] Ibid., 37, 100, 213.

[394] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 4-5.

[395] Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 372.

absent from Rorty's pragmatism, and from his portrayal of Dewey. We have seen that Deweyan science is not an unfortunate detour into seeking fixed truth; rather, for Dewey the scientific mindset is such that "the existence of fixed kinds of things, has…been destroyed,"[396] and that "knowledge is obtained…through deliberate institution of a definite and specified course of change"[397]—i.e., through putting principles developed through experience into practice in order to exercise a distinct, self-chosen effect on novel objects of experience. Interestingly, Rorty aligns himself with Hegel[398] as well as with Dewey, but Hegel would likely deem Rorty as someone whose supposed scruples create "a mistrust of Science, which in the absence of such scruples gets on with the work itself, and actually cognizes something," and who thus seeks to be "exempt from the hard work of Science."[399] Unlike Rorty, then, Dewey provides a Hegel-inspired pragmatism which is actually pragmatic—which puts ideas into action against objects of experience, and determines the truth of those ideas by whether they "successfully modify conditions in the direction desired."[400] Rorty thus fails to realize the implications of what happens when, as Margolis puts it, "we think of pragmatism as Hegelian in inspiration."[401]

We can see, then, how Dewey's pragmatism is a "constructive" philosophy (as Rorty notices, but chooses to dismiss); and we can also begin to see why this constructive quality leads Dewey to a notion of democratic governance which can itself continuously develop in response to changing circumstances, while Rorty is left with a fixed conception of democracy. Deweyan

[396] Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 286.

[397] Dewey, *Quest for Certainty*, 84.

[398] Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, xli.

[399] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 47-48.

[400] MW4: 185.

[401] Margolis, *Pragmatism without Foundations*, 273.

democracy does account for the importance of the negative freedoms achieved by liberal democracy, while avoiding the assumption that a government necessarily promotes democratic freedom when it primarily upholds only those formal rights and liberties in the face of unique threats to individual self-government. Rorty claims that Dewey aimed to undermine the "philosophical foundations" of liberalism because he saw "this undermining as a way of strengthening liberal institutions,"[402] for if liberals were freed from having to posit such eternal foundations, it would be easier for a liberal society to "leave people alone, to let them try out their private visions of perfection in peace."[403] Rorty is correct that Dewey's thought undermines the philosophical foundations of liberalism. But, the reason Dewey does this is because he sees the foundational ideas which gave rise to liberalism as having become undemocratic in practice.[404] In particular, he worries that the "special interpretation of liberty" put forward by liberals has been largely "frozen…into a doctrine to be applied at all times under all social circumstances."[405] Dewey appreciates how the negative, "bourgeois" freedoms achieved by liberalism have successfully worked in favor of "liberation from despotic dynastic rule," and "from inherited legal customs that hampered the rise of new forces of production."[406] However, the assumption that these struggles for freedom were *the* struggles for freedom can blind us to the manner in which new circumstances call for new means to address uniquely oppressive

[402] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 57.

[403] Rorty, "Priority of Democracy to Philosophy", 273.

[404] Similar critiques of Rorty can be found in: Robert Westbrook, *Democratic Hope: Pragmatism and the Politics of Truth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 1-17; Richard Bernstein, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward: Richard Rorty on Liberal Democracy and Philosophy", *Political Theory* 15, no. 4 (1987): 538-563; Richard Shusterman, "Pragmatism and Liberalism between Dewey and Rorty", *Political Theory* 22, no. 3 (1994): 391-413.

[405] John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935), 34.

[406] Ibid., 48.

situations. We may then identify liberty simply as "ability to make money,"[407] and thus "ignore the immense regimentation to which workers are subjected, intellectual as well as manual workers"[408]—which, as noted above, hinders workers from leading democratic lives, from interacting with objects in self-chosen ways. If liberals wish to promote free individuality in the face of these new circumstances, they need not give up negative freedoms, but they must recognize that "material security" and "socialized economy [are] the means of free individual development as ends."[409] Rorty, therefore, misses the point of Dewey's undermining of the philosophical foundations of liberalism. Dewey does not merely assume "liberal democracy" is achieved, and then aim to save its defenders the effort of justifying its existence. Rather, he emphasizes that liberalism has to cope with an evolving world, and he exposes how liberalism may become undemocratic if it does not itself evolve.

It should also be noted here that Rorty himself does endorse some "leftist" policies that aim at achieving "economic and political change" and at combating the advantages of "the rich and powerful" (although his policy positions on these matters are more moderate than Dewey's).[410] This could make it seem as if Rorty does indeed adequately account for the necessity of "positive freedom," and of the presence of certain material conditions to give freedom real value. The problem with this is that Rorty's philosophical position has locked him into the viewpoint that democracy has already been achieved in the United States, and all he can do then is throw his lot in with a leftist rather than rightist picture of America's future, with no way of showing us that rightist policies are any less democratic than leftist policies. His

[407] LW11: 366.

[408] LW11: 294-295.

[409] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, 57, 90.

[410] Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 30-31, 48, 104.

commitment to giving democracy priority to philosophy is intended to save democracy from philosophical controversy, but it leaves us assuming that America is already sufficiently democratic because of the liberal protections it has instituted; his version of pragmatism, then, is meant simply to be a useful philosophy for reinforcing the type of democracy that currently exists in America. When he expresses his view that America should go beyond negative freedom, he cannot make a philosophical case for why, in the midst of changing conditions, America's democratic status might depend on the achievement of positive freedom, for democracy must be said to already exist, and he can only express a preference that American democracy enact certain policies rather than others. Again misinterpreting Dewey, Rorty asserts that "[Dewey's] pragmatism is an answer to the question 'What can philosophy do for the United States?' rather than to the question 'How can the United States be philosophically justified?'"[411] As I have shown, Dewey does not simply assume that America has achieved democracy, and he does not merely tailor a philosophy to suit this already-accomplished democracy. Unlike Rorty (for whom America's democratic status cannot be fundamentally questioned), Dewey's philosophical position does not treat democracy as a fixed fact, and it instead allows him to conceive of the possibility that America might become more or less democratic in the face of changing circumstances, and that new governmental actions might be required by these changing circumstances to uphold America's uncertain democratic character.

Both Dewey and Rorty associate democratic freedom with the opportunity of individuals to create themselves. But it is Dewey, thanks to the constructive aspect of his pragmatism, who can effectively account for the possibility of unique obstacles (unforeseen by liberalism) to democratic self-creation emerging in the face of changing circumstances, and for the need of unique actions from democratic governments toward overcoming those obstacles. Rorty seeks to

[411] Ibid., 27.

be historicist and to eliminate fixed entities from his thinking, but in doing so, he actually creates a static conception of "liberal democracy" based on nothing more than the dominant "moral intuitions" of his time. He presents democracy as essentially already in existence, and as a result, he effectively discounts the possibility that his particular notion of democracy, and the moral intuitions with which it is associated, may permit significant impediments to individual self-government. In fact, his call to "leave people alone" has little use in a modern world where, as Dewey recognizes, individuals' lives are unavoidably impacted by the indirect consequences of actions taken by others far outside individuals' immediate control. We cannot assume, then, that self-government (or democratic individuality, as Dewey would say) is eternally available through the possession of negative liberties, or that a government is democratic when it primarily upholds only those liberties. For Dewey, the individual and governmental aspects of democracy are in a process of continuous, interlocking development. Individuals, in a changing world, may govern themselves by actively interacting with, and exercising a self-chosen effect upon, the novel obstacles to their growth they inevitably confront. And government, even if constituted democratically, must be capable of going beyond old solutions (e.g., negative freedom) in order to promote democratic freedom—in a world characterized by widespread interconnection of individuals, and by various forms of social inequality, such a government is unlikely to produce democratic effects by merely upholding the old rights and liberties in the face of these unique threats to democratic individuality. In these ways, Dewey, who declares that the democracy he seeks "is not a fact and never will be,"[412] allows us to conceive of democracy as in a process of continuous development, and avoids the Rortyan trap of presuming a fixed conception of democracy has already been achieved.

Conclusion

[412] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 148.

By focusing on Dewey's "permanent Hegelian deposit," this chapter has explored the unending development of Deweyan democracy through its interlocking individual and governmental phases. We have seen how Dewey's democratic individual way of life—which Dewey associates with a "scientific" approach to experience—can be fruitfully read as an updated version of the Hegelian "being for-itself." More specifically, a democratic individual "sees herself" in novel objects of experience which immediately oppose her development, and in the "negation" brought by such a confrontation. Such an individual actively interacts with the negation generated by her development, in order to exercise a unique, self-chosen effect on the objects she encounters. In a world lacking any eternal truth or fixed hierarchy, Dewey reasons, an individual cannot simply rely on any eternally sacred principles, or other eternally wise individuals, to direct her path in a way that will be most fulfilling for her personally, and most valuable to her society as a whole. Also, we have seen the implications of this reading of Dewey's democratic life for the activity of work, and how, in the face of social conditions which coerce many individuals into spending their lives in onerous occupations they cannot control, a democratically-constituted government may become undemocratic if it cannot evolve beyond the protection of liberal negative freedoms. Thus, in contrast with Rorty's fixed conception of democracy defined by the capacity of negative freedom to "leave people alone," Dewey's notion of democracy can effectively evolve to meet the unique threats to individual self-government generated by an increasingly interconnected world. Armed with a constructive, "scientific" pragmatism which is genuinely Hegelian in inspiration, Dewey can conceive of democratic governance which preserves its past achievements (e.g., negative freedom) while still continuing to develop itself in response to changing circumstances; Rorty, in trying to rid democracy of fixed philosophical foundations, ends up making liberal democracy into a fixed foundation.

Dewey contends that no one "was ever emancipated merely by being left alone. Removal of formal limitations is but a negative condition; positive freedom is not a state but an act which involves methods and instrumentalities for control of conditions."[413] By connecting democracy fundamentally with individuals' never-finished exercise of control over the objects of experience they confront, Dewey's theory avoids clinging to any fixed conception of democratic governance, and thus steers clear of becoming satisfied with what passes for democracy at the moment. Furthermore, he exposes why understanding democracy only as a political concept is insufficient for coping with the considerable threats to individual self-government that exist more at the societal level. Instead of allowing democracy to "become so associated with a particular political order," Dewey connects democracy with "individuality…[with] unique modes of activity that create new ends, with willing acceptance of the modifications of the established order entailed by the release of individualized capacities."[414] When individuals are effectively debarred from participating in directing their own unique development, the possibilities for self-government are obstructed in a way which our existing political machinery may not rectify.

[413] Ibid., 168.

[414] MW13: 297.

Dewey's Challenge to Contemporary Democratic Theory

In the first three chapters, we have explored the implications of Dewey's democratic theory in its interrelated political, social, and individual aspects. In this chapter, I will address where Dewey stands in relation to contemporary models in democratic theory, and explicate the distinctly Deweyan contribution to current democratic thought. I will argue in particular that Dewey should not be considered a forefather of deliberative democracy (as is widely believed); instead, I will show that Dewey's democratic theory can help demonstrate the potential value of the tradition of participatory democracy to contemporary democratic thought, and can also effectively illustrate why deliberative democracy does not subsume the principles of participatory democracy (as is also widely believed). In addition, I will construct a Deweyan critique of the democratic thought of the contemporary agonistic and communitarian traditions, which have each, in different ways, challenged fundamental tenets of deliberative theory.

Before expanding upon my argument, it will be worthwhile to sum up where we have been thus far. In Chapter 1, I investigated the specifically *political* aspect of Deweyan democracy, by demonstrating how Dewey conceives of an unending process of democratizing political institutions, a process which requires that we continuously overcome problems of exclusive control of those institutions by powerful (e.g., wealthy) interests. Furthermore, in response to Sheldon Wolin's claim that Dewey's theory is blind to the effects of power inequities on politics, I argued that radical democratic thought would be well-served by turning in a Deweyan direction, as opposed to the thoroughly anti-institutional approach offered by thinkers such as Wolin and Jacques Ranciere. In particular, Dewey accounts for the necessity of the temporary uprisings against established institutions valued by Wolin and Ranciere, without also

forcing us to forgo everything that takes place between such uprisings within institutions as inevitably devoid of any democracy. I also traced the divide between Deweyan and Wolinian thought to Hegel's critique of Rousseau's anti-institutionalism, in order to show how anti-institutional thinkers tend to conceive of institutions and democratic actors as essentially fixed entities which completely escape the influence of the other. Dewey's Hegelian theory, by contrast, allows us to reside between these extremes, by identifying how institutions and individuals may continuously develop through the unavoidable influence of the other.

In Chapter 2, I elucidated the meaning of Dewey's claim that "democracy is a *personal* way of individual life"[415] by exploring his philosophical relationship to Plato. I explained Dewey's admiration for Plato by pointing to the importance Dewey sees in Plato's goal of harmonizing individuals' capacities with the ascertainable order of human relations. For Plato, an ideal state cannot exist without the parallel presence of an ideal individual character-type. For Dewey, modern scientific and economic changes have undone the ontological and epistemological foundations of Plato's call for an aristocratic state and aristocratic individual character-type; but, Dewey's appreciation for Plato's focus on the individual level of analysis helps illuminate the former's call for a democratic individual way of life. As Dewey finds modern human relations to lack strict order, and as he considers modern scientific advancements to have progressively brought down claims of exclusive access to an eternal truth, he upholds *democratic individuality* as the key to individual fulfillment in a modern world—democratic individuality being defined, for Dewey (and for Plato as well, though in an unflattering light), by unending growth through engagement with the changeful qualities of ordinary experience, and in particular through interaction with the diverse others with whom individuals are interconnected

[415] John Dewey, "Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us", in *John Dewey: The Political Writings*, eds. Debra Morris and Ian Shapiro (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, [1939] 1993), 241.

by modern conditions. I used this Platonic interpretation of Dewey's democratic individual way of life to illuminate Dewey's claim that democracy cannot exist in political machinery alone (especially if iniquitous social conditions effectively prevent many individuals from exercising control over their own development), and to show the weakness of Robert Talisse's argument that Dewey's standard of democratic individuality effectively denies pluralism.

In Chapter 3, I synthesized Dewey's notions of democratic individuality and democratic governance, by delving yet further into Dewey's relationship to Hegel. Using a Hegelian lens, I expanded on the continuous development entailed by democratic individuality, by revealing how democratic individuals continuously reconstruct their habits for dealing with inevitably unforeseen situations of experience, and avoid assuming old habits are eternally pragmatically effective for coping with a changing world. I then demonstrated how such individuality requires the concurrent, unending development of democratic governance. Even when governing institutions are free of undemocratic control by exclusive interests, government is still hindered from functioning democratically if it is confined to old solutions (e.g., liberal negative freedoms) for coping with unique threats to individual self-government. For Dewey, negative liberties are to be preserved, but a government which merely seeks to leave individuals alone by upholding only those liberties is ignoring the increasing interconnectedness of modern conditions, and is effectively sustaining iniquitous social and economic inequality—thus Dewey's insistence that material security and socialized economy are necessary to the unending, interlocking development of democracy's individual and governmental phases. This analysis was further used to exhibit the contrast between Dewey and Richard Rorty, who, because of a misreading of Dewey, unintentionally adheres to a fixed, unchanging conception of liberal democracy.

I will argue that Dewey's association of democracy with the task of continuously

overcoming interrelated *political* and *social* threats to individual self-government effectively exposes shortcomings in deliberative democracy. While I do not claim the type of deliberation emphasized by deliberative theorists is wholly without value, I will show that, in order for deliberative democracy to maintain consistency, it must essentially isolate the political and social realms. More specifically, the theory must call on deliberators to all be equally willing to abide by deliberative norms, and to debate by using reasons that others can "reasonably" be expected to endorse, regardless of the unequal social statuses which the deliberators bring with them to the deliberative forum. For Dewey, as I have highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, individuals are inevitably heavily influenced by their social circumstances and the quality of their social relations; and furthermore, it is senseless in Dewey's view to expect that those holding advantaged social status will not enjoy a privileged position within political institutions—whether that status is determined by "dynastic" or "economic" attributes[416]—unless measures are taken to ameliorate that social inequality. To be sure, some deliberative theorists do insist that social and economic inequalities be reduced, if not eliminated. But, it is difficult to see how this can be consistent with a commitment to deliberation. If the idea is that the deliberation described by these theorists will lead to substantial reduction in social and economic inequality, then that is a monumental assumption, and it amounts to determining the correct outcome of deliberation before the deliberation has even taken place—which would make us wonder why there needs to be deliberation at all. On the other hand, if the reduction in social and economic inequality is meant simply to be a necessary prerequisite for ensuring deliberation is actually democratic, then deliberative theorists must concede that deliberation within political forums is not necessarily democratic at all, for it is recognized that under our present conditions of structural social inequality, the work of democratization must be achieved before the deliberation takes place.

[416] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chicago: Swallow Press, [1927] 1954), 77, 107-108, 161.

With Dewey's theory, the democratizing of political institutions, and the overcoming of social and economic inequalities, are in a process of unending, interlocking development. Political decision-making structures are to be continuously freed of exclusive control by powerful interests, and social and economic inequalities are to be progressively overcome; and these progressions—while never perfectly achieved—each require the concurrent movement of the other. Deliberation might potentially contribute to these progressions, but the problem with a commitment to deliberation as *the* democratic practice is that deliberation essentially abstracts from social inequality with its conception of a fair and equal policy debate. Dewey illustrates how a focus on specific deliberative practices can diminish democratic theory's capacity to account for the effect of unequal social statuses on political interactions, and he demonstrates the need, under unequal social conditions, for *non-deliberative* practices and methods of achieving democratization—non-deliberative because such practices (e.g., marches, protests, strikes) typically hold social inequality to be so pervasive that it cannot be bracketed by certain rules of discourse. I will argue, then, that Dewey, by placing the overcoming of social inequality on equal footing with the democratization of political institutions, and by exposing the theoretical weakness of the focus on deliberation, can be particularly useful to participatory democrats for upholding the independence and the unique value of their theory from deliberative democracy. Participatory theorists primarily advocate the democratization of both *political* and *non-political* authority structures, and I claim these thinkers can productively draw upon Dewey's analysis to show their lack of commitment to specific deliberative practices to be a virtue of their theory. Unlike deliberative theory, the participatory tradition does not presume that instituting deliberative reason-giving on policy matters will necessarily have democratizing effects in circumstances of evident structural social inequality. Dewey articulates the case for non-

deliberative practices that are specifically aimed at overcoming the social threats to individuals' capacity to participate in the governing of their lives, and he can thus be an effective voice for leading democratic thought toward participatory, rather than deliberative, democracy.

This chapter will construct a Deweyan critique of deliberative democracy, thus separating Dewey from the deliberative tradition, as well as illustrating (through Dewey) the unique insights of participatory democracy. After a review of literature which has connected Dewey with deliberative democracy, I will establish what I see as the primary principles of the vast deliberative tradition, based on analysis of major theoretical and empirical works which have come from that tradition. I will then demonstrate why Dewey should not be considered a forefather of deliberative democracy, before moving onto a discussion of the core principles of participatory democracy. I will show why Dewey's focus on continuously overcoming the interrelated social and political obstacles to individual self-government should lead democratic theorists to challenge the preeminent status of deliberative democracy, and to treat participatory theory as a serious alternative, rather than as a minor supplement, to deliberative theory. Finally, I will also explore where Dewey stands in relation to competing contemporary models of democracy—agonistic democracy and communitarianism, in particular. Agonistic democracy has provided a considerable challenge to deliberative ideals, but I will argue that agonistic theory is vulnerable to a quite similar critique, from a Deweyan perspective, as is deliberative theory. Agonistic thinkers value conflict between competing identities, and claim we have democracy when political opponents treat each other as "adversaries" rather than "enemies"; as with deliberation, though, agonism itself is compatible with social and economic inequalities, and if agonistic thinkers insist—as some do—on the reduction of social and economic inequality, they must either predetermine the outcome of agonistic conflict, or they must imply a major extra-

agonistic precursor to their agonistic theory. Regarding communitarianism, Dewey's democratic theory has indeed been placed in this tradition by certain thinkers, namely Robert Talisse (in an unflattering light) and communitarian exemplar Michael Sandel. However, communitarianism's focus on self-discovery through attachment to one's constitutive ends ultimately denies individuals' capacity (emphasized by Dewey) to revise their ends and create themselves. While Dewey does emphasize the effect of social and cultural upbringing on individuals' identities, it is still the case that if communitarian thinkers wish—as they typically do—to oppose oppressive cultural practices and to insist that individuals can actually revise their ends, they must import principles that are far outside communitarian thought. Dewey is in fact no more a communitarian than a deliberative democrat.

Recent Connections of Dewey and Deliberative Democracy

Jason Kosnoski reports that "A consensus appears to be forming among political theorists that John Dewey's political thought can be subsumed under the rubric of deliberative democracy."[417] Indeed, over the past decade and a half there have been an increasing number of democratic theorists and Dewey scholars who have classified Dewey as a forefather of deliberative democracy. James Bohman claims that Dewey's "pragmatist conception of practical reason suggests a deliberative form of democracy."[418] Alison Kadlec states that "a Deweyan view of democracy is, in contemporary parlance, deeply *deliberative*,"[419] while Melvin Rogers argues "It is Dewey's appeal to inquiry as a method for justifying beliefs that feeds directly into

[417] Jason Kosnoski, "Artful Discussion: John Dewey's Classroom as a Model of Deliberative Association", *Political Theory* 33, no. 5 (2005): 654.

[418] James Bohman, "Democracy as Inquiry, Inquiry as Democratic: Pragmatism, Social Science, and the Cognitive Division of Labor", *American Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 2 (1999): 590.

[419] Alison Kadlec, *Dewey's Critical Pragmatism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 4.

and underwrites democratic deliberation."[420] For Noelle McAfee, Dewey's emphasis in *The Public and its Problems* on the notion that the public "can find itself" is evidently a call for "public deliberation,"[421] and for John Dryzek, Dewey stands with Edmund Burke and John Stuart Mill as one of the primary historical "antecedents" to deliberative democracy.[422]

In his rebuke of Dewey's democratic theory, Richard Posner claims "deliberative democracy" is "not Dewey's term but a good description of his approach," and that Dewey's deliberative ideal "is as purely aspirational and unrealistic as rule by Platonic guardians."[423] William Caspary, responding to the fact that Dewey does not actually put forward any intricate account of public deliberation, draws on Dewey's discussion of the democratic individual way of life (which we have discussed at length in the previous two chapters) in order to connect Dewey with deliberative democracy, explaining that although Dewey does not focus on public deliberation "as fully as one might wish," we can still link him with deliberative theory by "extrapolating from his more detailed account of individual deliberation."[424] Jack Knight and James Johnson, on the other hand, dismiss the significance of the democratic way of life—claiming "the mechanisms, machinery, devices, or forms provided by political democracy" in Dewey's theory deserve the greatest attention—and then portray Dewey as stressing "the role of political argument and ultimately of deliberative processes in democratic politics…"[425]

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[420] Melvin Rogers, *The Undiscovered Dewey: Religion, Morality, and the Ethos of Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 21.

[421] Noelle McAfee, *Democracy and the Political Unconscious* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 115.

[422] John Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.

[423] Richard Posner, *Law, Pragmatism, and Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 106-107.

[424] William Caspary, *Dewey on Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 140.

[425] Jack Knight and James Johnson, *The Priority of Democracy: Political Consequences of Pragmatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 36, 115.

Therefore, regardless of whether the purpose is explanatory, laudatory, or critical, the classification of Dewey as a deliberative democrat has undoubtedly become the predominant view of Deweyan theory among democratic theorists and Dewey scholars. For my purposes, which will be to use Dewey to demonstrate the value of participatory democracy independent of deliberative democracy, the evolving position of Dewey scholar Robert Westbrook is significant: in his 1991 intellectual biography of Dewey, Westbrook labels Dewey a "most important advocate of participatory democracy"[426]; in 2005, though, he contends that "Dewey was anticipating an ideal that contemporary democratic theorists have dubbed 'deliberative democracy.'"[427] I will show that Westbrook was correct the first time.

Deliberative Democratic Theory

Dryzek has declared that "Deliberative democracy now constitutes the most active area of political theory in its entirety (not just democratic theory)."[428] There is no question that deliberative democracy is the most prominent model in contemporary democratic thought, and Dewey has been deemed one of its primary progenitors. I will now provide a general depiction of the main features of deliberative theory. Of course, there is not unanimity among all deliberative thinkers, and the notion of deliberation itself is not the same in all conceptions of the theory; nonetheless, a broad sketch of deliberative democracy's central characteristics is possible.

Deliberative democratic theory bears distinct influence from the thought of John Rawls

[426] Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), xiv-xv, 164.

[427] Robert Westbrook, *Democratic Hope: Pragmatism and the Politics of Truth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 187.

[428] John Dryzek, "Theory, Evidence, and the Tasks of Deliberation", in *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy: Can the People Govern?*, ed. Shawn Rosenberg (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 237.

and Jurgen Habermas.[429] Especially important are Rawls's notion of "public reason," and Habermas's description of "opinion-formation in a mobilized public sphere." Rawls explains how the "ideal of public reason" requires that citizens "should be ready to explain the basis of their actions to one another in terms each could reasonably expect that others might endorse as consistent with their freedom and equality," and that they show "a willingness to listen to what others have to say and [be] ready to accept reasonable accommodations or alterations in [their] own view"; he also states that "public reason applies…to citizens when they engage in political advocacy in the public forum, in political campaigns for example…[and] to public and government officers in official forums, in their debates and votes on the floor of the legislature."[430] Habermas characterizes the formation of public opinion as taking place through a "public sphere [which] can best be described as a network for communicating information and points of view…the streams of communication are, in the process, filtered and synthesized in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified *public* opinions"; and ideally, the opinions formed are "motivated solely by the unforced force of the better argument."[431]

Above all else, deliberative theorists have insisted that deliberators should argue for their various policy positions in terms of reasons that others can be reasonably expected to endorse, and that the outcome of deliberations should be determined simply by the most convincing such arguments within the deliberative forum. Bohman, for instance, remarks that "Deliberative democracy is a complex ideal with a variety of forms, but whatever form it takes it must refer to the ideal of public reason, to the requirement that legitimate decisions be ones that 'everyone

[429] Rawls and Habermas do have their differences, but as they both note, those differences are "familial"; see Jurgen Habermas, "Reconciliation Through the Public use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism", *Journal of Philosophy* 92, no. 3 (1995): 109-131; and John Rawls, "Political Liberalism: Reply to Habermas", *Journal of Philosophy* 92, no. 3 (1995): 132-180.

[430] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 218, 252, 253.

[431] Jurgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 306, 360.

could accept' or at least 'not reasonably reject'"[432]; and further, "the ensuing collective decision should in some sense be justified by public reasons—that is, reasons that are generally convincing to everyone participating in the process of deliberation."[433] Joshua Cohen provides a similar view, asserting that "Deliberation is *reasoned* in that the parties to it are required to state their reasons for advancing proposals, supporting them, or criticizing them. They give reasons with the expectation that those reasons (and not, for example, their power) will settle the fate of their proposal…the discovery that I can offer no persuasive reasons on behalf of a proposal of mine may transform the preferences that motivate the proposal."[434] Knight and Johnson focus on the *equality* entailed by such a demand for deliberative reason-giving: "all claims and counterclaims are subject to critical public scrutiny and…when challenged, any participant must defend her proposal or back her objection with reasons."[435] Jon Elster stresses how reason-giving should lead deliberators toward concern with the common good above mere self-interest—because "speakers have to justify their proposals by the public interest…self-interested or prejudiced speakers have an incentive to argue for a position that differs somewhat from their ideal point."[436] And for Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, reason-giving has particular value in that it may mitigate the intensity of moral disagreement: "In giving reasons for their decisions, citizens and their representatives should try to find justifications that minimize their differences

[432] James Bohman, "The Coming of Age of Deliberative Democracy", *Journal of Political Philosophy* 6, no. 4 (1998): 401-402.

[433] James Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 5.

[434] Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy", in *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*, eds. James Bohman and William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 74, 77.

[435] Jack Knight and James Johnson, "What Sort of Political Equality Does Deliberative Democracy Require?", in *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*, eds. James Bohman and William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 288.

[436] Jon Elster, "Deliberation and Constitution Making", in *Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Jon Elster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 104.

with their opponents."[437] Hence, the practice of reasoned debate, the outcome of which is determined by the strength of arguments based on "reasons that all can accept," is definitive of democratic thought in the deliberative tradition.[438]

On the matter of who is to take part in this deliberation, it can be unclear whether the theory intends for direct involvement by the citizenry at large, or whether deliberation among elected representatives is sufficient. The phrase "citizens and their representatives" is particularly conspicuous throughout Gutmann and Thompson's work,[439] though they also appear to favor deliberation by the latter group, stating that "Decision-making by the direct assembly of all citizens may not yield either the best laws and public policies or the best deliberative justifications for those laws and public policies. Democratically elected and accountable representatives of citizens may be better deliberators, and are likely to be democratically recognized as such."[440] Joseph Bessette is even more explicit about the value of representative deliberation, calling it "The genius and the peculiar challenge of the American system" that deliberation among representatives be combined with democratic accountability: "Because representatives have the time, information, and institutional environment to reason together on issues facing the nation, the public voice to which they give expression may better promote the

[437] Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 7.

[438] Bohman and Henry Richardson have recently advocated turning away from "reasons that all can accept" and toward "the simpler idea of what people 'do accept'"; their argument for this change in wording would take us too far afield here, but it should be noted that their case does not fundamentally alter the justification or aims of deliberative democracy; see James Bohman and Henry Richardson, "Liberalism, Deliberative Democracy, and 'Reasons that All Can Accept'", *Journal of Political Philosophy* 17, no. 3 (2009): 264-265.

[439] See also, Bohman, *Public Deliberation*, 4-5.

[440] Gutmann and Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?*, 31.

public good than the immediate and direct voice of the people."[441] And more recently, Stefan Rummens proclaims that "representative politics provides the democratic debate with a kind of *visibility* which allows representative institutions to play an ineliminable role in the connection of political power to public reason as well as in the generation of the epistemic resources and the sources of solidarity required to support ongoing and open-ended democratic deliberation."[442] The notion that representative institutions are particularly suitable for establishing deliberative principles is indeed prevalent; although, in the recent empirical literature on deliberative democracy (which we will discuss shortly), the focus has generally been on involvement of ordinary citizens in deliberative forums.

It should also be noted that, while reason-giving and the willingness of deliberators to consider the reasons of others are key features of deliberative theory, there are conflicting viewpoints regarding the form reason-giving must take in order to be genuinely deliberative. Seyla Benhabib takes the position that "Greeting, storytelling, and rhetoric, although they may be aspects of informal communication in our everyday life, cannot become the public language of institutions and legislatures in a democracy for the following reason: to attain legitimacy, democratic institutions require the articulation of the bases of their actions and policies in discursive language that appeals to commonly shared and accepted public reasons."[443] On this view, the kind of reasoned argument which impartially seeks the common good is necessary to achieve deliberative democracy. Dryzek, on the other hand, opposes "narrow limits on what constitutes authentic deliberation," and favors "A more tolerant position…[which] would allow

[441] Joseph Bessette, *The Mild Voice of Reason: Deliberative Democracy and American National Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5, 212.

[442] Stefan Rummens, "Staging Deliberation: The Role of Representative Institutions in the Deliberative Democratic Process", *Journal of Political Philosophy* 20, no. 1 (2012): 25.

[443] Seyla Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy", in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 83.

argument, rhetoric, humour, emotion, testimony or storytelling, and gossip. The only condition for authentic *deliberation* is then the requirement that communication induce reflection upon preferences in non-coercive fashion."[444] Simone Chambers further argues that the quality of rhetoric used by speakers must be a focus for deliberative theory; she distinguishes between "deliberative rhetoric"—which "makes people think, it makes people see things in new ways, it conveys information and knowledge, and it makes people more reflective"—and "plebiscitary rhetoric"—which "is concerned first and foremost with gaining support for a proposition," and which reigns "when politicians say anything to get elected."[445] And, Jane Mansbridge et al. seek to incorporate self-interest within deliberative theory, claiming "deliberative democracy must include self-interest and conflicts among interests in order to recognize and celebrate in the ideal itself the diversity of free and equal human beings."[446] The use of reason-giving to determine the fates of policy positions is essential to deliberative democracy, but there is not unanimity on whether that reason-giving must take the form of impartial arguments about the public good, or can take the form of rhetoric and storytelling which are potentially self-interested.

Since the turn of the century, increasing attention has been given to empirical testing of deliberative democracy.[447] This empirical work has largely focused on whether deliberators are, as Gutmann and Thompson put it, "open to the possibility of changing their minds or modifying

[444] Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, 1-2.

[445] Simone Chambers, "Rhetoric and the Public Sphere: Has Deliberative Democracy Abandoned Mass Democracy?", *Political Theory* 37, no. 3 (2009): 335, 337.

[446] Jane Mansbridge et al., "The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy", *Journal of Political Philosophy* 18, no. 1 (2010): 69.

[447] Thompson has warned that some of the empirical work on deliberation has not suitably captured the principles of the normative theorists; see Dennis Thompson, "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science", *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008): 497-520.

their positions…"[448] Robert Luskin, James Fishkin, and Roger Jowell study a British example of deliberative polling (in which a national sample of citizens are given briefing materials to inform them on a particular subject, and then are gathered together to discuss the subject in small moderated groups), and argue that deliberators do tend to change their initial policy preferences as a result of this process, and that this can help illustrate what public opinion might look like if it were more informed and reflective.[449] Graham Smith and Corinne Wales focus on citizens' juries (in which a randomly selected group of citizens are exposed to information about a particular issue, listen to expert testimony on that issue, and then provide a report) to again demonstrate how pre-deliberative preferences change through the process of deliberation.[450] Damien French and Michael Laver similarly examine a citizens' jury in Dublin to track the opinion shifts of the deliberators.[451] Other empirical studies have taken a more general look at the feasibility of deliberative principles. Dryzek and Robert Goodin, for example, outline how various deliberative "mini-publics" have affected policymaking—mini-publics being defined as deliberative bodies (including deliberative polls and citizens' juries) which are representative of the public, and which serve mostly in an advisory role rather than exercising decision-making power.[452] Dryzek and Valerie Braithwaite, by surveying political debate in Australia, find that

[448] Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 79.

[449] Robert Luskin, James Fishkin, and Roger Jowell, "Considered Opinions: Deliberative Polling in Britain", *British Journal of Political Science* 32 (2002): 455-487.

[450] Graham Smith and Corinne Wales, "Citizens' Juries and Deliberative Democracy", *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 51-65.

[451] Damien French and Michael Laver, "Participation Bias, Durable Opinion Shifts and Sabotage through Withdrawal in Citizens' Juries", *Political Studies* 57 (2009): 422-450.

[452] Robert Goodin and John Dryzek, "Deliberative Impacts: The Macro-Political Uptake of Mini-Publics", *Politics & Society* 34, no. 2 (2006): 219-244.

deliberators are willing to consider the views of others even if they have different basic values.[453] And Michael Neblo et al. use an experimental test to prove that people would be more willing to take part in deliberative forums if they could believe that the political system were less corrupt.[454] This empirical turn in deliberative democracy, therefore, appears to show that the theory is well-suited to being put into practice in meaningful ways.

There are of course other normative and empirical accounts of deliberative democracy besides those which are discussed here. Nonetheless, I hope to have provided a serviceable depiction of the theory's central features. I will now move onto my argument for why Dewey does not belong in the deliberative democratic tradition, and for why his theory exposes how deliberative democracy has not effectively subsumed participatory democracy.

A Deweyan Critique of Deliberative Democracy

There are points in Dewey's work which suggest that he might indeed be appropriately categorized as a deliberative democrat. For instance, he does attach great importance to the need (emphasized by deliberative theory) for "improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion."[455] However, Dewey makes it clear that such deliberation itself does not constitute an adequate plan for bringing democracy into existence: "I would not minimize the advance scored in substitution of methods of discussion and conference for the method of arbitrary rule. But the better is too often the enemy of the still better…discussion and dialectic, however indispensable they are to the elaboration of ideas and policies after ideas are once put forth, are weak reeds to depend upon for systematic origination of comprehensive plans, the

[453] John Dryzek and Valerie Braithwaite, "On the Prospects for Democratic Deliberation: Values Analysis Applied to Australian Politics", *Political Psychology* 21, no. 2 (2000): 241-266.

[454] Michael Neblo et al., "Who Wants to Deliberate—And Why?", *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 3 (2010): 566-583.

[455] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 208.

plans that are required if the problem of social organization is to be met."[456] For Dewey, under social conditions rife with structural inequality, we cannot presume progress in a democratic direction will necessarily result from giving political actors "the demand for greater honesty and impartiality"; in fact, within such unequal social conditions, "invention and projection of far-reaching social plans is demanded."[457]

Dewey's own projection of far-reaching social plans is displayed in his efforts during the 1930s (in the midst of the Great Depression) to form a new radical political party in the United States; and, the non-deliberative character of his plans is evident. He describes the attempts of his group (called the League for Independent Political Action) toward forming a new party as arising from the "realization that our existing political parties in the conduct of government are more concerned to serve the selfish and financial interests of the few than the human needs of the many."[458] He wishes to avoid the use of violence to solve this problem, but, when detailing the tactics to be used by the party, he also outlines something far different from an exchange of reasons that are acceptable to all others: "The usurpation of functions of government by an economic group in its own interests gives the opportunity for aggressive attack; and a sense of conflict and battle is a necessary part of any movement which enlists the imagination and the emotions…The present depression has made clear the incapacity of captains of industry and finance to lead the social host into anything but chaos, suffering and insecurity."[459] Dewey does not suggest that, if those who are wealthy and those who are not exchange reasons that can reasonably be endorsed by all, then this will necessarily have democratizing effects. He in fact

[456] John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935), 70.

[457] Ibid., 73.

[458] LW6: 149.

[459] LW6: 176.

argues that, under social conditions in which the wealthy enjoy vast privilege, democratization will likely require not reasoning with the wealthy, but inspiring mass support for programs which will reduce the structural advantages possessed by the wealthy. He claims "Our entire history and experience proves that the financial and industrial leaders of the nation will not make these changes voluntarily—they will not, except under compulsion, surrender their most profitable share of a system which has concentrated four-fifths of the nation's wealth in the hands of one twenty-fifth of the people"; he further insists on a substantial increase in taxes on the wealthiest individuals as a crucial step toward overcoming such structural inequality.[460]

The principle Dewey gives voice to here is that of the interconnection of *political* and *social*—the idea that interactions within political, policymaking forums cannot be isolated from the quality of the broader relations existing in society. Dewey affirms that "political democracy is not the whole of democracy. On the contrary, experience has proved that it cannot stand in isolation. It can be effectively maintained only where democracy is social…A social democracy signifies, most obviously, a state of social life where there is a wide and varied distribution of opportunities; where there is social mobility or scope for change of position and station."[461] When society is ridden with vast economic inequality, though, political forums cannot be isolated from the effects of that inequality: "As long as interests of pecuniary profit are powerful…those who have this interest will have an unresisted motive for tampering with the springs of political action in all that affects them."[462] Dewey's political party, then, was aimed at both changing the outputs of governing institutions (e.g., on tax policy), and at ensuring the

[460] LW6: 386.

[461] MW10: 138.

[462] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 182.

inputs to government do not come disproportionately from privileged elements of society.[463]

Deliberative theorists, by contrast, must effectively isolate political and social when they indicate that the effects of unequal social status can be neutralized within the deliberative forum, as long as deliberators are equally willing to give reasons that can be accepted by others, and are all given an equal opportunity to speak. Cohen establishes that all deliberators are equally bound to "find reasons that are compelling to others,"[464] and he maintains that the conditions of equality are met because "Everyone with the deliberative capacities has equal standing at each stage of the deliberative process. Each can put issues on the agenda, propose solutions, and offer reasons in support of or in criticism of proposals…The participants are substantively equal in that the existing distribution of power and resources does not shape their chances to contribute to deliberation, nor does that distribution play an authoritative role in their deliberation."[465] There is not sufficient recognition here of the possibility that such apparent equality within the political forum will bear influence from the effects of social and economic inequality experienced by deliberators outside the forum. Rawls attempts to address this issue with his "original position," in which the deliberators' ignorance of their social status ensures that deliberation will "not be affected by the contingencies of the social world," and will "eliminate the bargaining advantages that inevitably arise within the background institutions of any society from cumulative social, historical, and natural tendencies."[466] But while the original position is an interesting abstract thought experiment, it provides little guidance for coping with the unequal social conditions we actually confront, and the ways these conditions can affect political deliberations.

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[463] LW6: 149.

[464] Joshua Cohen, "Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy", in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 100.

[465] Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy", 74.

[466] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 23.

For example, in a debate between business interests and labor unions over collective bargaining rights, each side is likely to have little trouble making its case in terms the other side could "reasonably" be expected to endorse. The business side can appeal to reasons based on freedom, equality, the public good, etc., by claiming that too much money and benefits are guaranteed to workers and that society as a whole will benefit from decreasing unions' bargaining power; the labor side can also appeal to reasons based on freedom, equality, the public good, etc., by arguing that society has a greater interest in protecting economically vulnerable families than in ensuring the unfettered advance of business dealings. When deliberative theory calls for these two sides to exchange reasons, and for the outcome of deliberation to be determined by the most convincing argument, it does not effectively account for the structural and discursive privileges enjoyed by the business side, privileges which have their root in the broader social context. Some critics of deliberation have in fact previously touched on such issues: Lynn Sanders objects that men, whites, and the wealthy are more likely than women, racial minorities, and the poor to be seen as persuasive and as arguing for the common good rather than self-interest[467]; Iris Young charges that deliberative norms are assumed to be culturally neutral, but are in fact reflective of cultural biases, and that those who are disadvantaged by such biases should avoid conferring legitimacy on deliberative forums[468]; John Medearis notes that marginalized groups have often had to rely on non-deliberative means in order to make their voice heard, such as creating a crisis through unusual action (strikes,

[467] Lynn Sanders, "Against Deliberation", *Political Theory* 25, no. 3 (1997): 347-376.

[468] Iris Young, "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy", in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 120-135; and Iris Young, "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy", *Political Theory* 29, no. 5 (2001): 670-690.

protests, etc.)[469]; and Tali Mendelberg and John Oleske, in an empirical study of debate on school desegregation, find that whites tend to oppose desegregation using reasons that appear oriented to the common good, and that they are simply unconvinced when told their reasons carry racial undertones.[470] These shortcomings of deliberative theory are well-exemplified in Gutmann and Thompson's discussion of welfare policy, in which their proposed policy—"fair workfare," meaning citizens who need income support can receive welfare if they fulfill the obligation to work[471]—follows the pattern of assuming all interests involved must be equally willing to give a little, and effectively ignoring issues of structural inequity between the poor and the well-off, and of how "reasons all can accept" may reinforce the poor's disadvantaged social position.[472]

Some deliberative theorists do make an attempt at connecting social and political by focusing on deliberation in the broader society, and on how that deliberation may affect governing institutions. Habermas is one such theorist, arguing that "A deliberative practice of self-legislation can develop only in the interplay between, on the one hand, the parliamentary will-formation institutionalized in legal procedures and programmed to reach decisions and, on the other, political opinion-formation along informal channels of political communication"; he further explains how "The political system…is intertwined with the public sphere and civil society through the activity of political parties and general elections. This intermeshing is

[469] John Medearis, "Social Movements and Deliberative Democratic Theory", *British Journal of Political Science* 35 (2005): 53-75.

[470] Tali Mendelberg and John Oleske, "Race and Public Deliberation", *Political Communication* 17, no. 2 (2000): 169-191.

[471] Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, 273-306.

[472] Medearis effectively critiques Gutmann and Thompson's view on welfare, showing how welfare policies themselves can reinforce the stigmatized social status of welfare recipients; see John Medearis, "Deliberative Democracy, Subordination, and the Welfare State", in *Illusion of Consent*, eds. Daniel O'Neill, Mary Shanley, and Iris Young (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 208-230.

guaranteed by the right of parties to 'collaborate' in the political will-formation of the people, as well as by the citizens' active and passive voting rights and other participatory rights."[473] Benhabib[474] and Dryzek[475] offer nearly identical viewpoints. However, this intermingling of social and political does not adequately account for the undemocratic aspects of society itself. It ultimately amounts to calling for civil society associations to engage in deliberative reason-giving, while assuming that such communication within the "informal public sphere" will effectively broadcast to the political system the issues which need resolving. There is scant emphasis on how social inequality can prevent certain elements of society (the poor, women, racial minorities, etc.) from participating in such opinion-formation, or on how that exclusion diminishes the democratic quality of political parties and general elections.

All the same, there are deliberative theorists who insist that significant reduction of social and economic inequality is essential to deliberative democracy, while others do not. Bohman disputes the idea that "a theory of deliberative democracy leaves social conditions as they are and adapts to them. Some social conditions will have to be corrected if [deliberative] ideals are to be achieved; large social inequalities are inconsistent with public forms of deliberation in egalitarian institutions."[476] Knight and Johnson endorse "redistribution of income and wealth" because "citizens must possess a certain level of income and resources if they are to develop the basic capacities necessary to be effective participants in democratic deliberation."[477] Dryzek is on the other side of this question, worrying that "if we regard effective distribution as a

[473] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 275, 368.

[474] Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy", 73-74.

[475] Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, 162, 171.

[476] Bohman, *Public Deliberation*, 21.

[477] Knight and Johnson, "What Sort of Political Equality Does Deliberative Democracy Require?", 307.

necessary prerequisite for deliberation we may be in for a long wait," and contending that "deliberative democratization should never wait for material redistribution."[478] Similarly, Gutmann and Thompson assert that critics, who fear that deliberative theory is of little help to structurally disadvantaged elements of society, "tend to overlook the fact that disadvantaged groups usually manage to find representatives from within their own ranks who are…effective at articulating their interests and ideals," and that "suffering the effects of discrimination and other forms of injustice often produces leaders who are more committed, more insightful, and more charismatic than leaders of privileged groups in society"; they further accuse critics of implying "that members (or representatives) of disadvantaged groups are less reasonable in their appeals than their more advantaged counterparts"[479]—thus badly missing the point Sanders and Young are making about the way a word like "reasonable" can itself be a biased term.

But, even if we focus only on Bohman, Knight, and Johnson's position (that the reduction of social inequality is encompassed by deliberative democracy), it is difficult to see how such a view can be consistent with the theory's commitment to deliberation. If such a reduction in inequality is supposed to be the result of deliberation, then the principles of deliberation are compromised. The outcome of deliberation is supposed to be indeterminate, and if we insist that deliberation result in reducing social and economic inequality (e.g., by deciding to redistribute wealth), we would clearly be determining the outcome ahead of time—an outcome that real-life deliberation under present circumstances may not likely achieve. On the other hand, if the reduction in inequality is meant merely to be a necessary prerequisite to genuine deliberation, then it is recognized that, within social conditions defined by structural inequality, we must look to something besides deliberation to achieve democracy. Under our current unequal conditions,

[478] Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, 172.

[479] Gutmann and Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?*, 50-51.

democratization could not be equated with the achievement of deliberation, for we must instead focus on reducing social and economic inequality so that deliberation will actually be democratic. As such, the divide between Dewey and deliberative democracy lies in the way Dewey makes the overcoming of social and economic inequality into a central task of his democratic theory, rather than leaving this matter as a footnote to the achievement of deliberative reason-giving. Dewey's focus is on the process of overcoming interrelated social and political hindrances to self-government—a process which, as his efforts to form a radical political party show, is not to be traveled through a commitment to deliberative reason-giving alone. His party sought to help stimulate a broad social movement based on a sense of "conflict and battle" with entrenched power, and thus aimed at highlighting the current social inequality, rather than abstracting from this inequality with a conception of a fair debate over policy.

Participatory and Deliberative Democracy

Participatory democracy, which was a prominent model of democratic thought in the 1960s and 70s, has been widely regarded as effectively incorporated, and improved, by deliberative theory. Goodin, for instance, declares that "Deliberative democrats tend to be participatory democrats, too."[480] Thompson claims "the turn toward deliberative theory has not displaced participatory theory…Rather than transcending participatory theory, many deliberative democrats see themselves as extending it."[481] Archon Fung sees a similar focus on the public good in the two theories: "participatory democrats have long claimed that deliberative arenas function as schools of democracy where individuals acquire the skills of citizenship and come to

[480] Robert Goodin, *Innovating Democracy: Democratic Theory and Practice After the Deliberative Turn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 266.

[481] Thompson, "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science", 511-512.

consider public interests more highly in their own preferences and dispositions"[482]; Fung and Erik Olin Wright also describe deliberative democracy as "participatory democratic regeneration."[483] And for Denise Vitale, both participatory and deliberative democracy seek "to re-absorb citizens into public debate and political processes by means of participation and public deliberation," but deliberative theory represents an advance because "defendants of participatory democracy fail…to take the next step of guaranteeing these processes through legal institutionalization," whereas "deliberative democracy supports the implementation of forms of direct democracy that are defended by the theorists of participatory democracy."[484] Dissenting views against this prevalent depiction of the deliberative-participatory connection are provided by Emily Hauptmann, who argues that deliberative theory does not aim at the same type of social and political transformation as participatory theory[485]; and by Carole Pateman, who challenges the notion that upholding deliberative reason-giving within deliberative forums is a sufficient basis for a theory of *democracy*, rather than just of deliberation.[486]

The theory of participatory democracy has been outlined most fully by Pateman and C.B. Macpherson. Pateman explains that "The theory of participatory democracy is built round the central assertion that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one

[482] Archon Fung, "Minipublics: Deliberative Designs and Their Consequences", in *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy: Can the People Govern?*, ed. Shawn Rosenberg (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 169.

[483] Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, "Thinking about Empowered Participatory Governance", in *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, eds. Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright (New York: Verso, 2003), 40.

[484] Denise Vitale, "Between Deliberative and Participatory Democracy: A Contribution on Habermas", *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 32, no. 6 (2006): 753-754.

[485] Emily Hauptmann, "Can Less Be More? Leftist Deliberative Democrats' Critique of Participatory Democracy", *Polity* 33, no. 3 (2001): 397-421.

[486] Carole Pateman, "Participatory Democracy Revisited", *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 1 (2012): 8, 10.

another."[487] The institutions referred to here are not political institutions alone, for the way in which individuals experience the structures of power in the broader society cannot but influence their capacity to exercise an effect on distinctly political decision-making structures: "democracy must take place in other spheres in order that the necessary individual attitudes and psychological qualities can be developed."[488] Pateman thus emphasizes the importance of "a participatory society," and of recognizing that encouraging "the participatory process in non-governmental authority structures requires…that the structures should be democratised…"[489] She places particular focus on the workplace as an example of such a structure, and provides empirical evidence for the claim that "the development of a sense of political efficacy does appear to depend on whether [an individual's] work situation allows him any scope to participate in decision-making."[490] She further notes how this workplace democratization requires concurrent pursuit of "the substantive measure of economic equality required to give the individual the independence and security necessary for (equal) participation."[491] And, she stresses that the point here is not to conceive of how such democratization can be perfectly achieved, but to take present circumstances into account and "modify…authority structures in a democratic direction."[492] More recently, Pateman has reaffirmed these participatory tenets, stating that participatory democracy "is about changes that will make our own social and political life more democratic, that will provide opportunities for individuals to participate in decision-making in

[487] Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 42.

[488] Ibid.

[489] Ibid., 20, 45.

[490] Ibid., 53.

[491] Ibid., 43.

[492] Ibid., 74-75.

their everyday lives as well as in the wider political system," and that we must focus on "making substantive steps towards creating a participatory democracy..."[493]

Quite similarly, Macpherson identifies participatory democracy with the understanding "that the workability of any political system depends largely on how all the other institutions, social and economic, have shaped, or might shape, the people with whom and by whom the political system must operate."[494] He points to social inequality as the root of much of the apathy we see within modern citizenries—because those who are socially disadvantaged know they must exercise far greater effort than the well-off to have an effect on political processes—and, like Pateman, he highlights the democratization of work relations as a crucial step toward reducing exclusive control of the political system by powerful interests.[495] Ultimately, he reasons that we cannot have anything approaching a democratic politics without both "a great reduction of the present social and economic inequality," and "a change in people's consciousness" from primarily seeing themselves as isolated consumers in a market and toward recognizing their interdependency with others (I will discuss this latter issue in more detail below).[496] He also realizes, though, that "it is unlikely that either of these prerequisite changes could be effected without a great deal more democratic participation than there is now…Hence the vicious circle: we cannot achieve more democratic participation without a prior change in social inequality and in consciousness, but we cannot achieve the changes in social inequality and consciousness without a prior increase in democratic participation."[497] For a solution, he describes a process in

[493] Pateman, "Participatory Democracy Revisited", 10, 15.

[494] C.B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 4.

[495] Ibid., 88, 103-104.

[496] Ibid., 99-100.

[497] Ibid., 100.

which a democratic change in either the social or political dimension of this vicious circle will affect the other dimension, imagining "an incomplete change in one [dimension] leading to some change in the other, leading to more change in the first, and so on…we needn't expect one of the changes to be complete before the other can begin"; he further explains how "we may look for loopholes anywhere in the circle, that is, for changes already visible or in prospect either in the amount of democratic participation or in social inequality or consumer consciousness."[498] And, again like Pateman, Macpherson rejects the attempt to "simply try to draw mechanical blue-prints of the proposed political system," and instead focuses on the movement in the direction of participatory ideals by asking "what roadblocks have to be removed, i.e. what changes in our present society and the now prevailing ideology" are necessary to further democratize political and non-political authority structures.[499]

For other thinkers who belong to the participatory tradition, emphasis is again placed on the idea of participatory democracy as an ideal which is never fully achieved, but which gives us guidelines toward which to strive. Jack Walker depicts participatory theory as providing "an outline, a set of prescriptions for the ideal polity which men should strive to create," and he points to "broadly based social movements" as appropriate means for producing significant political, social, and economic change.[500] Arnold Kaufman equates the claim that substantial democratization is "unrealistic" with an attempt "to describe the fixed frame of human potentiality," and argues we should instead "assume that remedial action is always possible."[501]

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[498] Ibid., 101.

[499] Ibid., 98-99.

[500] Jack Walker, "A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy", *American Political Science Review* 60, no. 2 (1966): 289, 293, 294.

[501] Arnold Kaufman, "Human Nature and Participatory Democracy", in *The Bias of Pluralism*, ed. William Connolly (New York: Atherton Press, 1969), 194.

Graeme Duncan and Steven Lukes similarly note the hubris involved in presuming "the obstacles to [participatory theory's] realization are irremovable."[502]

While deliberation may be one method available for democratizing authority structures and for overcoming social and economic inequalities, participatory theory does not commit to such reason-giving as though this practice were necessarily equivalent to democratization. When deliberative thinkers like Bohman, Knight, and Johnson insist on the reduction of social and economic inequality, or on a policy such as public financing of campaigns[503], they unwittingly hit on an important anti-deliberative point: under conditions of structural inequality, we move in the direction of democracy by taking steps toward overcoming that inequality, not by instituting a deliberative process with an indeterminate outcome. As Pateman explains, participatory democracy works toward allowing individuals "to exercise the maximum amount of control over their own lives and environment…"[504] Participatory theory focuses on remedying present threats to individual self-government, and locates threats within broader social relations as well as political institutions. We are to then take advantage of available opportunities to either reduce social inequality or combat the exclusive control of government by powerful interests, for a democratic change in one realm may help produce democratic effects in the other realm. And, participatory democracy makes room for this democratic progression to proceed through methods and practices other than deliberative reason-giving. Participatory democracy continuously pursues democracy, rather than continuously pursuing deliberation. Deliberative theory, therefore, cannot subsume participatory theory by primarily advocating the practice of

[502] Graeme Duncan and Steven Lukes, "The New Democracy", *Political Studies* XI, no. 2 (1963): 166.

[503] Bohman, *Public Deliberation*, 133; Knight and Johnson, "What Sort of Political Equality Does Deliberative Democracy Require?", 294.

[504] Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*, 43.

deliberative reason-giving under circumstances of evident structural inequality.

One example of participatory democratic practice which diverges from deliberative principles is the participatory budgeting institutions which got their start in Brazil in the late 1980s, and have since expanded to about 250-300 cities worldwide.[505] Typically a municipal program, participatory budgeting aims at democratizing political decision-making structures by opening up budgetary policy decisions to ordinary citizens, and by allowing local communities to select projects and proposals that best suit their needs.[506] Participation in these programs is incentivized because the level of turnout in neighborhood-level popular assemblies (the initial stage of the policymaking process) determines the number of elected representatives from each neighborhood at the "regional budget forums," where budget priorities for the region are finalized.[507] Perhaps most significantly, participatory budgeting has had the effect of increasing the political participation of historically excluded low-income citizens, and of producing policies which benefit those citizens (whereas previous budgetary processes primarily benefited the well-off)[508]; these results have been accomplished because the poor can be free of the normal barriers to their political influence, and because participatory budgeting has made use of a "Quality of Life Index" which ensures that poorer regions receive a greater percentage of budget spending than wealthier regions.[509] Not all examples of participatory budgeting are equally successful—in some cases, decision-making power is not genuinely delegated from the government to the

[505] Brian Wampler, "A Guide to Participatory Budgeting", in *Participatory Budgeting*, ed. Anwar Shah (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2007), 22; Graham Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 33.

[506] Wampler, "Guide to Participatory Budgeting," 24, 37.

[507] Ibid., 23-24, 28, 33, 49-50.

[508] Smith, *Democratic Innovations*, 34, 43-44; Pateman, "Participatory Democracy Revisited", 11-12.

[509] Wampler, "Guide to Participatory Budgeting", 30-31, 36, 40, 51, 52.

citizens, and the poor have not increased their participation or seen more favorable policy outputs.[510] Participatory budgeting in Europe, in particular, has largely left citizens as consultants rather than decision-makers.[511] Nonetheless, participatory budgeting's successes exhibit participatory theory's commitment to democratizing political institutions, while also taking measures to ameliorate the effect of social inequality on political processes. Deliberative theory, by contrast, has difficulty making room for participatory budgeting. Goodin and Dryzek exclude it from their definition of a deliberative mini-public, because the participation in the budgeting process is not determined by statistical representativeness[512]; Fung and Thompson each classify the program as deliberative, but they also claim it does not do enough to lead citizens to put aside their own self-interest and pursue the public good.[513] These thinkers again overlook the effect of social inequality on politics by primarily requiring that all deliberators articulate reasons that are publically acceptable, and assuming that such an exchange of reasons can insulate political forums from the effects of unequal social status among the deliberators.

Participatory theorists have also endorsed the policy of universal basic income, which would signify an attempt to remedy social and economic inequality, and which could then have a democratic impact on the political realm, the other side of Macpherson's "vicious circle." A basic income is unconditionally guaranteed to all citizens by the government, and is large enough on its own to ensure the citizens' basic needs are met; Alaska's partial basic income guarantee (the Permanent Dividend Fund, which has helped Alaska to one of the lowest poverty rates in the

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[510] Brian Wampler, *Participatory Budgeting in Brazil: Contestation, Cooperation, and Accountability* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 6, 7-8, 39, 72-73, 143-144, 172, 274-275, 281.

[511] Yves Sintomer, Carsten Herzberg and Anja Rocke, "Participatory Budgeting in Europe: Potentials and Challenges", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32, no. 1 (2008): 164-178.

[512] Goodin and Dryzek, "Deliberative Impacts," 221-222.

[513] Fung, "Minipublics," 179; Thompson, "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science", 514-515.

United States), the 2008 basic income grant in the Namibian village of Otjivero (which decreased poverty, unemployment, and malnutrition among children), and Brazil's program aimed at assisting poor families with young children (which has reduced the number of families living below poverty), have all been movements in the direction of an unconditional basic income guarantee; such a policy can open opportunities to individuals who were previously forced by poverty into alienating occupations, while also avoiding, because it is universal, stigmatizing its recipients in the way Medearis (as noted above) observes welfare policies often do.[514] Of course, some deliberative theorists may endorse this policy, but they cannot do so without effectively advocating something quite different from deliberative theory—either they must determine the policy outcome of deliberation before deliberation has taken place, or they must concede that the work of democratization must be done with extra-deliberative means.

Before returning to Dewey, I will make a brief comment on the democratic thought of Benjamin Barber, who uses Dewey as support for his arguments. Barber considers himself a participatory theorist[515] (and is often deemed participatory by others[516]) because he wants to move away from representative politics and toward direct citizen involvement in policy discussion. However, he effectively ignores issues of social and economic inequality, and instead calls on all citizens to engage in "public deliberation," or "ongoing talk," and to all be willing to transform—through encountering the interests of others—their initial private interests into concern for the common good of all.[517] The potential for such a "common good," under

[514] See the various selections in *Basic Income Worldwide: Horizons of Reform*, eds. Matthew Murray and Carole Pateman (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 12, 13, 38, 39, 41, 46, 74, 75, 78-79, 124, 188-189, 240, 241.

[515] Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117.

[516] E.g., Vitale, "Between Deliberative and Participatory Democracy", 750.

[517] Barber, *Strong Democracy*, 119, 132, 133-134, 135, 136-137, 173.

conditions of structural inequality, to reinforce the privilege of socially advantaged individuals is not addressed. Barber in fact specifically states that his theory "places politics before economics" by giving priority to citizen involvement in political forums over changes in economic relations.[518] As such, he does not capture participatory theory's focus on overcoming social and economic inequality and democratizing political institutions—two tasks which mutually condition each other—and he instead should be classified as a deliberative democrat who is more skeptical of representative politics than many other deliberative theorists.

Dewey and Participatory Democracy

The depictions of participatory democracy in the 1960s and 70s contain little discussion of Dewey. This is perhaps a result of the fact that, after Dewey's death in 1952, his thought had largely faded from view until Rorty's work in the late 70s and early 80s. Kaufman does include Dewey as a proto-participatory democrat, though while also remarking that Dewey does not provide an adequate empirical case for participatory ideals.[519] Macpherson provides a more thorough analysis of Dewey, but it is mostly critical. He claims that Dewey "was not interested in any analysis of capitalism," that he was unaware of the way government had become unresponsive to those who do not belong to the economic elite, and that he believed "everything would work out to the best advantage of everybody" if citizens would simply make more rational use of current political institutions.[520]

Macpherson's portrayal of Dewey is vastly inaccurate. To say Dewey was unconcerned with the undemocratic effects of capitalism is a great distance from the truth. He in fact argues that "The idea of a pre-established harmony between the existing so-called capitalistic regime

[518] Ibid., 305.

[519] Kaufman, "Human Nature and Participatory Democracy", 191.

[520] Macpherson, *Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, 74-76.

and democracy is as absurd a piece of metaphysical speculation as human history has ever evolved"[521]; that the exercise of power by "the political state…is pale in contrast with that exercised by concentrated and organized property interests"[522]; and that when one calls attention to "how inequitably [capitalism's] economic conditions are distributed," too often it is "considered an aspersion on our rugged individualism and an attempt to stir up class feeling."[523] As we have certainly already seen, Dewey is aware of how government is not currently "an instrument in the service of the people," because, "under the system of competition for power and competition for command of power, [government is] the tool and instrument of selfish acquisitive interests."[524] And as we have also already seen, Dewey does not simply call on individuals to make more rational use of current political institutions, because the workings of political institutions cannot be isolated from the democratic or undemocratic quality of broader social relations.[525]

In order to uphold the independence of their theory from deliberative democracy, participatory democrats can draw on Dewey's depiction of democracy as an unending movement through interrelated social and political obstacles to self-government. Dewey focuses on the inevitability of obstacles to the control individuals may exercise over their development, and argues that democracy can be continuously brought into existence to the extent we overcome those obstacles. His insistence that political democracy cannot be achieved without the concurrent development of social democracy buttresses participatory theory's advocacy of the

[521] John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), 72.

[522] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, 64.

[523] John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (New York: Capricorn Books, [1930] 1962), 106-107.

[524] LW11: 280.

[525] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 143.

democratization of political and non-political authority structures, and of the reduction of social and economic inequality. Dewey declares that "we know that the relations which exist between persons, outside of political institutions, relations of industry, of communication, of science, art and religion, affect daily associations, and thereby deeply affect the attitudes and habits expressed in government and rules of law. If it is true that the political and legal react to shape the other things, it is even more true that political institutions are an effect, not a cause."[526] He emphasizes that interactions within political forums cannot be isolated from the quality of broader social relations, which are themselves inevitably influenced by the outputs from political forums: "The state of culture is a state of interaction of many factors, the chief of which are law and politics, industry and commerce, science and technology, the arts of expression and communication, and of morals…"[527] He describes his planned radical political party as being "opportunistic in application,"[528] taking advantage of available opportunities to achieve substantial progress in both overcoming the exclusive control of political institutions by powerful interests, and overcoming social and economic inequality, while holding, like Macpherson, that progress on one task could likely have a democratic effect on the other (participatory budgeting, in fact, was first achieved through the efforts of an emergent workers' political party[529]). Contra Macpherson, therefore, Dewey should be embraced by participatory theorists, for his principles imply that participatory theory captures the various elements of democracy's development.

Like the participatory theorists, Dewey maintains that democracy's development must proceed through general guidelines, rather than mechanical blueprints. Regarding Dewey's own

[526] Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 6.

[527] Ibid., 23.

[528] LW6: 177.

[529] Wampler, "Guide to Participatory Budgeting", 23.

guidelines for achieving democracy, we saw in Chapter 1 his proposal to create a council for regulating industrial activity which would ensure that labor representatives can exercise power over policymaking.[530] We saw in Chapter 2 his assertion that racial and gender inequity are significant societal threats to democracy which can render apparent "political democracy" essentially meaningless.[531] We saw in Chapter 3 his support for ensuring "greater ability on the part of the workers in any particular trade or occupation to control that industry"[532]—and contra Kaufman, he does provide empirical evidence for the benefits of workplace democratization.[533] He also advocates "a basis of material security [that] will release the powers of individuals,"[534] which is similar to the universal basic income policy described above. Dewey thus not only shares participatory democrats' eschewal of a firm sketch of democracy's complete achievement, but he also propounds similar policy aims for guiding the current movement of democracy.

For Dewey, we can bring democracy further into existence, but that movement is inevitably imperfect, and certainly never finished. The development of democracy is never free of interrelated political and social obstacles, and we cannot presume that one set of obstacles may be effectively isolated from the other. In the example noted above involving a debate between business and labor interests over collective bargaining rights, Dewey would not simply ask the two sides to exchange reasons for their preferred policies within a political forum, for the social inequality between the two sides, if ignored, will likely corrupt that political process. He instead calls both for using government to further social democracy by strengthening the

[530] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 118.

[531] Dewey, "Creative Democracy", 242; LW5: 276.

[532] LW13: 313.

[533] LW5: 239.

[534] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, 91.

vulnerable social position of the laborers, and for ensuring that business representatives do not possess disproportionate access to governing institutions over other elements of society. Dewey, again, has us focus on taking our present obstacles, both political and social, into account and continuously modifying each realm in a democratic direction to the greatest extent possible: "I should begin…with finding out what are the urgent needs of the present and then try to shape policies to meet those needs."[535] Intelligent reflection can signal to us the direction in which democratic development must go—socially, we may recognize the need for material security and for workers to have some control over their activities; politically, we may identify the need for "a form of government which does not esteem the well-being of one individual or class above that of another."[536] But, the journey toward these goals will likely be forever unfinished: "Since things do not attain fulfillment but are in actuality distracted and interfered with, democracy in this sense is not a fact and never will be."[537] Participatory theorists, who seek democratization of authority structures in both social and political life, can find support in Dewey's depiction of democracy as an unending movement constituted by interrelated social and political elements.

Furthermore, Dewey's notion of a democratic individual way of life augments the importance of Macpherson's statement that participatory theory also requires a change in individuals' consciousness away from viewing themselves as isolated consumers in a market. As we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, Dewey's call for democratic individuality is a response to a constantly changing world which lacks any fixed truth or divinely-ordained social hierarchy. Democratic individuals, for Dewey, fully engage with the changing, uncertain, increasingly interconnected world they confront, in order to continuously develop, through experience, their

[535] LW9: 72.

[536] MW10: 137.

[537] Dewey, *Public and its Problems*, 148.

capacity to exercise some control over their future uncertain experience—they do not seek to somehow avoid the uncertainty and anxiety brought by changing circumstances. Macpherson only broaches these Deweyan issues when he calls on individuals to move away "from seeing themselves and acting as essentially consumers to seeing themselves and acting as exerters and enjoyers of the exertion and development of their own capacities."[538] Dewey in fact diagnoses Macpherson's concern that the "consumer" consciousness "has become the source and justification of inequalities and oppressions," leading individuals to believe that poverty and wealth are purely the result of isolated individual effort; and, he further warns that "As long as imagination is concerned primarily with obtaining pecuniary success and enjoying its material results," many individuals will look for "some adventitious way of getting the wealth that will make security possible."[539] This pursuit of material results is what we have seen Dewey call a "quest for certainty," an attempt to achieve security through the stable attainment of fixed ends (e.g., money). It is an attempt to escape the vicissitudes of experience through the attainment of wealth, and it leads us away from the type of continuous, active, necessarily imperfect exercise of control over our changing circumstances which is possible through democratic individuality.[540] Dewey's theory thus points us toward (imperfectly) overcoming interlocking political and social obstacles to individual self-government, while also recognizing an additional interrelated element of imperfect individuality. If individuals stick to a consumer consciousness, they will defend current inequalities, and will also pursue the quickest path to fixed material wealth and to (unrealistic) isolation from the influence of other individuals. In Dewey's view, democracy develops to the extent that the political and social realms are democratized, and that

[538] Macpherson, *Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, 99.

[539] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 18, 55, 136.

[540] I will address this point in greater detail in Chapter 5.

individuals themselves take advantage of available opportunities to exercise control over their constantly changing, and increasingly interconnected, world. He thus draws out the significance of Macpherson's later statement regarding the *individual* aspect of democracy.

The intricacies of democratic individuality are more fully discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, but the important point here is that Dewey identifies democracy with participation by individuals in the governance of their lives, and depicts this notion as a never-finished ideal which is constituted by various interrelated elements (political, social, individual) that are not in immediate harmony. He contends "the greatest mistake that we can make about democracy is to conceive of it as something fixed…the meaning of democracy, must be continually explored afresh; it has to be constantly discovered, and rediscovered, remade and reorganized; while the political and economic and social institutions in which it is embodied have to be remade and reorganized to meet the changes that are going on…"[541] Dewey thus reinforces participatory theory against deliberative theory by identifying democracy with the continuous amelioration of threats to the control individuals may exercise over their lives, threats which are not exclusively political. He places the social threats to democracy represented by crippling poverty and alienating work environments at the center of his theory, rather than leaving these matters as footnotes to the achievement of deliberative reason-giving within political forums. He also leads us away from a fixed association of democracy with deliberation—in the face of constantly changing threats to self-government, Dewey's principles could not permit democracy to be associated exclusively with one particular practice, for the actualization of democracy will need to allow for our methods of action to adapt in response to present conditions.

This last point is especially important, because it exemplifies why Dewey's theory can be particularly useful to participatory democrats for upholding the independence of their theory

[541] LW11: 182.

from deliberative democracy. Dewey would certainly not rule out deliberation as a method for potentially enacting the movement of democracy, i.e. for achieving his broad policy aims and overcoming current obstacles to individual self-government. But, deliberative democracy necessarily has an uncomfortable relationship with the reduction of social and economic inequality, because of its singular focus on deliberation as *the* democratic practice. As I have explained above, when deliberative democrats have insisted on the reduction of social and economic inequality, they have had to also concede that deliberation alone is theoretically problematic as a democratic practice under our current unequal conditions. Deliberation, as I have again explained above, tends to abstract from social inequality with its conception of a fair and equal debate over policy. This is what critics such as Sanders and Young have recognized, and what Dewey recognizes when he refers to "discussion and dialectic" as "weak reeds" to depend upon "if the problem of social organization is to be met." Dewey articulates this shortcoming of deliberative theory, and he demonstrates the need, under unequal social conditions, for practices which highlight the insuppressible character of social inequality; he himself marched in the streets for women's suffrage in the early 20th century, and during the 1894 Pullman workers' strike in Chicago, he displayed strong support for the workers and a belief that such strikes were progressive conflicts.[542] Unlike deliberative reason-giving, these types of practices do not require that socially disadvantaged individuals argue only for policies that can be acceptable to the advantaged, and they do not presume that certain rules of discourse can assure equality between the advantaged and the disadvantaged. These practices typically carry the connotation that social inequality is so pervasive that it cannot be merely bracketed—therefore, they aim more at allowing socially disadvantaged individuals to take direct action

[542] Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 86, 167; Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 111, 161.

toward overcoming their unequal conditions, and to do so without having to satisfy the advantaged individuals at each step of the way. If participatory theory has been unclear on any particular point, it would be the specific practices it endorses for effecting democratization of political and non-political authority structures, and this has given room for some thinkers (e.g., Vitale) to attest that deliberative theory's commitment to specific deliberative practices shows the superiority of deliberative to participatory democracy. Walker (as noted above) does associate participatory democracy with broadly based social movements, but Dewey's analysis can be useful to participatory democrats in conveying why exactly a commitment to deliberation is not a virtue. By avoiding such a commitment, participatory theory can make room for a mass movement—as Dewey hoped to help stimulate with his political party—which would be based on conflict with entrenched power and on overcoming social inequality, rather than on simply attempting to convince powerful actors to change their views through persuasive reasoning.

In fairness to the "deliberative" interpretations of his theory, Dewey does emphasize that not *all* means are automatically justified to reach democratic ends, pointing out that sudden, violent transformations of society in pursuit of democracy have tended to fail to even approach their democratic ends, as evidenced by the attempt to effect sudden Marxist revolution in the Soviet Union.[543] Violence is further problematic as a democratic method, for Dewey, in that it contravenes the principles of democratic individuality by destroying others rather than allowing them to potentially take part in a more democratic social context.[544] Still, Dewey buttresses participatory principles against deliberative theory when he does endorse non-deliberative means (e.g., the mass movement signified by his radical political party) to effect democratization, and when he rejects the assumption that reasoned debate in a political forum can bracket the

[543] LW11: 259.

[544] Dewey, "Creative Democracy", 243-244.

influence of social and economic inequality. Deliberative theorists inadvertently concede that deliberation is not necessarily democratic when they note that social and economic inequality must somehow be reduced in order for deliberative democracy to work. These theorists must go outside their central category (deliberation) in order to ensure their theory is actually democratic. Dewey, by contrast, gives the reduction of social and economic inequality a central position in the unending task of allowing individuals, as much as possible, to *participate* (socially and politically) in the governing of their own lives. As such, he is an effective voice for upholding the independence of participatory democracy from deliberative democracy.

Dewey and Agonistic Democracy

The principles of deliberative democracy have been challenged, in different ways, by agonistic democrats and communitarians. I will now address how Dewey's participatory theory stands in relation to these competing democratic traditions. Agonistic democracy challenges deliberative theory's notion that policies can be justified to all who are affected, and claim this notion merely covers over the exclusion that is characteristic of any policy decision. Thinkers in this tradition insist we must recognize how politics inevitably involves conflicts of power between competing positions, and that deliberative norms cannot eliminate the effect of power from a political forum. Chantal Mouffe describes how "such an 'agonistic' democracy requires accepting that conflict and division are inherent to politics…We have to accept that every consensus exists as a temporary result of a provisional hegemony, as a stabilization of power, and that it always entails some form of exclusion"; she further argues that deliberative democrats "are unable to recognize that bringing a deliberation to a close always results from a *decision* which excludes other possibilities and for which one should never refuse to bear responsibility

by invoking the commands of general rules or principles."[545] While deliberative theorists could respond that they do not seek consensus in the way agonists claim, the deliberative principle of providing "reasons all can accept" does imply a greater possible unity between political actors than agonists are willing to grant. Agonists see that unity as merely concealing the unavoidable exclusionary quality of political decisions; hence, as Bonnie Honig puts it, we must "secure the perpetuity of political contest" by ensuring "the proliferation of political spaces" where previous decisions are open to challenge.[546] And, this contest is democratic when its participants treat each other as, in Carl Schmitt's sense of these terms, *adversaries* to be argued with rather than *enemies* to be potentially fought with violence.[547] Mouffe writes that "*Antagonism* is struggle between enemies, while *agonism* is struggle between adversaries…the aim of democratic politics is to transform *antagonism* into *agonism*."[548] Agonistic theory thus seeks democracy not through decisions acceptable to all, but through recognizing the exclusionary quality of all political decisions, and ensuring that the opportunity to contest those decisions is always open. As William Connolly sums up, we have agonistic democracy "when the perspective of an identifiable constellation attains predominance in several areas of public debate, resisting factions remain effective in publicly articulating the terms of their opposition and compelling compromises on some of these fronts, and the news media, judiciary, and electoral system function to keep the terms of contestation among coalitions reasonably open…"[549]

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[545] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), 15-16, 104-105.

[546] Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 3, 10.

[547] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, exp. ed., translated and with an introduction by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1932] 2007), 27-28.

[548] Mouffe, *Democratic Paradox*, 102-103.

[549] William Connolly, *Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 213.

There has been little analysis of Dewey's relation to the agonistic model of democracy. Larry Hickman discusses some of the similarities and differences between Dewey and Mouffe, though he focuses more on their underlying philosophical principles than their political theories. For instance, he notes that Dewey and Mouffe similarly find the world to lack universal truths and view individual selves as many-sided, constantly changing entities, but he also contends that Mouffe's thought would benefit from Dewey's notion of progressive attainment of truth through experimental inquiry.[550] Richard Bernstein sees Dewey as achieving a middle ground between the insights of deliberative and agonistic theories: "Dewey emphasized that without creative conflict there is the danger of complacency and stagnation. But a democracy degenerates into a sheer contest of wills and a naked power struggle if there is not a serious attempt to engage in deliberation and public debate"; on Bernstein's view, a Deweyan cannot endorse agonistic democracy because "Agonism…can lead to a life-and-death struggle in which one seeks not only to defeat an opponent but to annihilate him."[551] This is not a compelling critique of agonism, though, for agonistic democrats specifically state that their theory requires those engaged in political conflict to treat each other as adversaries to debate, not as enemies to annihilate.

However, agonistic democracy is vulnerable to a similar critique, from a Deweyan perspective, as deliberative democracy regarding the effective isolation of the political and social realms. It is perhaps not surprising that agonistic theory would have this quality, given that the theory shows particular influence from the thought of Hannah Arendt,[552] who complains that "In the modern world, the social and the political realms are much less distinct [than in the ancient

[550] Larry Hickman, "The Genesis of Democratic Norms: Some Insights from Classical Pragmatism", in *Democracy as Culture: Deweyan Pragmatism in a Globalizing World*, eds. Sor-Hoon Tan and John Whalen-Bridge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 23-27.

[551] Richard Bernstein, *The Pragmatic Turn* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 84-85.

[552] E.g., Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, 4, 9, 77, 116, 125.

world]…In the modern world, the two realms indeed constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the life process itself."[553] For Arendt, the "rise of the social" is an especially troubling aspect of the modern world, because she thinks it signifies that politics has become intermingled with private concerns (e.g., individuals' material needs) which should be kept hidden in the household, thus turning politics into a realm for satisfying individuals' predetermined needs, rather than the realm for genuinely unpredictable action—separate from mere economic interests—that (she believes) it was in ancient Greece.[554] On an Arendtian view, individual uniqueness and freedom are diminished when the political and social intertwine.[555]

By equating agonistic conflict with democratization, agonistic democrats must isolate political and social by essentially conceiving of a political realm which achieves democracy by allowing an open contest of political positions, a contest that is unaffected by the social statuses of the individuals holding those positions. Recognizing the inevitability of domination, and creating spaces where domination can be contested, do little on their own to address the effect of social and economic inequality on political processes.[556] Under conditions of such inequality, political participants may openly contest one another's positions, while treating each other as adversaries rather than enemies, and yet the non-political resources enjoyed by certain elements of society can give those individuals a structural advantage in determining the outcome of the conflict. These resources can include the far greater time that the wealthy have to devote to politics than the poor, and the greater legitimacy that the viewpoints of the wealthy are given

[553] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 33.

[554] Ibid., 38.

[555] Schmitt, another influential thinker for the agonistic tradition, similarly draws a rigid distinction between the political and the non-political; see Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, 26-27.

[556] Nancy Fraser has made a similar point, charging that agonistic democracy "tends to bracket political economy"; see *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 181.

over the poor's in everyday social life. Now, as with the deliberative democrats, there are some agonistic democrats who insist on the reduction of social and economic inequality. Connolly maintains that "Agonal democracy…presupposes a reduction in established economic inequalities,"[557] while Mouffe actually endorses "the allocation of an unconditional minimum income (basic income)."[558] But as with deliberative theory, it is difficult to see how these policy preferences can be compatible with a commitment to agonistic conflict. If the reduction in inequality is meant to be the result of agonistic conflict, then the theory cannot genuinely commit to an open power contest between different positions, for the correct outcome of the conflict has been determined before the conflict has even taken place. And if the reduction in inequality is meant instead to be a prerequisite to agonistic democracy, then it is recognized that agonistic conflict within our present unequal circumstances is not the key to democratization, for we must look outside this type of open conflict to ensure the agonism actually is democratic.

From a Deweyan, and participatory, perspective, agonistic democracy, like deliberative democracy, mistakenly takes the focus away from the unending, constantly evolving, social and political aim of allowing individuals as much as possible to participate in the governing of their own lives. Agonistic theorists, like deliberative theorists, instead uphold a particular political practice as the key to democratization, regardless of unequal social conditions. When these types of thinkers realize that the practice they advocate can be adulterated by social inequality, they must then go outside the central category of their theories to ensure they are actually promoting a *democratic* theory. And furthermore, agonistic theorists emphasize that, because all viewpoints are partial and exclude other possible alternatives, "no limited social actor can attribute to herself

[557] Connolly, *Identity\Difference*, 212.

[558] Mouffe, *Democratic Paradox*, 126.

or himself the representation of the totality and claim to have the 'mastery' of the foundation."[559] But when Mouffe advocates basic income, or when she and Ernesto Laclau endorse leftist principles in general against "the neo-conservative offensive,"[560] they cannot avoid claiming access to the totality, for they are holding that certain positions in the agonistic conflict are more democratic than others. Agonistic theorists who demand that social and economic inequalities be reduced must commit to philosophical foundations and to certain positions over others in the agonistic struggle, rather than simply maintaining open contestation as their theory requires. For agonistic theory to remain consistent, it should endorse the victory of any position in the conflict, for there are surely powerful adversaries who stand in the way of Mouffe's preferred policies. But if those policies are necessary to effect democratization, then Mouffe and the agonists should place their focus on those policies, rather than on agonistic conflict. This is a crucial point, because it may appear that agonism captures Dewey's insistence that, under unequal social conditions, democratization will likely require practices that highlight the conflict between entrenched interests and the majority. Agonism does make room for non-deliberative practices, but, to remain consistent with their theory, agonistic theorists cannot associate democratic progress with the victory of the socially disadvantaged, and must instead endorse the conflict itself regardless of who wins. With Dewey and the participatory theorists, there is not the problematic assumption that agonistic conflict itself is necessarily synonymous with democracy.

Dewey and Communitarianism

Communitarian political thinkers do not object to the principles of deliberative democracy per se, but rather to the liberal tenets of thinkers like Rawls. From the communitarian

[559] Ibid., 100.

[560] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), 186.

perspective, it is greatly problematic when liberals portray individuals as "unencumbered" selves who can freely revise fundamental aspects of their identities (through taking part in a deliberative forum, for example). Communitarians claim that individuals' identities are largely constituted through their communal upbringing, which gives individuals aims and purposes that are so essential to them as to be un-revisable. Michael Sandel asserts that "To imagine a person incapable of constitutive attachments such as these is not to conceive an ideally free and rational agent, but to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth. For to have character is to know that I move in a history I neither summon nor command, which carries consequences none the less for my choices and conduct."[561] Drawing on Aristotle in particular, Alasdair MacIntyre similarly maintains that "we all approach our own circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity. I am someone's son or daughter, someone else's cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be the good for one who inhabits these roles."[562] Because liberals focus mainly on individuals' capacity to choose and revise their ends, communitarians believe they ask individuals to impossibly separate themselves from the ends which come from the type of communal roles that all individuals inhabit. Sandel thus reasons that "The relevant question is not what ends to choose…but rather who I am, how I am to discern in this clutter of possible ends what is me from what is mine,"[563] while MacIntyre advocates "construction of local forms of community"[564] to allow individuals to flourish within their constitutive roles. And in Michael Walzer's view, communitarianism represents an especially

[561] Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 179.

[562] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 204-205.

[563] Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 59.

[564] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 245.

modest philosophical position, for it accepts the diversity of particular communal practices and avoids imposing the standards and traditions of one community onto any other: "There are an infinite number of possible lives, shaped by an infinite number of possible cultures, religions, political arrangements, geographical conditions, and so on. A given society is just if its substantive life is lived…in a way faithful to the shared understandings of the members."[565]

While not as ubiquitous as the depictions of Dewey as a deliberative democrat, there have been several attempts to link Dewey with communitarianism. Sandel sees Dewey as supporting his own view that a community should cultivate virtues in individuals which will reinforce that community,[566] and Daniel Savage suggests that "Dewey's pragmatic philosophy is capable of dissolving many of the problems that occupy contemporary liberals and communitarians," because Dewey makes autonomous self-development into the type of "cultural virtue" that MacIntyre is looking for.[567] Robert Talisse also groups Dewey with communitarianism, though in an extremely unflattering light. He takes aim at Dewey's notion of a democratic way of life, insisting that this concept essentially calls on communities to form its individuals in the singular image of a citizen who possesses civic virtue and concern for the greater communal good. He equates Dewey in this way with Sandel, and argues that Dewey's democratic theory is anti-pluralist and suppresses individuality "under a common substantive moral image."[568]

I have shown the weakness of Talisse's pluralist objection to Dewey in Chapter 2, but it is further noteworthy here how the democratic way of life can actually form the basis of the

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[565] Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983), 313.

[566] Michael Sandel, "Dewey Rides Again", *New York Review of Books*, May 9, 1996.

[567] Daniel Savage, *John Dewey's Liberalism: Individual, Community, and Self-Development* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 27, 176.

[568] Robert Talisse, "Can Democracy Be a Way of Life? Deweyan Democracy and the Problem of Pluralism", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 39, no. 1 (2003): 1-21.

Deweyan critique of communitarianism. In Chapter 3, I identified the democratic life with a subject-object interaction in which subjects, who are inevitably influenced by the objects of experience they confront, exercise some manner of control over those objects—i.e., participate in the governing of their lives—rather than being passively molded by objects. When we follow communitarian thought to its logical conclusion, though, we are left with a static conception of the individual which is too much "object" and not enough "subject." Sandel explains how he aims to revive "A theory of community whose province extended to the subject as well as the object of motivations…"[569] An individual, then, actualizes her identity by "discovering" who she is within the context of her communal roles, which seems to deny the individual the opportunity to act as a subject exercising a unique effect on her own development; as Sandel puts it, there are "aims and attachments from which [the self] cannot stand apart…"[570] The description of this conception of individuality as "static" may appear unfair, for communitarians do emphasize that individuals develop within their constitutive roles. But, in Aristotelian fashion, while there may be development, it is still in the direction of a given endpoint which is provided by the community (and for Aristotle, by nature as well), and which is not revisable by the individual subject. MacIntyre indeed remarks that "To know oneself as such a social person…is to find oneself placed at a certain point on a journey with set goals; to move through life is to make progress – or to fail to make progress – toward a given end."[571] Communitarians are, at the same time, understandably wary of upholding cultural practices which deny individuals (e.g., women) any opportunity to step away from their inherited roles—Sandel thus assures us that "the

[569] Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 150.

[570] Ibid., 182.

[571] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 32.

contours of my identity will in some ways be open and subject to revision…"[572] But if traditional practices which suppress individuals' capacity to choose the roles they will inhabit are not acceptable, then communitarianism is barely distinct from the liberalism it claims to reject.[573] In order to oppose oppressive social customs, our theory must import principles from far outside communitarianism's maintenance of traditional communal identities.

For Dewey, it is important that we recognize the inevitable effect of social upbringing on individuals' lives, and the way individuals are inextricably connected with, and largely defined by their relations to, other individuals (as noted in Chapter 3, these are central aspects of Dewey's critique of much liberal theory). But he makes the quality of social upbringing and social relations into an object of analysis, primarily through his critique of prevalent educational practices[574] and of the iniquitous character of many racial, gender, and economic relations. He does not focus on simply bolstering traditional communal ties, but rather on the degree to which social practices are upholding the "subject" side of subject-object interaction—i.e., whether they allow individuals to exercise their own unique effect on their development. This is in fact a major reason why Talisse's connection of Dewey with Sandel is ultimately incoherent. Sandel's theory holds that individuals are defined so deeply by "constitutive ends" given to them by their community that they cannot be expected to stand back and revise them. But Dewey's democratic individual way of life, which Talisse castigates, is characterized by the unending development of one's unique self in response to inevitably changing circumstances, which entails the capacity to revise the ends of one's development. It is not at all clear how Dewey's and Sandel's theories

[572] Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 180.

[573] Will Kymlicka makes a similar argument; see "Liberalism and Communitarianism", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 18, no. 2 (1988), 192.

[574] Dewey's educational principles will be the focus in Chapter 5.

could both be oppressively anti-pluralist.

By encouraging individuals to discover the ends they have inherited, and diminishing the possibilities for individuals to revise their ends, communitarianism has at best an uneasy relationship with democracy, and certainly does not express Dewey's principle of continuous participation by individuals in the governance of their lives. Sandel does attempt to construct a democratic theory from his communitarianism, but he winds up resembling Barber by calling for individuals to take part in a virtuous republican politics aimed at the common good at local, state, and national levels, without addressing how this search for a common good may simply cover over the social inequalities contained within the community, inequalities which likely affect the quality of governing processes.[575] The awkward fit between communitarianism and democracy is particularly evident in Walzer's democratic theory—Walzer claims we should permit communal practices which uphold inequality as long as those communities are sufficiently unified and reflect the "shared understandings" of its members, but in "differentiated" communities (e.g., the United States), the logic of their association dictates strong measures (e.g., a national health service) to promote social and economic equality.[576] Besides the untenable quality of this distinction between "integrated" and "differentiated" communities, the fact that the "shared understandings" of at least a substantial portion of American society do not support a national health service—which should be an important issue for a communitarian—must be put aside in favor of Walzer's own preferred interpretation of the logic of America's community. With Dewey's democratic theory, by contrast, the focus is on the continuous amelioration of social

[575] Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 5-7, 25, 208, 274, 319-320, 322-323, 345, 348. Dewey does have common ground with the republican notion of continuous participation in governance which is not fulfilled simply through the possession of formal rights and liberties; but a Deweyan, again, cannot accept a call for more civic engagement on governing matters without concurrently accounting for social and economic inequalities.

[576] Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, xiv, 5, 19-20, 78-79, 84-85, 88-90, 121, 312-316, 319-321.

and economic inequality and of the exclusive control of political institutions by powerful interests; we do not have to then make an undemocratic commitment to upholding communal practices which restrict the capacity of individuals to participate in the governing of their lives.

Conclusion

This chapter has elucidated the particular contribution Dewey's democratic theory can make to contemporary democratic thought. I have argued that, contrary to popular belief, Dewey should not be classified as a forefather of deliberative democracy. Instead, his theory effectively highlights the potential value of participatory democracy to contemporary democratic thought, and exposes why participatory theory has not been incorporated by deliberative theory. Dewey associates democracy with the unending amelioration of threats to the capacity of individuals to participate in the governing of their lives. For Dewey, the interlocking political and social obstacles to this type of individual self-government necessitate the concurrent, continuous overcoming of exclusive control of political institutions by powerful interests, and of social and economic inequalities. By recognizing the interconnection of the political and social realms, Dewey buttresses the tenets of participatory theory, and he shows why a commitment to deliberation weakens democratic theory's capacity to account for the effects of unequal social status on political interactions, by exposing deliberation's tendency to abstract from social inequality. He thus leads democratic theory toward non-deliberative methods and practices (e.g., marches, protests, strikes) which highlight the insuppressible character of social inequality. Under unequal social conditions, Dewey reasons, we move democracy forward through policies aimed at addressing that inequality, and at addressing the effect of that inequality on political processes. We cannot assume, under such unequal conditions, that proper debate on policy will necessarily have democratizing effects. When they do hold to this assumption, deliberative

theorists must isolate the political and social realms, and when they insist on the reduction of social and economic inequality, they must concede that we have to go outside deliberation in order to ensure their theory is actually democratic. I have also shown that agonistic democracy is vulnerable to a similar critique, from a Deweyan perspective, as deliberative democracy, in the sense that the theory must isolate political and social if it is to commit to agonistic political conflict as the key to democratization under our present unequal social circumstances. And, I have shown why Dewey should not be placed in the tradition of communitarian thought either, for if we follow communitarianism through to its own conclusions, it must deny the essentials of individual self-government signified by Dewey's democratic way of life.

For Dewey, it is necessary to progressively overcome social and economic inequality because the opportunity for individuals to exercise some manner of control over their lives is affected no less by that inequality than by political institutions. But, as noted above, Dewey stresses that there is also an element of imperfect individual development which is interrelated with the imperfect democratization of the political and social realms. The manner in which individuals approach their world, and the way in which they interact with others under increasingly interconnected conditions, certainly cannot be predetermined for them. The societal threats to Deweyan democratic individuality—i.e., to the continuous, active, necessarily imperfect control that individuals may exercise over their development—may be progressively overcome, but it is still ultimately up to individuals to progressively actualize democratic social relations in their everyday interactions. And, as again noted above, this contribution by individuals to democratic development is intimately bound up with their contingent capacity to transcend a type of market consciousness and ideology, for if individuals continue to see themselves primarily as consumers in a market, they will defend present inequalities and will

seek the quickest path toward material wealth as deliverance from the vicissitudes of experience. This capacity of individuals to overcome market consciousness is certainly influenced by the social and political world they see around them, but individuals still bear large responsibility for forwarding the democratic movement themselves: "Imagine a society free of pecuniary domination…If human beings are not strong and steadfast enough to accept the invitation and take advantage of the proffered occasion, let us put the blame where it belongs."[577] It is precisely this aspect of individual development that I see as the central concern of Dewey's educational theory, and that will be our focus in the next chapter.

[577] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 158.

Educating Students for Democratic Individuality

In the previous chapter, I argued that advocates of participatory democracy can draw on Dewey's democratic thought to uphold the independence of their theory from deliberative democracy. One reason for this, I noted, is that Dewey's notion of a democratic individual way of life amplifies the significance of the rather underdeveloped point made by C.B. Macpherson (one of the foremost theorists of participatory democracy) that the achievement of democracy depends heavily on individuals' everyday behaviors. Macpherson claims that individuals must move away "from seeing themselves and acting as essentially consumers to seeing themselves and acting as exerters and enjoyers of the exertion and development of their own capacities."[578] As I have described in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, Dewey's conception of democratic individuality involves a recognition that we live in a constantly changing world lacking any fixed truth or divinely-ordained social hierarchy. Democratic individuals do not seek complete certainty in static ideals, but rather continuously develop themselves through active engagement with their changing surroundings, and in particular with the diverse others with whom they are interconnected by modern scientific and economic conditions; in so doing, these individuals may develop, through experience, their capacity to exercise some control over their future uncertain experience, and thus increase their capacity to participate in the governing of their lives. But even if the significant political and social obstacles to such individual self-government (as described in Chapter 4) are progressively overcome, individuals may still cling rigidly to fixed principles in the face of changing circumstances, and behave as if their actions do not affect, and are not affected by, other individuals. The manner in which individuals approach their world

[578] C.B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 99.

cannot be predetermined for them, and an attempt to plainly coerce individuals into becoming self-governing could carry many troubling implications. However, through significant changes in our prevalent methods of education, it would be possible, for Dewey, to encourage greater interest among individuals in the type of continuous development demanded by changing circumstances: "Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest; these can be created only by education."[579]

The deliberative theorists Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson have established the importance of education to deliberative democracy, stating that "From a deliberative perspective, the single most important institution outside government is the educational system,"[580] because schools are meant to cultivate the necessary deliberative skills among young individuals. I will use Dewey's analysis of education to show the types of educational principles that participatory democrats should uphold, and to argue that such a participatory perspective on education accounts for shortcomings of prevalent schooling practices that are overlooked by the deliberative perspective. In his advocacy of participatory democracy, Macpherson asks individuals to cease viewing themselves as isolated consumers in a market, and to recognize their interdependency with others. Dewey elaborates on the dangers posed to democracy by such a "consumer" consciousness, arguing that it leads individuals to seek the quickest path toward stable material wealth in order to escape from change and uncertainty, and to believe that poverty and wealth result only from isolated individual effort.[581] As noted in previous chapters, economic inequality and individuals' attempts at isolation from the constantly changing, increasingly

[579] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Free Press, [1916] 1966), 87.

[580] Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 61.

[581] John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (New York: Capricorn Books, [1930] 1962), 18, 55, 136.

interconnected conditions of modern life are major hindrances to Deweyan participatory democracy. In this chapter, I will elucidate the role that such a participatory democratic theory would have schools play in promoting continuous individual development and in fostering critical thought toward current economic relations.

I will focus in particular on Dewey's discussion of the effect of "external aims" (e.g., grades and standardized test scores) in producing a belief among students that the process of learning is naturally an intrinsically insignificant chore done primarily for a reward, and that individuals' worth can be determined by the possession of that reward. Dewey explains how analysis of education must pay attention to "all of the school machinery that hinges around the giving of marks—the eternal presence of the record book, the never-absent consciousness on the part of the child that he is to be marked for the poorness or goodness of his lesson, the sending home of graded reports upon purely conventional, mathematical or alphabetical schemes, the comparing by the children of their respective grades and all the scheming (sometimes cheating) thereby called forth."[582] The prevalence of such "marking" within typical educational settings is crucial for understanding Dewey's educational theory, for it is this marking that encourages students to seek the easiest path toward a fixed point where learning can end, and develops an "individualistic"[583] ideology among students which justifies current economic relations. If schools would instead allow students to learn without the "eternal presence of the record book," and without being led to judge both themselves and others by their status within that record book, then schools (for Dewey) would resist the consumer consciousness, and would allow

[582] MW3: 241.

[583] There will be an important distinction in this chapter between *individuality* and *individualism*. "Individuality" will refer to the continuous development and critical thought that I have associated with *democratic* individuality; "individualism" (or "individualistic") will refer to the belief that individual worth can be isolated and evaluated on the basis of some external reward.

greater space for the continuous development and critical thought entailed by democratic individuality.

I will argue in this chapter that the effect of "external aims" has not been suitably recognized in scholarship on Dewey's educational theory. In that scholarship, the discussion of Dewey's ideas for democratizing education has focused mainly on the type of subject matter which is presented to students. More specifically, the focus has been on: providing students with problems which lack a fixed, readymade answer, and thus giving them the opportunity to *inquire* during school, rather than passively memorize; assigning students more projects which involve working with other students, rather than working in isolation; and, connecting subject matter with its practical use, so that students can test the relevance of school material against their real-life experience. I do not suggest that Dewey scholars are wrong to emphasize such issues, for Dewey certainly does advocate these types of educational practices. However, I do claim that Dewey's analysis of education indicates that these practices could not likely be effectively instituted without also accounting for the effect of grading on how students approach school subject matter and the process of learning. In fact, Dewey stresses that, as long as students have that "never-absent consciousness" of being graded for their work, they are not likely to embrace the opportunity to engage in open-ended projects which have real-world implications. With the external aim lingering in students' minds as the defining matter of their educational experience, Dewey's concern is that the uncertainty and lack of structure involved in open-ended projects will be unappealing to students, and that students will ultimately gravitate toward seeking strict instructions from the teacher on what exactly is required to receive the desired grade. In Chapter 3, where I analyzed the democratic individual way of life by exploring Dewey's relation to Hegel, I associated democratic individuality with the opportunity of individuals to exercise a

unique effect on the novel "objects of experience" they inevitably confront, and thus, to participate in the governing of their lives; within grade-based schooling (as Dewey finds it), students instead seek a clear, unambiguous path of learning, provided by others, which they can follow in order to reach a fixed endpoint.[584] Such schooling does not then promote students' capacity to actively interact with novel objects of experience, for the students seek to be told by the teacher precisely what to do in response to all possible objects of experience.

This chapter will demonstrate the importance of Dewey's argument against external aims to his conception of democratic education, particularly when that conception is read in relation to the *individual* aspect of Deweyan participatory democracy. As I have described in previous chapters, the development of this participatory democracy requires the continuous overcoming of the exclusive control of political institutions by powerful interests, and of social and economic inequality; individuals themselves still bear the responsibility of adapting to a constantly changing, interconnected world and of challenging unequal social relations, and education is essential to the development of those individual capacities. In this chapter, I will first discuss the recent scholarly literature on Dewey's educational theory, and then I will show why this literature's focus on the type of subject matter presented to students does accurately capture some of Dewey's concerns with typical educational settings. I will then argue, though, that discussion of Deweyan education should emphasize Dewey's case against the value attached to

[584] Elsewhere, I have described in detail the Deweyan case for how external aims tend to lead students away from continuous individual growth, by drawing out the implications of Dewey's Hegelian conception of individual experience; see Jeff Jackson, "Reconstructing Dewey: Dialectics and Democratic Education", *Education and Culture* 28, no. 1 (2012): 62-77. In this chapter, I will also be drawing on my analysis of Dewey's Hegelianism in Chapter 3; my broader purpose in this chapter, though, is to show why Dewey's argument against external aims should be emphasized in discussions of his educational theory, particularly when his educational theory is placed in the context of the type of participatory democracy I have outlined in the previous chapters.

grades and standardized test scores in schools,[585] for this case illustrates that more practical, open-ended subject matter will do little to change the educational experience if students must still concern themselves primarily with accumulating those external rewards. The pursuit of such rewards, for Dewey, encourages behavior aimed at escaping the uncertain process of growth in order to attain security in stable "markers," and encourages an ideology that tends to justify current inequalities in wealth. Finally, I will exhibit how these Deweyan principles highlight shortcomings in the educational theory offered by Gutmann, who presumes that promoting the deliberative skills of students will be sufficient to cultivate continuous development and critical thought, without considering how quotidian school practices (such as grading) may lead students to uncritically accept our dominant social tenets.

The significance of this chapter will go beyond the argument regarding specific educational practices. My analysis of Dewey's educational principles will further illustrate deliberative democracy's insufficient means for accounting for social threats to self-government—in particular, I will show how the deliberative educational theory does not adequately consider the extent to which certain school practices may already reflect the structural advantage of certain social interests over others, or how a "fair" debate over educational policy may in fact be biased in favor of those advantaged social interests. The analysis in this chapter can also be drawn upon by participatory democrats, in order to establish (in a more effective manner than in deliberative theory) the effect of social, *non-political* threats to self-government on everyday educational practice and on educational policy debate. Indeed, this chapter will exhibit the importance that should be placed on education within any democratic theory that identifies a social element to democracy. If we are to see democracy as more than a political

[585] For a valuable account of the use of external aims (particularly standardized testing) during Dewey's time, see Mark Garrison, *A Measure of Failure: The Political Origins of Standardized Testing* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).

mechanism for allowing various interests to compete with each other (or to reason with each other), then we must consider how individuals can help promote democratization in their everyday social relations, and we must therefore give due attention to the types of attitudes and behaviors encouraged in young individuals during school, and to how schooling could be altered so as to allow individuals a greater opportunity to live democratically and contribute to a democratic society. A nation, such as the United States, is not only a set of political and social institutions, but also a set of ideas used to buttress that nation's political and social environment; thus, a nation's dominant set of ideas, and the way those ideas are transmitted to individuals through that nation's education system, are crucial to any discussion of democratizing that nation. Education, then, should be seen as an essential pillar in participatory democratic theory, and this chapter will show why Dewey can be especially useful in constructing that pillar.

The Call for Meaningful Subject Matter in Dewey Scholarship

One of the main points of emphasis in the recent literature on Dewey's educational theory is that Deweyan education demands assignment of projects which do not have a predetermined result, which reflect the complexity and uncertainty of the students' natural and social surroundings, and which allow students to develop habits of inquiry, rather than habits of memorization of readymade answers. James Johnston underlines this point, noting that "Dewey hopes formal education will…provide [students] with opportunities such that they can develop the habits of inquiry so that they might then have strong and robust problem-solving dispositions," and that Dewey believes "children learn best by actively engaging in the world around them, testing materials in various ways, sorting and selecting best practices through trial and error…"[586] In order to develop such habits of inquiry, Johnston specifically recommends

[586] James Johnston, *Deweyan Inquiry: From Education Theory to Practice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 11, 35.

measures which will create a suitable environment for inquiry: "This can take many forms, from needed facilities, supplies, and other material resources, to climate control, adequate nutrition, and time for exercise and rest. The more environmental variables that are controlled, the more likely it is that the probability of a child to not be sidetracked by potential challenges to her attention, interest, and effort to the task at hand will be heightened."[587] Along similar lines, Gert Biesta argues that Deweyan inquiry would require that students not be forced to simply memorize facts of history, for example, but that they be exposed to debates within the field of history, and encouraged to determine for themselves which side in the debate is strongest.[588] Sharon Feiman-Nemser also declares that "What is needed is not ready-made subject matter, but an actual empirical situation that presents something new and therefore uncertain or problematic..."[589] And for Elizabeth Minnich, if this type of inquiry were made possible, then "When the class period ends, [students will] not want to stop, so engaged, so interested, are they."[590] According to this viewpoint, then, Deweyan education primarily involves presenting students with subject matter which is open-ended and provides opportunities for inquiry, because such subject matter would hold students' interest and develop their problem-solving capacities.

Another common point in current Dewey scholarship is that Deweyan schools must allow students greater opportunity to work with, and learn from, other students, rather than passively

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[587] James Johnston, *Inquiry and Education: John Dewey and the Quest for Democracy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 193.

[588] Gert Biesta, "The Communicative Turn in Dewey's *Democracy and Education*", in *John Dewey and Our Educational Prospect: A Critical Engagement with Dewey's Democracy and Education*, ed. David Hansen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 32.

[589] Sharon Feiman-Nemser, "A Teacher Educator Looks at *Democracy and Education*", in *John Dewey and Our Educational Prospect: A Critical Engagement with Dewey's Democracy and Education*, ed. David Hansen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 134.

[590] Elizabeth Minnich, "Dewey's Philosophy of Life", in *John Dewey and Our Educational Prospect: A Critical Engagement with Dewey's Democracy and Education*, ed. David Hansen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 156.

listening to the teacher alone. As Leonard Waks puts it, "The passive listening that is characteristic of one-way, straight-line communication, the form of communication so deeply entrenched in our schools, leads to negative conformity, the absence of vital interchange, and the swallowing up of individuals in an undifferentiated mass."[591] Waks further notes that, for Dewey, interaction with other students who provide different perspectives and ideas on subject matter is "*inherently* challenging, just because communication by any speaker to any other logically requires openness to an understanding of the listener's perspective."[592] Hence, to the extent that schools assign projects which require students to confront the views of others, these schools would be encouraging students' growth and their capacity to think critically about current beliefs and habits. This portrayal of Dewey's educational principles, in fact, coheres well with the prevalent depiction of Dewey (explored in the previous chapter) as a forefather of deliberative democracy. Jason Kosnoski explains how students must "regard interaction with others who face similar problematic situations as the proper means to address the confusing and chaotic quality of their experience"; when students do this, they can develop the capacity to "place oneself into the position of others' experience of the same situation," and, as a result, they will "come to not simply know but to 'feel' the public through their mutual discussion in a much more passionate manner than if they had merely learned new political facts and values."[593] Such interaction and communication, therefore, could lead students to fulfill deliberative democracy's ideals of fair debate with others, and willingness to change one's views in the course of that debate. As Eric Weber sees it, Dewey's educational ideas aim at creating a system "in which

[591] Leonard Waks, "John Dewey on Listening and Friendship in School and Society", *Educational Theory* 61, no. 2 (2011): 202-203.

[592] Leonard Waks, "Dewey's Theory of the Democratic Public and the Public Character of Charter Schools", *Educational Theory* 60, no. 6 (2010): 677.

[593] Jason Kosnoski, *John Dewey and the Habits of Ethical Life: The Aesthetics of Political Organizing in a Liquid World* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 205, 206, 207.

people can deliberate together about how best to deal with the problems that confront them."[594]

Yet another frequently referenced point in discussions of Dewey's educational theory is Dewey's belief that schools must allow students to see the concrete, practical value of subject matter, so that the students may be able to connect with the subject matter and use it to illuminate their experiences outside the school. Dewey's pragmatist philosophy (described in detail in Chapter 3) holds that ideas and principles are to be judged by the changes they effect in our ordinary, everyday experience, and Stephen Fishman and Lucille McCarthy primarily see Deweyan schools as encouraging students to "use their own lives to connect to and make sense of new material and use new material to shed fresh light on their personal experiences."[595] On this view, when schooling connects subject matter to its real-life significance, and allows students to test the validity of the subject matter against their own experience, students would more likely grow through each encounter with new subject matter. Conversely, as Herbert Kliebard puts it, "if knowledge is presented to the child principally as something that simply needs to be learned without any relationship to its origins in human experience, knowledge, particularly school knowledge, as perceived by the learner becomes an inert assemblage of facts that bears no relevance to life as it is lived"; when students cannot connect the subject matter to their own experience, and instead see it as just a collection of facts to be memorized, the students are not likely to continuously grow in their encounters with subject matter, for "they promptly abandon [subject matter] once the defined period of schooling is past."[596] As a specific example

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[594] Eric Weber, *Rawls, Dewey, and Constructivism: On the Epistemology of Justice* (London: Continuum International, 2010), 136.

[595] Stephen Fishman and Lucille McCarthy, *John Dewey and the Philosophy and Practice of Hope* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 110.

[596] Herbert Kliebard, "Dewey's Reconstruction of the Curriculum: From Occupation to Disciplined Knowledge", in *John Dewey and Our Educational Prospect: A Critical Engagement with Dewey's Democracy and Education*, ed. David Hansen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 120.

of connecting school material to real-life experience, Reba Page discusses how a concept like "longitude" is often taught to students as a vocabulary word with a definition to be memorized and recited, whereas a Deweyan school would help students see how various human activities have depended upon the awareness of longitude.[597] As another example, Jim Garrison focuses on the practical value offered by the reading of dramatic narratives in schools: "Dramatic narratives are excellent instances of vicarious experience, but not overt fact, wherein students may imaginatively indulge their desires. They may suffer the consequences of their imaginary actions, and learn from the experience. They can condense a lifetime of suffered consequences into an afternoon of exciting reading"; because such literature can allow students to learn from painful experience without having to actually endure the painful experience, Garrison claims that "Relationships with literature can lead to expansive growth."[598] In other words, students may continuously grow in their schooling because they can use subject matter to shine new light on their ordinary experiences, and they may think critically about the subject matter because they do not simply memorize it, but rather test its relevance by applying it to their own experiences.

There is nothing wrong per se with any of these claims about Dewey's educational theory, and in fact they each touch on issues that are extremely important to Dewey's conception of democratic education. However, I will argue that this scholarship is overlooking a crucial aspect of Dewey's critique of prevalent educational principles by leaving aside his concerns with the effect of "external aims" on students' educational experience. I will show that, when students are unavoidably conscious of grades and standardized test scores as the validating markers of their learning, Dewey holds that even cooperative projects involving inquiry into

[597] Reba Page, "Curriculum Matters", in *John Dewey and Our Educational Prospect: A Critical Engagement with Dewey's Democracy and Education*, ed. David Hansen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 53.

[598] Jim Garrison, *Dewey and Eros: Wisdom and Desire in the Art of Teaching* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997), 121, 144-145.

problems with real-life significance will do little to cultivate students' capacity for continuous development and for critical thought toward current social and economic relations.

Cooperative, Practical Inquiry in Deweyan Education

Before moving onto my primary argument in this chapter regarding external aims, I will briefly elaborate on Dewey's discussion of the issues described in the previous section. The broader scope of Dewey's ideas for democratizing education is not expressed through the case against external aims alone (although I do claim that the importance of this case has not been adequately recognized in Dewey scholarship), and so the issues identified by these other Dewey scholars do deserve amplification. With respect to the point that Deweyan schools would allow students far greater opportunity to engage in open-ended inquiry, rather than memorization of fixed answers, Dewey does indeed remark that "Just because a second-handed material has been supplied wholesale and retail, but anyway ready-made, the tendency is to reduce the activity of mind to a docile or passive taking in of the material presented—in short, to memorizing, with simply incidental use of judgment and of active research. As is frequently stated, acquiring takes the place of inquiring."[599] This is a problem Dewey sees, for example, when "science is still taught very largely as a separate and isolated subject" with a set of biological, chemical, and physical facts which students are to memorize in order to exhibit scientific knowledge.[600] This is not to suggest that Dewey would like for schools to treat the finished work and past accomplishments of a field like science as irrelevant to students' education; he in fact states that it is important for schools to "[put] the net product of past experience in the form which makes it

[599] MW3: 236.

[600] LW11: 187.

most available for the future."[601] But, he stresses that this past experience should not be accepted uncritically by the students. With the example of past scientific facts, the students should instead get the sense of scientific subject matter as a continuously developing entity—they should be exposed to the conflicts and debates among scientists which gave rise to currently-held scientific facts, and should be given opportunities to use these past facts to inquire into new biological, chemical, and physical problems: "Learning [in traditional education] means acquisition of what already is incorporated in books and in the heads of the elders. Moreover, that which is taught is thought of as essentially static. It is taught as a finished product, with little regard either to the ways in which it was originally built up or to changes that will surely occur in the future."[602]

Dewey also highlights a political significance to the presence, or lack, of inquiry within education. He contends that "current schooling…not only does little to make discriminating intelligence a safeguard against surrender to the invasion of bunk, especially in its most dangerous form—social and political bunk—but it does much to favor susceptibility to a welcoming reception to it."[603] One of the main reasons schooling has had this effect, he argues, is that there has been "a systematic, almost deliberate, avoidance of the spirit of criticism in dealing with history, politics, and economics. There is an implicit belief that this avoidance is the only way by which to produce good citizens. The more undiscriminatingly the history and institutions of one's own nation are idealized, the greater is the likelihood, so it is assumed, that the school product will be a loyal patriot, a well equipped good citizen."[604] American schools, therefore, should confront students with the undesirable aspects of America's current political

[601] John Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902), 27.

[602] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1938), 5.

[603] MW13: 332.

[604] MW13: 332.

and economic reality (e.g., governmental gridlock, income inequality) and of America's history (e.g., genocide of Native Americans); the students should be exposed to differing positions on the meanings and lessons of these defects in American life, and encouraged to critically inquire into each position. Any attempts to conceal the undesirable aspects of American politics, economics, and history, and to orient the social studies curriculum primarily toward portraying the United States as simply the greatest nation in the world,[605] must be opposed by Deweyans. As Dewey puts it, "our instruction in history and geography and our social studies in general should be intellectually more honest, they should bring students into gradual contact with the actual realities of contemporary life…"[606] And with political education more specifically, he insists that "We need methods of teaching that will not merely give pupils a simple paper knowledge of government, but that will give them…a knowledge of what are the underlying tendencies and problems they must meet in government, local, state, and national."[607]

It is also crucial, for Dewey, that school projects allow students to work with, and learn from, other students, rather than conveying to students that cooperation is not legitimate and that learning is mainly an individualistic activity of receiving information from the teacher alone. Dewey asserts that the individualistic atmosphere of typical educational settings is such that "for one child to help another in his task has become a school crime. Where the school work consists in simply learning lessons, mutual assistance, instead of being the most natural form of cooperation and association, becomes a clandestine effort to relieve one's neighbor of his proper duties."[608] When students are not provided sufficient opportunity to work with other students,

[605] Michael Brick, "Texas School Board Set to Vote Textbook Revisions", *New York Times*, May 20, 2010.

[606] MW15: 156.

[607] MW15: 161.

[608] John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900), 29.

and to learn from the experiences of those other students, the students are then cut off from potential sources of learning, and come to see only the teacher's voice as worth listening to. Furthermore, as Dewey explains, individuals have capacities which are not expressed when working in isolation, but are expressed "when the individual is working with others, where there is a common project, something of interest to them all, but where each has his own part."[609] If students spend the vast majority of their time in schools working alone at isolated desks, these capacities to contribute positively to a group endeavor may remain undeveloped. The students will not then learn to put their own views—e.g., on a social studies question or a scientific experiment—up for challenge by others, or to constructively draw on the views of others in order to strengthen an initial suggestion or proposal for solving a problem. Encouraging students to engage in cooperative work relations with others, therefore, is critical if students are to learn to tolerate and respectfully engage the differing views of their peers, rather than seeing their peers merely as hindrances to their own individualistic activity: "the best and deepest moral training is precisely that which one gets through having to enter into proper relations with others in a unity of work and thought. The present educational systems, so far as they destroy or neglect this unity, render it difficult or impossible to get any genuine, regular moral training."[610]

Finally, there is no topic more frequently addressed in Dewey's educational writings than the importance of connecting school subject matter to its practical, real-life significance. Dewey declares that "the great waste in the school comes from [the child's] inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself;

[609] MW15: 176.

[610] EW5: 88.

while, on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning at school."[611] In Dewey's view, too much of the information tossed at students during school is completely foreign to the students' everyday lives. The students are asked to accumulate mathematical techniques, scientific facts, historical events, etc. in their minds just for the sake of the subject matter itself, while their ordinary experiences are left at the schoolhouse door. They have difficulty, then, seeing how math, science, or history might help them think in new ways about situations they experience outside of school, and, being unable to form an authentic connection with the subject matter, they will likely expel the subject matter from their minds whenever it is not necessary for their school work. On the topic of making school information more practical, Dewey argues that mathematical subject matter "arises in connection with the measuring of things for purposes of constructive activity; and hence arithmetic should be so taught," meaning that students could connect more deeply with mathematical concepts by seeing their value for construction projects.[612] He also suggests cooking and sewing as activities which can allow students to perceive the practical, real-life value of the chemical and physical aspects of scientific study.[613] With this focus on practical activities, Dewey assures us that schools would not then fail to provide students with necessary facts and information: "a child cannot garden intelligently without learning about soils, seeds, measures, plants and their growth, the facts of rain, sunshine, etc."; by applying these facts to concrete experience, though, the students will less likely accept these facts simply on hearing them, but will treat them as "working hypotheses" to be altered if they do not have the intended effect on the students' concrete experience.[614] Most

[611] Dewey, *School and Society*, 89.

[612] EW5: 205.

[613] MW3: 238.

[614] MW4: 187-188.

importantly, this connection of school information with real-life, practical activities, for Dewey, would allow students to see their school experience as bearing directly on their everyday experience. The students would less likely see subject matter as merely an alien entity with no relevance to their normal lives, and may instead use each encounter with new subject matter to shed further light on the situations they experience outside of school.

If individuals are to be capable of participating in the governing of their lives in the way Dewey describes—i.e., if they are to be capable of flexibly, intelligently adapting to a changing, increasingly interconnected world—then it is essential that students find sufficient opportunity for cooperative, practical inquiry in their education. I will now argue, though, that the value placed on "external aims" in schools must be addressed if we are to approach Dewey's goals of encouraging continuous development and stimulating critical thought toward current social and economic relations within students' education.

The Effect of External Aims on Individual Development

Within his discussions of external aims, the point Dewey wishes to immediately impress upon us is that these types of aims are detrimental to students' growth. In *Democracy and Education*, his central work on educational philosophy, Dewey writes that "In contrast with fulfilling some process in order that activity may go on, stands the static character of an end which is imposed from without the activity…When one has such a notion, activity is a mere unavoidable means to something else; it is not significant or important on its own account. As compared with the end it is but a necessary evil; something which must be gone through before one can reach the object which is alone worth while."[615] In other words, when students see their grade at the end of a semester, or their score on a state-mandated standardized test, as *the* mark of evaluation which will legitimize their learning, the learning process itself comes to lack

[615] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 105-106.

intrinsic value to the students. Their encounters with school subject matter tend to be seen as meaningless chores, which must be endured mainly because the students have been told that this subject matter is necessary to receive the grades and test scores that will indicate their quality as students: "the external idea of the aim leads to a separation of means from end…Every divorce of end from means diminishes by that much the significance of the activity and tends to reduce it to a drudgery from which one would escape if he could."[616] For Dewey, the value attached to these external aims hinders the school's capacity to help students grow through each encounter with new subject matter, because the students are likely to view learning itself as insignificant, and to focus their attention primarily on bringing the learning process to a close so that this process can finally be validated through attainment of the desired reward.

Elsewhere, Dewey notes the effect of practices such as grading on students' interest in engaging with subject matter to their fullest individual capacities, and in seeking out the greatest possible growth available through that subject matter. He warns that these practices encourage students to approach school material with a view to only what is necessary for accomplishing the aims which have been imposed upon them, and nothing beyond that: "I have seen a powerful indictment against the marking and examination system, as ordinarily conducted, to the effect that it sets up a false and demoralizing standard by which the students come to judge their own work. Instead of each one considering himself responsible for the highest excellency to which he can possibly attain, the tendency is to suppose that one is doing well enough if he comes up to the average expectation."[617] This issue, Dewey contends, should nullify those "arguments which imply that there is something particularly strenuous in the disciplinary ideals of rigid tests and

[616] Ibid., 106.

[617] MW3: 243.

marks, and that their surrender means the substitution of a less severe and exacting standard."[618] The focus on grading and testing does not lead students toward fully engaging with school activities and subject matter, but rather toward seeking a clearly delineated path that will lead them directly to the external aim: "It points out to students certain particular things which are to be done and certain particular things which are to be avoided. And it not only permits but encourages them to believe that the whole duty of man is done when just these special things have been performed, and just these special things avoided."[619] Hence, students' growth is hindered by the presence of external aims, for these aims tend to leave students searching for the quickest, easiest path toward a fixed end where learning can stop. As Dewey remarks, "In education, the currency of these externally imposed aims is responsible for…rendering the work of both teacher and pupil mechanical and slavish."[620]

The essence of Dewey's complaint against grades and standardized test scores relates to the effect of these external aims on students' approach to the uncertainty inherent in their development. As noted in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, Dewey's pragmatist philosophy is based upon the recognition that there are no ideas or principles which can be said to be eternally true, and that there is no completed knowledge available to us which is safe from the hazards of our changing experiences. The path toward increasing our knowledge, then, is through active engagement with our inevitably changing world, wherein we may develop, through experience, provisional, not certain, ideas and principles to use toward effectively interacting with the world in the future. Dewey attests that "To say that thinking occurs with reference to situations which are still going on, and incomplete, is to say that thinking occurs when things are uncertain or

[618] MW3: 243-244.

[619] MW3: 244.

[620] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 110.

doubtful or problematic…It also follows that all thinking involves a risk. Certainty cannot be guaranteed in advance. The invasion of the unknown is of the nature of an adventure; we cannot be sure in advance."[621] If we are to genuinely engage in this adventure, and build provisional principles which are useful in future experiences, then we must accept the uncertainty involved in this process, and also the sheer difficulty entailed by engagement with the inevitably unique situations produced by our changing circumstances: "Every vital activity of any depth and range inevitably meets obstacles in the course of its effort to realize itself."[622] However, when students cannot escape the feeling that their grades and standardized test scores are the sole validating measures of their school activities, then uncertainty and difficulty become, not necessary and invigorating aspects of the process of development, but treacherous signs that the all-important grade or test score may not be received. It becomes increasingly burdensome, then, for students to actively seek out new paths of development available within education, and to accept and value the missteps they will likely make within such uncertain paths; it will likely appear senseless to the students to risk their academic record by making themselves vulnerable to such missteps, and instead, the quick, easy path toward the external aim, with the least possibility of error, will seem desirable: "Insistence upon avoiding error instead of attaining power tends…to interruption of continuous discourse and thought. Children who begin with something to say and with intellectual eagerness to say it are sometimes made so conscious of minor errors in substance and form that the energy that should go into constructive thinking is diverted into anxiety not to make mistakes, and even, in extreme cases, into passive quiescence as the best

[621] Ibid., 148.

[622] John Dewey, *How We Think* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1910), 64.

method of minimizing error."[623]

From this analysis, we can begin to see the importance of Dewey's discussion of external aims for his notion of the democratic individual way of life, or, for the individual aspect of Deweyan participatory democracy. I have explained in previous chapters how, for Dewey, modern scientific and economic changes have progressively brought down past claims to eternal truth, and have increasingly interconnected individuals with others far outside their immediate circle of acquaintances. In Chapter 3 in particular, I showed how Deweyan democratic individuality involves recognition by an individual that there are no eternally wise ideas or principles which that individual can uncritically rely upon for directing her development in the face of inevitably changing conditions. By drawing specifically on Dewey's Hegelianism, I described how individuals, as *subjects* of experience, are inevitably confronted by unique *objects* of experience, and how individuals are confronted with considerable difficulty by having to adapt to such objects in ways that cannot be rigidly prescribed for them. To the extent that individuals actively engage in this uncertain, difficult process of marking a self-directed path through the novel objects brought by constantly changing circumstances, they are exhibiting what we have seen Dewey call a genuinely "scientific" existence—they are critically inquiring into their past habits and principles by testing their validity against new experiences, and are giving themselves the opportunity to exercise their own unique effect on the objects of experience they encounter (rather than being passively impacted by novel objects), which means they are *participating in the governing of their lives*. Dewey maintains that "There is…no point in the philosophy of progressive education which is sounder than its emphasis upon the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his

[623] Ibid., 186.

activities in the learning process…"[624] But, when schools have the effect of leading students toward fearing the difficulty inherent in uncertain development, and toward seeking a clearly delineated path which can be strictly followed toward a given endpoint, the students are undemocratically hindered from learning to become distinct subjects exercising a unique effect on the objects of experience they confront. In other words, the students are hindered from learning to participate in the governing of their lives.

The point that grades and test scores deny the originality and unique individuality of each student is frequently underlined by Dewey. Education for democratic individuality would entail allowing students some space to form their own unique connections with subject matter, such that they can figure out for themselves how a mathematical technique, scientific fact, historical event, etc. bears on their past experience, and how it can be meaningfully applied to their future experience. In typical schooling, though, there is "the substitution of a conventional average standard of expectation and requirement for a standard which concerns the specific powers of the individual under instruction."[625] With the practice of standardized testing, for instance, it is assumed that timed examinations represent the sole method of promoting, and evaluating, the students' learning. In a particularly relevant argument for our own time (given the emphasis on high-stakes testing in both the "No Child Left Behind" and "Race to the Top" policies of the Bush and Obama administrations, respectively), Dewey states that "The practical educational use to which testers propose that the results of testing should be put strengthens the proposition that even cultivated minds are dominated by the concept of quantitative classes—so much so that the quality of individuality escapes them…An individual is not conceived as an individual with his own distinctive perplexities, methods and rates of operation. The classificatory submergence of

[624] Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 77.

[625] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 55.

individuals in averaged aggregates is perpetuated."[626] Dewey also applies this concern with the attenuation of students' individuality to grading practices, proclaiming that, "given two schools of otherwise equal conditions, in one of which the marking system prevailed, and in the other did not," in the latter school "the individual has to be known and judged in terms of his own unique self, unrepeatable in any other self," whereas the former school "permits and encourages the teacher to escape with the feeling that he has done his whole duty when he has impartially graded the external and dead product of such a personality."[627] The effect of external aims, then, is to erode students' sense that they can, as subjects of experience, exercise a unique effect on the objects of experience they encounter during school. Students are instead universally held to the same fixed standards, standards (e.g., receiving an "A") to which they have contributed nothing original, but which they are taught to pursue in order to be placed in predetermined educational strata: "Originality is gradually destroyed, confidence in one's own quality of mental operation is undermined, and a docile subjection to the opinion of others is inculcated…"[628]

As noted above, other Dewey scholars have rightly pointed out Dewey's insistence that students be assigned projects which provide the opportunity for open-ended, self-directed inquiry into questions which reflect the uncertainty of the students' natural and social surroundings, rather than mere memorization of readymade answers. This discussion of the effect of external aims shows us that it would not be enough, for Dewey, to simply assign these types of projects; if students cannot escape the "never-absent consciousness" of grades as the validating measure of their learning, then the primary question on students' minds (while working on open-ended projects) may simply change from "What is the right answer?" to "What should I do to get an

[626] MW13: 292.

[627] MW3: 243.

[628] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 303.

'A'?" The capacity to intellectually reflect on and execute an action in response to a novel situation of experience—rather than relying wholly upon others to direct one's own development—is essential to Deweyan democratic individuality. But because students must primarily meet imposed standards which are alien to any aims they have set for themselves, they tend to seek precise direction from authority (e.g., the teacher) on how to meet these mysterious standards: "as the pupil generally has no initiative of his own in this direction, the result is a random groping after what is wanted, and the formation of habits of dependence upon the cues furnished by others."[629] Dewey's analysis thus indicates that opportunities for open-ended inquiry alone may have little effect on students' educational experience if the grade book still conveys to them that there are (as referenced above) "certain particular things which are to be done and certain particular things which are to be avoided" to meet the imposed, universal standard. Open-ended projects are meant to help students cope with a world that is constantly changing and defined by uncertainty, but external aims breed a "failure to develop initiative in coping with novel situations,"[630] by turning uncertainty and novelty into mere nuisances in the way of receiving the desired grade, and by encouraging students to seek precise direction from teachers on what particular things to do and not do in pursuit of the fixed endpoint.

Dewey's case against external aims has in fact been supported by significant empirical research. Multiple studies which have compared students who work on a task while knowing they will receive a grade on their performance, and students who work on the same task while knowing that they will not be graded, have illustrated the adverse effect that grades can have on the possibilities for continuous individual development. Experiments have found, for instance, that students have greater interest in continuing on with a task when they have been able to

[629] Ibid., 57.

[630] Ibid., 50.

engage in the task without grades, whereas students who are graded on the task have less interest in continuing on with that task[631]; that students are more likely to express greater subsequent interest in a task after receiving ungraded, *individualized* feedback specifically related to their performance on the task, while students who are graded again show less subsequent interest in that task[632]; and that students are particularly unlikely to return to a *difficult* task after being graded on that task, but students who are not graded on that difficult task are much more likely to return to the task if given the chance.[633] We have seen how, for Dewey, the willingness of individuals to accept difficulty and challenge, rather than seeking the easiest path to a fixed endpoint, is a crucial feature of democratic individuality. Another important experiment has indeed shown that students are more likely to seek out even more challenging versions of a task after engaging in the task without grades, whereas students who are graded on a task tend to then choose the easier versions of the task. The students in this particular study were questioned after the experiment was carried out, and the students who were ungraded specifically stated that had they been graded they would have chosen easier tasks, and students who were graded specifically said they would have chosen more difficult tasks if they had been ungraded.[634] These findings are further supported by research on cheating behaviors—for example, survey results of students have found that students who cheat on school assignments are likely to be concerned more with extrinsic goals such as grades than with mastery of the school material, to perceive

[631] Farideh Salili et al., "A Further Consideration of the Effects of Evaluation on Motivation", *American Educational Research Journal* 13, no. 2 (1976): 96.

[632] Ruth Butler and Mordecai Nisan, "Effects of No Feedback, Task-Related Comments, and Grades on Intrinsic Motivation and Performance", *Journal of Educational Psychology* 78, no. 3 (1986): 213.

[633] Billie Hughes, Howard Sullivan, and Mary Lou Mosley, "External Evaluation, Task Difficulty, and Continuing Motivation", *The Journal of Educational Research* 78, no. 4 (1985): 212-213.

[634] Susan Harter, "Pleasure Derived from Challenge and the Effects of Receiving Grades on Children's Difficulty Level Choices", *Child Development* 49, no. 3 (1978): 794-796.

their school as being performance-oriented, and to feel anxiety over their own academic performance.[635] This empirical evidence, which supports the notion that less grading can promote educational growth, is significant in that it supports Dewey's position, and in that it exhibits how students can find the motivation to engage in ungraded schoolwork even when their typical educational experience has involved the use of grades to motivate activity.

If these various factors in Dewey's argument against external aims could be boiled down to one general message, it would be that grades and test scores hinder students' capacity for continuous development by diminishing the significance of uncertain growth, and elevating the value attached to certain attainment of static rewards. In previous chapters, we have seen Dewey associate pragmatism with a rejection of the "quest for certainty"—the search for a perfectly stable existence which is safe from the vicissitudes of constantly changing experience. Dewey challenges individuals to instead continuously generate greater (though inevitably imperfect) certainty for themselves through active engagement with their changing, unstable world. The use of external aims in schools, however, "sets up as an ideal and standard a static end. The fulfillment of growing is taken to mean an *accomplished* growth: that is to say, an Ungrowth, something which is no longer growing."[636] In essence, the uncertain process of learning is devalued, and the stable attainment of sufficiently high grades and test scores is set up as the foundational purpose of students' education. Dewey alleges that those who uphold the necessity of external aims in schooling "[pay] the tribute of speaking much of development, process, progress. But all of these operations are conceived to be merely transitional; they lack meaning on their own account. They possess significance only as movements *toward* something away

[635] Eric Anderman, Tripp Griesinger, and Gloria Westerfield, "Motivation and Cheating During Early Adolescence", *Journal of Educational Psychology* 90, no. 1 (1998): 87-89.

[636] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 42.

from what is now going on."[637] As a result, students are more likely to see "endeavor as proof not of power but of incompletion," and to conceive of "a completed activity, a static perfection" as their educational ideal.[638] Dewey argues that "The criterion of the value of school education is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact."[639] To the extent that schools are evaluated by measures such as standardized test scores, the conditions are created for students to devalue opportunities for growth within school, and to focus primarily on finding the point where uncertain growth can finally stop.

External Aims and Market Ideology

There is much more to be said about Dewey's argument against external aims, particularly in terms of the effect of these aims in cultivating an ideology which is detrimental to the development of Deweyan participatory democracy. We have seen Macpherson declare that participatory democracy requires individuals to cease viewing themselves as isolated consumers in a market, and with Dewey, we get fuller elaboration on this point through his depiction of democratic individuality, and his account of how a "market" culture inhibits that individuality. In Chapter 3, I pointed out Dewey's concern that the tendency to "[identify] the power and liberty of the individual with…ability to make money"[640] serves to justify economic inequality which hinders certain individuals from leading democratic lives, from interacting with objects of experience in self-chosen ways. Dewey explains that there has been "a perversion of the whole ideal of individualism to conform to the practices of a pecuniary culture. It has become the

[637] Ibid., 57.

[638] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1922), 174.

[639] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 53.

[640] LW11: 366.

source and justification of inequalities and oppressions."[641] And, he stresses that this pecuniary culture cannot but impact the type of education provided to young individuals: "That which prevents the schools from doing their educational work freely is precisely the pressure—for the most part indirect, to be sure—of domination by the money-motif of our economic regime."[642] Dewey is especially troubled here by what he sees as an excessive individualism developed in schools, and he alludes to the effect of external aims in conveying to students that these fixed measures of achievement are indicative of individual quality. He charges that "almost the only measure for success is a competitive one, in the bad sense of that term—a comparison of results in the recitation or in the examination to see which child has succeeded in getting ahead of others in storing up, in accumulating the maximum of information."[643] As a result, the students become accustomed to the idea that individual worth is to be judged according to their possession of certain static markers of achievement, and that a hierarchy based on such possession is legitimate: "Just because all are doing the same work, and are judged (both in recitation and in examination, with reference to grading and to promotion)…the feeling of superiority is unduly appealed to."[644] The crux of Dewey's point here, then, is that schools familiarize students with an individualistic environment in which ostensibly isolated effort will determine one's status within a class-divided hierarchy: "Our economic and political environment leads us to think in terms of classes, aggregates and submerged membership in them…Instead of mixing up together a lot of pupils of different abilities we can divide them into a superior, a middle and an inferior section,

[641] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 18.

[642] Ibid., 127.

[643] Dewey, *School and Society*, 29.

[644] EW5: 65.

so that each can go its own gait without being kept back or unduly forced by others."[645]

Dewey does not mean to suggest that schools alone are responsible for legitimizing the class boundaries generated by capitalism. But, he does maintain that schools play an important role in accustoming young people to an individualistic atmosphere in which markers of achievement are doled out apparently in accordance with each individual's own effort. In this way, Dewey sees schools as contributing to a worldview that conceives of poverty and wealth as being the result of purely isolated individual effort, and thus as being the fair outcomes of a legitimate competition. He explains: "I refer to the schools in connection with this problem of American culture because they are the formal agencies for producing those mental attitudes, those modes of feeling and thinking, which are the essence of a distinctive culture"; he professes further that, within typical schooling, "There is little preparation to induce either hardy resistance, discriminating criticism, or the vision and desire to direct economic forces in new channels."[646] Hence, schools have the effect of helping to validate economic inequality, because the students' mental attitudes are formed within the context of an individualistic pursuit of grades, and are therefore well-suited to a wider economic environment defined by an apparently fair, individualistic pursuit of money. Dewey also traces this lack of critical thought toward current economic relations to the fact that school performance (i.e., attainment of grades, high test scores) is commonly assumed to be a direct indicator of how a student will perform within the capitalist economy as an adult: "We accept standards of judging individuals which are based on the qualities of mind and character which win under existing social conditions conspicuous success. The 'inferior' is the one who isn't calculated to 'get on' in a society such as now exists. 'Equals' are those who belong to a class formed by like chances of attaining recognition, position

[645] MW13: 291-292.

[646] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 128-129.

and wealth in present society."[647] The students, therefore, are not only placed into an environment which mirrors the image of the broader capitalist economy, but are also led to believe that their performance within the school environment will directly bear on their economic success as adults. There is little room within such an environment, Dewey reasons, for students to develop genuine critical thought toward the economic relations generated by capitalism.

This type of market ideology surely hinders the prospects for democratic individuality among the economically disadvantaged, for it interprets their lack of resources as indicative of their own personal failure. There is more, though, to Dewey's concern with the effect of external aims in encouraging uncritical acceptance among students of capitalistic norms and principles. Another crucial element of Dewey's argument relates to the mindset toward work that the pursuit of external aims helps to generate. He describes how our schooling tacitly "assumes that in the future, as in the past, getting a livelihood, 'making a living,' must signify for most men and women doing things which are not significant, freely chosen, and ennobling to those who do them; doing things which serve ends unrecognized by those engaged in them, carried on under the direction of others for the sake of a pecuniary reward."[648] We saw in Chapter 3 how democratic individuals, for Dewey, are able to participate in decision-making in their work and exercise a self-chosen effect on the methods and aims involved in their work; they are not forced to simply obey an authority figure in order to receive a money reward at the conclusion of their activities. Of course, changes in prevalent educational practices could not alone alter the undemocratic quality of many workplaces, but Dewey's point here is that schoolwork which is done primarily for a grade can lead students toward accepting that work is supposed to be an

[647] MW15: 295.

[648] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 192.

intrinsically insignificant chore done primarily for an external reward. I explained above Dewey's account of how external aims tend to produce an undesirable quality among students, whereby they seek clear, unambiguous instructions from the teacher on how to do their work so they can receive their prized grade. Dewey's case does not suggest that all students will then invariably spend their entire lives in undemocratic workplaces, but it does imply that students—having been educated in an environment which leaves little opportunity for exercising a unique effect on the objects of experience they confront—will be more likely to deem undemocratic work relations in a general sense to be natural and just. Dewey does call on schools to provide students with more critical subject matter on these types of economic relations (which accords with current Dewey scholarship's focus on subject matter), but my analysis has shown that Deweyan schools must also diminish the importance attached to external aims if "pupils are to…[become] active instead of passive economic units."[649]

I have also explained above Dewey's claim that typical educational settings, being dominated by external aims, have the effect of setting up a stable attainment of sufficiently high grades and test scores—such that the uncertain process of learning and growing can finally end—as the students' educational ideal. With the uncertainty (and difficulty) of development lacking intrinsic value to the students, schooling works against democratic individuality by leading students toward seeking an impossible realm of certainty, wherein their sufficient external rewards will allow them to escape from the vicissitudes of growth: "A goal of finished accomplishment has been set up which if it were attained would mean only mindless action…The practical impossibility of reaching, in an all around way and all at once such a 'perfection' has been recognized. But such a goal has nevertheless been conceived as the ideal,

[649] MW15: 169.

and progress has been defined as approximation to it."[650] And for Dewey, the manner in which this "quest for certainty" feeds into market ideology heightens its consequences for democratic individuality. As he construes it, the desire for escape from uncertain activity corresponds with the capitalistic goal of sufficient monetary gain such that one can finally stop working—"the accumulation of investments such that a man can live upon their return without labor."[651] This is again not to say that Dewey sees schools as universally producing the same effect on all students, in terms of educating them to approach work only for the money reward it brings, and to stop working as soon as it is financially possible. But he does determine that schools tend to contribute to powerful ideological messages in support of capitalism—schools acquaint students with the idea that work serves the pursuit of a static realm of certainty where work is no longer necessary, and with the notion that those individuals who possess sufficient resources in order to cease working (e.g., the wealthy) are worthy role models and deserving of their social status.

It has been an important point in each of the three previous chapters that Dewey's democratic theory relies to a significant degree on individuals' everyday attitudes and behaviors. Dewey concedes that however effective an argument he might make for certain alterations in political institutions, and for policies that aim to redress social ills, these political and social elements of democracy cannot develop without the concurrent development of the individual aspect of democracy (i.e., the democratic individual way of life). If individuals largely continue to cling to old ideas about freedom in the face of new conditions, if they believe that economic outcomes are the result of free, isolated individual effort—unaffected by individuals' social circumstances—they will more likely consider the poor to deserve their status, and this ideology clearly works against the development of the type of participatory democracy that has been

[650] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, 173-174.

[651] Ibid., 124.

discussed in the previous chapters. We have seen Dewey affirm that individuals cannot be legitimately forced into adapting to new conditions and challenging current forms of inequality. Through education, Dewey does see the possibility of encouraging this type of continuous development and critical thought, but typical educational settings, for Dewey, instead place students on an anxious, acquisitive quest for certainty, a pursuit which feeds into the capitalistic goal of attaining sufficient individual wealth to isolate oneself from uncertain development.

We should also recall here Macpherson's statement regarding the individual aspect of participatory democracy, and how he associates this in part with individuals recognizing their interdependency with others. We have seen (especially in Chapters 2 and 3) that this recognition is an essential quality of Deweyan democratic individuality—in the modern world, our changing circumstances are defined in particular by interconnection with diverse others who are far outside our immediate circle of acquaintances, and democratic individuals do not attempt to futilely isolate themselves from the impact of the actions of other individuals. Rather, they actively engage with diverse others, grow through that engagement, and, in so doing, increase their capacity to exercise some control over their unending development. The effect Dewey sees typical schooling, and specifically external aims, having on this quality of democratic individuality is evident: because "children are…prematurely launched into the region of individualistic competition,"[652] the vision of the isolated individual, wholly in control of her own outcomes in life, is promoted, rather than the idea that all individual endeavors are dependent upon (and also, responsible to) other individuals. Other Dewey scholars, again, have addressed this issue by pointing to the need for school projects which allow students to work with other students, and Dewey certainly does endorse such projects. But the ideological effects of external aims should also be emphasized, for Dewey indicates that these aims can affect students'

[652] EW5: 65.

understanding of their interdependency with others, and thus their capacity to contribute to the development of participatory democracy.

In terms of educational policy, Dewey's analysis implies that the increasing importance attached to standardized test scores as indicators of school quality must be reversed. Everyday classroom activity should also rely less and less on grading to motivate the students to work, and should accustom students to the idea that the process of working and learning is more important than a static marker of achievement. Dewey advises that "the absence of economic pressure in schools supplies an opportunity for reproducing industrial situations of mature life under conditions where the occupation can be carried on for its own sake."[653] Because students do not yet face the economic pressure endured by adults in capitalist society, schools could provide a space of resistance against the dominant capitalistic image of work. Dewey also notes that, if students are to attach greater value to the intrinsic character of their schoolwork than to a reward received at the end of work, this type of education will have to begin early on; he himself was a college professor, but he would not suggest that colleges take students as they are typically educated in the earlier years of schooling and remove the motivation of grades, for "college reaches their minds too late"[654] to fundamentally alter the students' mindset. In the elementary school which Dewey organized during his time at the University of Chicago, he specifically sought to "make unnecessary a servile dependence upon the ordinary machinery of petty rules, constant markings, reports, etc."[655] To be sure, there would also be other factors involved in effectively reducing the reliance on grading and standardized testing in schools: if teachers are to meaningfully observe the unique growth of each student, rather than simply grading each one

[653] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 204.

[654] LW3: 279.

[655] MW3: 283.

according to fixed standards, then we must ensure that class sizes do not balloon to such an extent that teachers are unable to engage with each student (not to mention the impossibility of such engagement within online education); I also established in Chapter 3 how Dewey insists that teachers be granted greater control over their work, such that they can use their experience to respond to unique classroom situations, rather than having to follow rigid educational methods prescribed by superintendents and politicians.

It is interesting to note that there are some current schools which do operate without grading their students.[656] It would surely be unfair, though, to conclude, because such schools exist and have not opened the floodgates of a movement bringing down the use of grading in schools and, with it, the market ideology I have described here, that the topic of external aims is not important to the discussion of democratization. American education (in Dewey's time and in ours) has been and continues to be dominated by grading practices, and of late there has been increasing focus on high-stakes standardized testing as the method of evaluating school effectiveness. A handful of experimental schools which do not rely on external aims could not show us the effect on market behaviors and beliefs that a broader-scale reduction of external aims might have. The students who graduate from these experimental schools still live and interact in a society where most individuals have been educated with a full dose of grading and standardized testing; also, the evidence that is out there (as noted in the previous section) that less grading can promote learning has to contend with the massive ideological and structural factors which buttress traditional grading practices, and therefore, the success of certain ungraded educational environments should not be deemed irrelevant simply because it has not been able to precipitate widespread educational changes. We do have to concede that, while the

[656] Examples include: Carolina Friends School in Durham, North Carolina (www.cfnsc.org); Eagle Rock School in Estes Park, Colorado (www.eaglerockschool.org); Poughkeepsie Day School in Poughkeepsie, New York (www.poughkeepsieday.org); Waring School in Beverly, Massachusetts (www.waringschool.org).

political and social aspects of Deweyan participatory democracy may depend upon education to promote democratic individuality, this type of education is itself interrelated with the democratization of social and political conditions that I have outlined in previous chapters—i.e., we could not expect fundamental alteration in the capitalistic nature of schooling without concurrent change in the capitalistic nature of social and political life. Still, the potential impact of education on democracy should not be dismissed as long as we grant that there is an individual aspect of the democracy we strive to bring into existence. Deweyan participatory democracy does recognize such an individual element, and for Dewey, the schools are to provide the conditions for individuals to value the process of uncertain, never-finished growth at a young age. The effect of external aims must then be emphasized in Dewey scholarship, for these aims, in Dewey's view, diminish the significance of the growth process in a way that hinders the possibilities for democratic individuality: "Until the democratic criterion of the intrinsic significance of every growing experience is recognized, we shall be intellectually confused by the demand for adaptation to external aims."[657]

The Deweyan Critique of Deliberative Educational Theory

In Chapter 4, I argued against the prevalent depiction of Dewey as a forefather of deliberative democracy, and I showed that Dewey's democratic theory can instead help demonstrate why (contrary to popular belief) deliberative democracy has not effectively subsumed the principles of participatory democracy. My discussion of Dewey's educational theory, and of its role in the development of Deweyan participatory democracy, adds additional layers to the separation of participatory theory from deliberative theory, and to the claim that contemporary democratic thought would be well-served by turning in a participatory, rather than deliberative, direction.

[657] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 109.

As noted above, Gutmann and Thompson have deemed the education system to be the most important institution outside of government for enacting deliberative democracy, because "Schools should aim to develop their students' capacities to understand different perspectives, communicate their understandings to other people, and engage in the give-and-take of moral argument with a view to making mutually acceptable decisions."[658] Deliberative democracy (as described in detail in Chapter 4) is defined by an exchange of reasons among individuals who are discussing a particular policy question. The theory relies on individuals exchanging reasons that could "reasonably" be endorsed by their opponents in the debate; to the extent that deliberators do this, the theory goes, the resulting policy decisions will have democratic quality because everyone involved has been treated respectfully, has had their views considered, and has had the policy decisions justified to them in terms they can accept. I used Dewey's democratic theory in the last chapter to critique deliberative democracy, by focusing on Dewey's central point that political democracy cannot be achieved without concurrently overcoming social and economic inequality—both because individuals' capacity to participate in the governing of their lives is affected no less by that inequality than by distinctly political institutions, and because political, policymaking forums cannot be isolated from the effects of such inequality. I demonstrated that deliberative democrats must essentially isolate the political and social realms when they indicate that the effects of unequal social status can be neutralized as long as deliberative reason-giving is determining the fates of policy positions. And, when these thinkers have insisted on the reduction of social and economic inequality, I showed that they must compromise the principles of deliberation: either they must predetermine the outcome of deliberation by requiring that the debate specifically produce policies that reduce social and economic inequality; or they must

[658] Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 359.

concede that, under unequal social conditions, deliberation itself is not democratic, and that deliberative principles would only be democratic after the work of democratization (i.e., overcoming social and economic inequality) is achieved through non-deliberative means.

With respect to the educational principles entailed by deliberative theory, Gutmann in particular has proclaimed that "the content of education should be reoriented toward teaching students the skills of democratic deliberation."[659] If schools were to teach such deliberative skills, she argues, the students could "develop capacities for criticism, rational argument, and decisionmaking by being taught how to think logically, to argue coherently and fairly, and to consider the relevant alternatives before coming to conclusions."[660] Gutmann is exhibiting here that quality of deliberative democratic theory which presumes that greater deliberation is equivalent to democratization: "Deliberation is connected, both by definition and practice, with the development of democracy."[661] This connects us yet again to the issue of isolating political and social—i.e., of maintaining that, even under unequal social conditions, the key to democratization is getting all individuals to deliberate together on political matters. Gutmann contends that "However students have been socialized outside of school, there should be room within school for them to develop the capacity to discuss and defend their political commitments with people who do not share them"; she further suggests that we "[redirect] concern away from the question of whether high-school graduates can get good jobs and toward the question of whether they have the capacity to deliberate about the political issues that affect their lives."[662] This deliberative educational theory, like deliberative theory in general, abstracts from social

[659] Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 171.

[660] Ibid., 50.

[661] Ibid., 52.

[662] Ibid., 107, 147-148.

inequality by associating democracy primarily with a process in which all individuals involved, regardless of social status, put their political views up for challenge and are all equally willing to modify their views in order to reach "mutually acceptable decisions." The theory does not directly address social inequality, and instead focuses itself on the idea that a fair and equal political debate can be created against an unequal social background.

In line with her deliberative principles, Gutmann's discussion of educational policy does not attend closely to the problem of certain (e.g., wealthy) interests and perspectives already being reflected in prevalent educational practices. She instead concentrates her analysis on "improving the quality of American education not directly by changing school policy, but indirectly by improving the quality of our public deliberations over education."[663] She takes differences over educational policy just as mere differences, and calls on deliberators to show willingness to reconcile those differences, without sufficiently addressing how these differences can reflect broader social inequities in which certain elements of society already possess a privileged position in the educational debate: "We can do better to try…to find the fairest ways of reconciling our disagreements, and for enriching our collective life by democratically debating them. We may even find ourselves modifying our moral ideals of education in the process of participating in democratic debates and of publicly reconciling our differences."[664] There is little room, then, within Gutmann's educational theory for establishing that grading and standardized testing practices already evince the dominance of one set of ideas of how students should be educated over others. Her theory is inadequate to the recognition that a "fair" debate over such practices—a debate in which all involved must be equally willing to modify their positions in order to reach mutually acceptable decisions—may simply reinforce the privileged position of

[663] Ibid., 5.

[664] Ibid., 12.

that dominant set of ideas. Gutmann does in fact discuss the merits of grading and standardized testing, but the point she makes is simply that universities should consider additional factors in their criteria for admissions, rather than relying solely on grades and test scores—she does not challenge these external aims themselves in terms of the effect they may have on students' capacity for continuous development, or on the ideas that students may pick up about the legitimacy of current economic relations.[665]

Dewey's educational theory, by contrast, shines a light on the undemocratic social interests already involved in prevalent educational practices, and he exposes why democratizing education under these conditions requires working against these practices, rather than creating a fair debate where all interests are treated as already equal. His theory also demonstrates why a focus on improving students' capacity to debate with others does not sufficiently account for the effect of certain taken-for-granted school practices in producing undemocratic attitudes among the students. Dewey pronounces that "Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important…"[666] In this chapter, I have elucidated Dewey's point that external aims (grades, standardized test scores, etc.) can diminish students' desire to seek the greatest possible growth within their schooling, and can help legitimize current social and economic relations in students' eyes. Dewey does still make room for school activities which encourage students to engage with, and be challenged by, other students—I have shown this in my discussion of the

[665] Ibid., 197-203. Gutmann even endorses the practice of "merit pay"—the use of external standards (e.g., students' test scores) to determine teachers' effectiveness, and thus their pay—by asserting that "The institution of merit pay is another way of mitigating the ossification of office among the best teachers"; she also criticizes the efforts of teachers' unions to oppose merit pay by calling such efforts "an attempt to shield teachers from legitimate external evaluation" (Ibid., 81).

[666] Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 49.

educational topics that have been highlighted by other Dewey scholars. But Dewey's theory does not presume that asking students to continuously, critically engage with others will automatically produce the type of continuous development and critical thought that this practice is meant to produce. He instead causes us to question what "collateral" learning students may do as a result of grading and testing practices which tend to be uncritically accepted as necessary for schooling—i.e., how those external aims may diminish the importance for students of novel experiences in school (including the novel perspectives of other students), and may cultivate an individualistic mindset that contradicts the "cooperative" aims of deliberative education.

It should also be noted here that, even with this analysis of the divergence of Dewey's educational theory from Gutmann's, it would not be accurate to immediately align Dewey with the most extremely radical theories on education, such as the landmark work done by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis. Bowles and Gintis do appear to follow in Dewey's footsteps by charging schools with the legitimation of economic inequality, and they point to grades and test scores as particularly important tools for justifying that inequality, as well as for familiarizing students with the idea that work is naturally insignificant and should be done as quickly as possible for a money reward.[667] But, Bowles and Gintis go in an extreme direction by implying that market ideology signifies not only an exceptionally powerful influence on current education, but actually *the* influence on current education. They conceive of a one-to-one correspondence between the social relations of the classroom and the workplace, such that students are directly trained for the type of labor-power that can be converted into profits for capitalists.[668] Because they present the impact of capitalist relations of production on education as essentially all-

[667] Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 9, 11, 12, 39, 103, 131.

[668] Ibid., 125.

encompassing, Bowles and Gintis wind up with little space for schools to resist market ideology, and to contribute to the process of democratization. On their terms, schooling can only become democratic once there has been the revolutionary transformation of capitalism into socialism.[669] On Dewey's terms, education cannot rectify the undemocratic qualities of the broader society all on its own, but the classroom is also not assumed to be so thoroughly colonized by capitalistic norms that there is no room for resistance within the school whatsoever: "The school cannot immediately escape from the ideals set by prior social conditions. But it should contribute through the type of intellectual and emotional disposition which it forms to the improvement of those conditions."[670] In line with his depiction of democracy as in a continuous process of actualization, constituted by various interrelated elements, Dewey conceives of education as having an essential role in democratization, particularly in relation to the individual aspect of democracy which is interconnected with—and thus, can promote the realization of—the social and political elements of democracy: "This does not mean that we can change character and mind by direct instruction and exhortation, apart from a change in industrial and political conditions…But it does mean that we may produce in schools a projection in type of the society we should like to realize, and by forming minds in accord with it generally modify the larger and more recalcitrant features of adult society."[671] With respect to external aims specifically, we noted above Dewey's point that the "absence of economic pressure in schools" creates such an opportunity for resistance against undemocratic social norms—because they are not yet fully ensnared by the pressure of the capitalist pursuit of money, young individuals have space to become accustomed to "conditions where the realization of the activity rather than merely the

[669] Ibid., 266.

[670] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 136.

[671] Ibid., 316-317.

external product is the aim," and to perhaps learn to demand such work conditions in the future.[672]

Gutmann's educational theory does indeed stay true to the tenets of deliberative democracy. Deliberative theory associates democracy with a policy debate in which debaters exchange reasons for their various policy positions, they are all given equal chance to speak, and they have policy outcomes justified to them in terms they can accept. The deliberative educational theory outlined by Gutmann, similarly, focuses not on specific changes to existing school policies, but on encouraging all parties to be more willing to modify their own positions in the course of debate with others; within the classroom, she also calls primarily for teaching students to defend their political views against opposing views. By contrast, Dewey's educational theory, like his democratic theory, does not presume that all sides in an educational debate are granted equal status simply through being given an equal opportunity to speak, or that improving students' debate capacities is equivalent to democratizing education. Under unequal social conditions, Dewey argues, we must account for the privileged position that advantaged elements of society already possess through existing school policies, and for how those policies can develop behaviors and ideologies among students that legitimize current social and economic relations. I have shown in Chapter 4 how Dewey can uphold the independence of participatory democracy from deliberative democracy with his demonstration of why a primary focus on improving policy debate does not account for the effects of unequal social status on political,

[672] Ibid., 309. While Gutmann and Bowles and Gintis do not capture Dewey's principles, there have been some more recent educational theorists who have identified the powerful influence of market ideology over schools, while also accounting for the factors of resistance that are available within schools—e.g., see Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum International, 1970); Michael Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); Henry Giroux, *Ideology, Culture, and the Process of Schooling* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981); Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux, *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Debate over Schooling* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, 1985); Ira Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

policymaking forums. Dewey's educational theory further exhibits the theoretical weakness of deliberative democracy's abstraction from social inequality, while also illustrating how we may help realize the individual aspect of participatory democracy.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how education may contribute to the type of self-government signified by Dewey's democratic individual way of life. Democratic individuals, for Dewey, recognize that we live in a constantly changing world which lacks any fixed truth or divinely-ordained social hierarchy—they do not seek certainty in reliance on eternally wise principles, or on eternally wise individuals, but rather continuously develop their imperfect knowledge of the world through active engagement with their constantly changing surroundings, and therefore, continuously develop their capacity to exercise some control over their future uncertain experience. I have shown in this chapter that Dewey scholars make a mistake in overlooking the importance of Dewey's discussion of "external aims" (e.g., grades, test scores) in education, because Dewey sees these aims as devaluing the process of growth in students' eyes, and as setting up the attainment of a fixed endpoint as the students' educational ideal. Relatedly, Dewey also argues that external aims help legitimize old ideas of individual effort being isolated from the effect of social circumstances, and of unequal economic relations being just. We saw in Chapters 2 and 3 how Dewey conceives understanding our interconnectedness with others, and critically questioning social inequality, as essential to individual self-government under rapidly evolving, increasingly interconnected conditions; this chapter has elucidated Dewey's case for why grading and standardized testing in schools can work against such critical thought and recognition of interdependency, and why, therefore, in hindering this individual aspect of Deweyan participatory democracy, these external aims relatedly obstruct the realization of the

social and political elements of participatory democracy described in previous chapters. I have also demonstrated in this chapter why Dewey's educational theory should be held in higher regard than the deliberative educational theory offered by Gutmann, for Dewey's theory does not focus simply on improving the political debate over education, or on improving students' ability to engage in political debate, but on how current social inequality already manifests itself within prevalent educational policies, and how those policies (e.g., standardized testing) must be combated if schools are to better avoid transmitting undemocratic social norms to students. Through this argument, I have aimed to show the role that education can play within a conception of participatory democracy. A democratic theory that identifies a social element of democracy (as participatory theory does) must concern itself with the actions of the individuals who make up the social realm, and as such, must concern itself with the types of attitudes and behaviors that are encouraged in young individuals within typical educational settings.

Within his most famous account of the democratic individual way of life, Dewey makes the case that, as opposed to democracy, "Every other form of moral and social faith rests upon the idea that experience must be subjected at some point or other to some form of external control; to some 'authority' alleged to exist outside the processes of experience. Democracy is the faith that the process of experience is more important than any special result attained…Since the process of experience is capable of being educative, faith in democracy is all one with faith in experience and education."[673] Once we reject the notion that our experience is subordinate to an entity outside of experience, we must also abandon ideas of the inherent superiority of certain individuals over others, and instead democratically affirm the unique experiences of all individuals. Dewey's educational theory should lead us to question the extent to which schools

[673] John Dewey, "Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us", in *John Dewey: The Political Writings*, eds. Debra Morris and Ian Shapiro (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, [1939] 1993), 244.

devalue the process of experience, for when they do this, they can hinder students' capacity to intelligently, flexibly adapt to inevitably changing circumstances, and can transmit older, "individualistic" principles to students that encourage uncritical acceptance of current social and economic inequality. I have associated Deweyan democratic individuality with the capacity of individuals, as subjects of experience, to exercise a unique, self-chosen effect on the novel objects of experience they confront—or, to participate in the governing of their lives. My analysis indicates that, perhaps contrary to immediate appearances, individuals who seek to isolate themselves from changing experience are not necessarily securing control over their lives, and may concurrently be obstructing the opportunities of others for self-government.

Conclusion

I have argued in this dissertation that John Dewey, far from being the forefather of deliberative democracy he is often taken to be, provides a democratic theory that can effectively undermine deliberative democracy, and can instead help highlight the unique and valuable insights of participatory democracy. I have shown that, under unequal social conditions (such as prevailed in Dewey's time, and certainly prevail in our time), deliberative democracy represents a type of displacement of our theoretical attention. Deliberative theory associates democracy with an exchange of reasons on policy matters, and in so doing, it effectively assumes that individuals in a deliberative forum are substantively equal simply through being granted equal opportunity to articulate reasons for their policy positions. The theory thus does not adequately account for the structural and discursive privileges enjoyed by certain elements of society over others—e.g., for the greater time and resources available to wealthy individuals (as opposed to poor individuals) to devote to exploring political issues, and for how the terms of normal discourse on political issues may already reflect the viewpoints and interests of wealthier individuals over others'. In essence, deliberative democracy represents an attempt to shortcut directly to an end-stage in democratic development that our present society has plainly not reached. The equation of democracy with deliberative reason-giving on policy matters would be sensible in a social context where individuals are all granted genuinely equal access to the structures of power within the broader society, and where the terms of everyday discourse permit the equal standing of divergent viewpoints as they enter the deliberative forum. As I have shown, the deliberative theorists who note that these forms of social inequality would have to be largely taken care of in order for deliberative democracy to work must also concede that their

focus on deliberative reason-giving is ill-suited to unequal social conditions. If the type of ideal social context which would justify equating democracy with deliberation is not present—and perhaps, may never be present—then the work of democratization must focus (as Dewey and the participatory theorists do) on overcoming the social inequalities we currently confront to the greatest possible degree, rather than on instituting deliberative reason-giving on policy matters.

This is all not to say that deliberation is not something we should ultimately like to see, for the type of respectful discussion advocated by deliberative democrats would certainly represent an improvement over what passes as policy discussion in many current legislative bodies. I am also not suggesting that it would be impossible for poor individuals, for example, to convince wealthy individuals to change their views through the use of strong arguments within a deliberative forum. But, my argument has demonstrated why it is problematic to assume that such a policy discussion is synonymous with democracy under unequal social conditions. This is the prevalent assumption in contemporary democratic theory, and it leads the discussion of democratization to revolve around simply getting individuals to engage in reason-giving. We have seen how such an exchange of reasons may be impacted undemocratically by the effects of social inequality, which should turn democratic theory away from its current commitment to deliberative practices, and toward giving greater attention to practices that highlight the insuppressible character of social inequality. These practices—which may include protests, marches, strikes, and other practices that are typically involved in broad social movements—differ from deliberative reason-giving in that they do not require that socially disadvantaged individuals argue only for policies that can be acceptable to the advantaged, and in that they do not presume that certain rules of discourse can assure equality between the disadvantaged and the advantaged. This does not mean, for instance, that a protest or march held by a discriminatory

group would be classified as democratic; but it does mean that, under unequal social conditions, democratic theory should give greater attention to opportunities for socially disadvantaged individuals to take direct action toward overcoming their adverse circumstances, and to do so without having to also satisfy advantaged individuals at each step of the way.

It is thus important to keep in mind that the type of participatory democracy I have described—which is defined by the Deweyan principle of continuous amelioration of political and social threats to individual self-government, as well as by the necessary ethical conduct among individuals to promote such democratization—does not go to the opposite extreme of deliberative democracy and automatically equate these non-deliberative practices with democracy. My argument should not be seen as a call for "protest democracy" or "strike democracy," but for a participatory democratic theory which possesses the Deweyan pragmatist capacity for flexible, intelligent adaptation of its practices to suit the conditions we currently confront. In order to uphold current democratic theory's premise that greater deliberation is equivalent to democratization, we must assume that the structural and discursive privileges enjoyed by some individuals within broader social life will not have an impact on the deliberation; we must assume that democracy is sufficiently achieved (even under unequal social conditions) through simply granting deliberators equal opportunity to exchange reasons for their policy positions; and, we must assume that the policies produced by such an exchange of reasons will have democratic quality, as long as the deliberators give reasons that could be endorsed by their opponents, and final policies are justified with reasons that are generally acceptable to all. When analyzing participatory and deliberative democracy, it could appear as if the two theories are somewhat talking past each other, with participatory theorists focusing on specific changes to our social and political life, and deliberative theorists focusing on a particular method for guiding

policy debate. By peeling Dewey away from his current classification as a deliberative democrat, participatory democrats can reinforce their own principles while also directly showing that a commitment to deliberation diminishes democratic theory's capacity to account for the significance of *non-political*, social threats to self-government, and that deliberative theory's attempts to account for such social qualities are necessarily incoherent. Participatory democrats might in fact like to see the deliberative process described by deliberative democrats, but participatory democracy is better suited to theorize how we should respond to the unequal social conditions we currently confront, rather than primarily theorizing about how political debate should proceed once all the undemocratic qualities of our current social conditions have been rectified. And I have shown how participatory theorists can draw on Dewey in particular to distinguish themselves from deliberative theory in this way.

This critical discussion of deliberative democracy's theoretical principles is particularly useful at present, because the current analysis of deliberative democracy has largely transitioned into empirical testing of the theory. My argument in this dissertation does not suggest that such empirical testing is entirely invalid, for this work can show us how individuals might interact with each other within various types of debate settings. However, my argument does imply that we should question whether this empirical work is necessarily showing us the path toward *democracy*, rather than just the path toward *deliberation*. The empirical tests of deliberative theory have primarily investigated the degree to which individuals in deliberative forums are willing to listen to others and to change their own preferences as a result of encounters with strong arguments. This type of testing does not adequately account for the possibility that what constitutes an acceptable reason, and what constitutes a strong argument, may be impacted by the quality of relations existing outside the deliberative forum in the broader society. When certain

individuals have an everyday experience of the world that is oppressive and downright insulting to their capacity to govern their own lives, it is heavily problematic to presume that proper reason-giving, and the willingness of deliberators to change their preferences, can alone insulate policy debates from the effects of such undemocratic social circumstances. In other words, it is heavily problematic, again, to presume that greater deliberation can be automatically equated with democratization under our unequal social conditions.

I also do not mean to imply that Dewey is the only thinker we can turn to in order to lay the foundation for the type of critique of deliberative democracy I have made. John Stuart Mill, for instance, is another thinker who places heavy emphasis on the more *social*, rather than exclusively *political*, threats to self-government. Mill's work, though, is overall less critical of laissez-faire capitalism and of economic inequalities than is Dewey's work. The social obstacles to self-government that Mill is concerned with primarily revolve around the power of social custom, or of prevailing public opinion, to stifle dissenting viewpoints and unique individuality. While he is certainly not uncritical of economic inequalities, Mill still deems the capitalistic economic system, and the inequalities it gives rise to, to be a largely necessary supplement to the cultivation of individuality within a society, rather than being a threat to such individuality.[674] Dewey can thus be seen as a more effective critic than Mill of deliberative democracy, and as a more appropriate resource for participatory democracy. With Karl Marx, on the other hand, we have a thinker who does provide an incisive critique of the hindrances to self-government and individuality brought by economic inequalities. But, Marx also diminishes the significance of social inequalities which are not distinctly "economic"—inequalities of race, gender, etc.—and determines these other inequalities to be merely reflections of economic relations, with no

[674] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, in *J.S. Mill: On Liberty and Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1859] 1989), 95; John Stuart Mill, *Chapters on Socialism*, in *J.S. Mill: On Liberty and Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1879] 1989), 249-253.

genuine significance on their own; he also restricts the possible methods for achieving democratization to widespread revolt, with his historical narrative dictating that capitalist society will necessarily bring deteriorating conditions, which will bring the majority of individuals to revolt against the system for their own survival.[675] In contrast, we have seen Dewey's democratic theory to have the pragmatist capacity to recognize that, while economic inequalities may very well have been the primary explanatory factor of social phenomena in Marx's time (and still an important explanatory factor in Dewey's time), other forms of inequality may become more significant to social life with time and changing circumstances. We have also seen how Dewey's theory can accommodate the possibility that the capitalist system may produce effects which do not fit neatly into a particular historical narrative, and how that may require us to evolve our methods for addressing capitalism's undemocratic qualities beyond widespread revolt alone (this point also again works against current democratic theory's over-commitment to deliberation as *the* democratic method). Thinkers such as Mill and Marx could certainly be used to form a critique of deliberative democracy, but Dewey can be seen as accounting for some of the shortcomings of these prior thinkers. The fact that Dewey is also commonly cited as a forefather of deliberative democracy only makes him a further interesting figure to use against this theory.

The analysis I have presented of Dewey's democratic individual way of life carries additional important implications for democratic theory. It may appear problematic to base a conception of democracy at least in part on a kind of ethical standard, for in a world defined by pluralism and a diversity of worldviews, we must be especially careful of imposing a specific paradigm of conduct on individuals from different walks of life. This is indeed the point we have seen Robert Talisse make in his objection to Dewey's democratic theory, and to the

[675] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, [1848] 1978), 482-483, 487-491.

democratic way of life in particular. However, if we are to recognize democracy as more than a purely political mechanism for allowing current interests to compete with each other (or to reason with each other), then we cannot avoid a consideration of individuals' own responsibility to contribute to democracy's realization in their everyday social relations. Deweyan democratic individuality does not represent a rigid restriction on the paths that individuals may take in life, but it does signify how individual attitudes which are racist or sexist are plainly threats to democratization. This does not mean that the type of participatory democracy I have outlined requires some procedure for erasing individuals' current attitudes; it does mean that such a theory of democracy must still give consideration to how individuals' own behaviors may or may not promote the development of a democratic society. Further, this individual aspect of democracy becomes especially important when we are cognizant of the degree of interconnection of individuals under modern circumstances. We cannot simply declare that the actions of modern individuals are not the business of other individuals, because those actions increasingly affect, and are affected by, the actions of those others. Hence, those who behave as though their actions do not affect, and are not affected by, other individuals may be hindering the development of those others, and a democratic theory that identifies a social element of democracy must accentuate this point. With Dewey's notion of the democratic individual way of life, we get an effective articulation of this point, and we also get a cogent illustration of how such contribution to the social aspect of democracy can actually aid individuals' own self-government: under constantly changing, and increasingly interconnected, circumstances, democratic individuality exhibits an understanding that an attempt to isolate oneself from others, and to cling to fixed ideas and principles, may not grant individuals control over their own lives.

The implications which this idea of democratic individuality carries for democratic

theory include the importance of education for effecting movement in the direction of democracy. If we are to properly account for the extent to which democracy depends upon the conduct of individuals, then we must be conscious of the types of attitudes and behaviors that prevalent educational practices encourage in individuals at a young age, and of the possibilities for alteration in those practices which might give individuals a better opportunity to become democratic individuals. With respect to Dewey's theories of democracy and of education, we have seen that this concern should lead us to consider how typical educational settings can obstruct democratic individuality, both by conveying to students that unequal economic outcomes are the result of a fair competition, and by cultivating behaviors among students which parallel the capitalistic pursuit of sufficient wealth such that an individual can stop working altogether. We have further seen how, in order to encourage continuous individual development and critical thought toward current economic relations, some of our most taken-for-granted school practices—such as the use of grades and standardized test scores to evaluate student learning—would need to be contested by democratic educational reformers.

An additional implication of my analysis of democratic individuality, and of my analysis of democracy as a whole, relates to the way in which democracy is defined in political science more generally. I have focused primarily on an argument for altering the current direction of democratic theory, but my discussion should also encourage political scientists in a broader sense to depict democracy as a complex concept made up of multiple, mutually influencing elements (individual, social, political), and as an ideal which never reaches complete achievement. We would then avoid declaring polities to be "democratic" merely because of the existence of certain political measures, and using overly simplistic categories such as "democratic" and "non-

democratic," as if there were some full democratic status that any polity has attained.[676] With Deweyan participatory democracy, we would more adequately account for how democratic political measures may become insufficient for dealing with current threats to self-government, and for how such political democracy would itself be impacted by the democratic or undemocratic qualities of individual and social life.

So where do we go from here? If my argument is convincing, then the time would be ripe for a thorough reexamination of the relation of democracy and pragmatist philosophy. There have been numerous recent attempts to outline a conception of "pragmatist democracy," and those which have drawn primarily on Deweyan pragmatism have been of the type we have encountered throughout this dissertation: the depictions of Deweyan democracy as being a call for deliberative democracy, where individuals are to exchange reasons for their different policy positions, and where policy outcomes are to be determined by the most convincing reasons given. Another strand of pragmatist democracy has emerged more from Richard Rorty's pragmatism, against which I laid the foundation of a critique in Chapter 3. As we saw in that chapter, Rorty associates democracy with practices which break down past claims to truth, leave individuals alone to pursue their private self-images, and avoid any "scientific" attempts to increase the control that individuals can exercise over their lives; he thus equates democracy fundamentally with the capacity of liberal, negative freedoms to "leave people alone," and argues that pragmatism's capacity to combat past truth claims is simply useful for one who is committed to this type of democracy. Talisse's condemnation of Dewey's democratic way of

[676] As one example from political science, in a famous study of corruption, Daniel Treisman classifies a country as democratic if "(1) the chief executive is elected, (2) the legislature (at least its lower house) is elected, (3) more than one party contests elections, and (4) during the last three elections of a chief executive there has been at least one turnover of power between parties"; see Daniel Treisman, "The Causes of Corruption: A Cross-National Study", *Journal of Public Economics* 76, no. 3 (2000): 413, 451.

life (which we have confronted multiple times) is indeed quite Rortyan[677] in its assertion that democratic individuality represents an imposition of a common standard of behavior on diverse individuals. The 2007 book, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy*, is Talisse's attempt at clearly outlining what pragmatist philosophy has to contribute to democratic theory, but my analysis indicates that we need a new pragmatist philosophy of democracy. I have illustrated here why Talisse's interpretation of, and argument against, democratic individuality are misconceived, and now it would be time to delve deeper into the pragmatist tradition in order to demonstrate why Dewey, and the later pragmatists who have properly followed his principles, should have greater claim to being pragmatism's main representatives within the field of political theory. As we have seen, Dewey portrays democracy as a continuously developing ideal in which individuals progressively exercise greater control over their own development, which entails continuous growth on the part of individuals in response to changing circumstances, and also the establishment of various social and economic rights (e.g., a right to material security) in addition to the older liberal rights (e.g., the right to free speech). Deweyan pragmatism holds that ideas and principles gain truth to the extent that they are put into practice and produce an intended effect on our experience; when they do not produce such an effect, ideas and principles are to then be reconstructed in order to regain truth. This pragmatism can thus account for the possibility that older means for advancing individuals' self-government (i.e., for advancing the purpose of democracy) may become insufficient in the face of changing conditions, and that new means may be justified by unique threats to self-government. Because of these qualities, Dewey's philosophy, unlike Rorty's, maintains the *practical* quality of pragmatism, and allows our notion of democracy to effectively evolve to meet new challenges.

[677] Robert Talisse, "Can Democracy Be a Way of Life? Deweyan Democracy and the Problem of Pluralism", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 39, no. 1 (2003): 5.

Ultimately, this dissertation has shown that our current social conditions do not make it possible for democracy to be placed into a contained space such as a deliberative forum. When the terms of everyday discourse are already infected by undemocratic social relations, democracy then must take place (at least to a certain extent) in the streets, and through practices which do not limit socially disadvantaged individuals to a discourse that is acceptable to the advantaged. Under such social conditions, we must further consider whether social spaces such as the workplace are actualizing or hindering democratization, by either giving workers the opportunity to exercise some control over the methods and purposes of their work, or confining workers to unreflectively executing the will of superiors. And, we must examine whether individuals themselves are contributing to social democratization in their everyday actions and interactions with others. The depiction of democracy I have laid out is that of a concept composed of multiple, mutually influencing elements, and this works against the notion that a certain area can be walled off from the realities of the social world, and made into the expression of democratic ideals. Such a contained area, no matter how well-constructed, cannot plausibly be placed under effective shelter from the other spaces in which individuals spend the majority of their lives.

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