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JOHN DEWEY¹

Born	October 20, 1859
Died	June 1, 1952 (aged 92)
Era	20th-century philosophy
Region	Western Philosophy
School	Pragmatism
Main interests:	Philosophy of education, Epistemology, Journalism, Ethics
Notable ideas:	Reflective Thinking
American Association of University Professors	
Inquiry into Moscow show trials about Trotsky	
Educational progressivism	

John Dewey (October 20, 1859 – June 1, 1952) was an American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer whose ideas have been influential in education and social reform. Dewey was an important early developer of the philosophy of pragmatism and one of the founders of functional psychology. He was a major representative of the progressive and progressive populist^[2] philosophies of schooling during the first half of the 20th century in the USA.

Although Dewey is known best for his publications concerning education, he also wrote about many other topics, including experience, nature, art, logic, inquiry, democracy, and ethics.

In his advocacy of democracy, Dewey considered two fundamental elements—schools and civil society—as being major topics needing attention and reconstruction to encourage experimental intelligence and plurality. Dewey asserted that complete democracy was to be obtained not just by extending voting rights but also by ensuring that there exists a fully formed public opinion, accomplished by effective communication among citizens, experts, and politicians, with the latter being accountable for the policies they adopt.

Life and works

Dewey was born in Burlington, Vermont, to a family of modest means. Like his older brother, Davis Rich Dewey, he attended the University of Vermont, from which he graduated (Phi Beta Kappa) in 1879. A significant professor of Dewey's at the University of Vermont was Henry A. P. Torrey, the son-in-law and nephew of former University of Vermont president Joseph Torrey. Dewey studied privately with Torrey between his graduation from Vermont and his enrolment at Johns Hopkins University.^{[6][7]}

After two years as a high-school teacher in Oil City, Pennsylvania and one teaching elementary school in a small town in Vermont, Dewey decided that he was unsuited for employment in primary or secondary education. After studying with George Sylvester Morris, Charles Sanders Peirce, Herbert Baxter Adams, and G. Stanley Hall, Dewey received his Ph.D. from the School of Arts & Sciences at Johns Hopkins University. In 1884, he accepted a faculty position at the University of Michigan (1884–88 and 1889–94) with the help of George Sylvester Morris. His unpublished and now lost dissertation was titled "The Psychology of Kant."

In 1894 Dewey joined the newly founded University of Chicago (1894–1904) where he developed his belief in an empirically based theory of knowledge, becoming associated with the newly emerging Pragmatic philosophy. His time at the University of Chicago resulted in four essays collectively entitled *Thought and its Subject-Matter*, which was published with collected

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dewey (downloaded 11/8/11)

works from his colleagues at Chicago under the collective title *Studies in Logical Theory* (1903). During that time Dewey also initiated the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, where he was able to actualize the pedagogical beliefs that provided material for his first major work on education, *The School and Social Progress* (1899). Disagreements with the administration ultimately caused his resignation from the University, and soon thereafter he relocated near the East Coast. In 1899, Dewey was elected president of the American Psychological Association. From 1904 until his retirement in 1930 he was professor of philosophy at both Columbia University and Columbia University's Teachers College.[8] In 1905 he became president of the American Philosophical Association. He was a long-time member of the American Federation of Teachers.

Along with the historian Charles Beard, economists Thorstein Veblen and James Harvey Robinson, Dewey is one of the founders of The New School. Dewey's most significant writings were "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" (1896), a critique of a standard psychological concept and the basis of all his further work; *Democracy and Education* (1916), his celebrated work on progressive education; *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), a study of the function of habit in human behavior; *The Public and its Problems* (1927), a defense of democracy written in response to Walter Lippmann's *The Phantom Public* (1925); *Experience and Nature* (1925), Dewey's most "metaphysical" statement; *Art as Experience* (1934), Dewey's major work on aesthetics; *A Common Faith* (1934), a humanistic study of religion originally delivered as the Dwight H. Terry Lectureship at Yale; *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), a statement of Dewey's unusual conception of logic; *Freedom and Culture* (1939), a political work examining the roots of fascism; and *Knowing and the Known* (1949), a book written in conjunction with Arthur F. Bentley that systematically outlines the concept of trans-action, which is central to his other works. While each of these works focuses on one particular philosophical theme, Dewey included his major themes in most of what he published. He published more than 700 articles in 140 journals, and approximately 40 books.

Reflecting his immense influence on 20th-century thought, Hilda Neatby, in 1953, wrote "Dewey has been to our age what Aristotle was to the later Middle Ages, not a philosopher, but the philosopher."^[9]

Dewey was first married to Alice Chipman. They had six children.^[10] His second wife was Roberta Lowitz Grant.^[11]

The United States Postal Service honored Dewey with a Prominent Americans series 30¢ postage stamp.

Functional psychology

See also: *History of psychology*

At University of Michigan, Dewey published his first two books, *Psychology* (1887), and Leibniz's *New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding* (1888), both of which expressed Dewey's early commitment to British neo-Hegelianism. In *Psychology*, Dewey attempted a synthesis between idealism and experimental science.^[12]

While still professor of philosophy at Michigan, Dewey and his junior colleagues, James Hayden Tufts and George Herbert Mead, together with his student James Rowland Angell, all influenced strongly by the recent publication of William James' *Principles of Psychology* (1890), began to reformulate psychology, emphasizing the social environment on the activity of mind and behaviour rather than the physiological psychology of Wundt and his followers.

By 1894, Dewey had joined Tufts, with whom he would later write *Ethics* (1908), at the recently founded University of Chicago and invited Mead and Angell to follow him, the four men forming the basis of the so-called "Chicago group" of psychology.

Their new style of psychology, later dubbed functional psychology, had a practical emphasis on action and application. In Dewey's article "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" which appeared in *Psychological Review* in 1896, he reasons against the traditional stimulus-response understanding of the reflex arc in favor of a "circular" account in which what serves as "stimulus" and what as "response" depends on how one considers the situation, and defends the unitary nature of the sensory motor circuit. While he does not deny the existence of stimulus, sensation, and response, he disagreed that they were separate, juxtaposed events happening like links in a chain. He developed the idea that there is a coordination by which the stimulation is enriched by the results of previous experiences. The response is modulated by sensorial experience.

Dewey was elected president of the American Psychological Association in 1899.

In 1984, the American Psychological Association announced that Lillian Moller Gilbreth (1878–1972) had become the first psychologist to be commemorated on a United States postage stamp. However, psychologists Gary Brucato Jr. and John D. Hogan later made the case that this distinction actually belonged to John Dewey, who had been celebrated on an American stamp 17 years earlier. While some psychology historians consider Dewey more of a philosopher than a bona fide psychologist,^[13] the authors noted that Dewey was a founding member of the A.P.A., served as the A.P.A.'s eighth President in 1899, and was the author of an 1896 article on the reflex arc which is now considered a basis of American functional psychology.^[14]

Dewey also expressed interest in work in the psychology of visual perception performed by Dartmouth research professor Adelbert Ames, Jr. He had great trouble with listening, however, because it is known Dewey could not distinguish musical pitches - in other words was tone deaf.^[15]

Pragmatism and instrumentalism

Although Dewey referred to his philosophy as "instrumentalism" rather than pragmatism, he was one of the three major figures in American pragmatism, along with Charles Sanders Peirce, who invented the term, and William James, who popularized it. Dewey worked from strongly Hegelian influences, unlike James, whose intellectual lineage was primarily British, drawing particularly on empiricist and utilitarian ideas.^[16] Neither was Dewey so pluralist or relativist as James. He stated that value was a function not of whim nor purely of social construction, but a quality situated in events ("nature itself is wistful and pathetic, turbulent and passionate" (Experience and Nature).

James also stated that experimentation (social, cultural, technological, philosophical) could be used as an approximate arbiter of truth. For example he felt that, for many people who lacked "over-belief" of religious concepts, human life was superficial and rather uninteresting, and that while no one religious belief could be demonstrated as the correct one, we are all responsible for making a gamble on one or another theism, atheism, monism, etc. Dewey, in contrast, while honoring the important function that religious institutions and practices played in human life, rejected belief in any static ideal, such as a personal God. Dewey felt that only scientific method could reliably increase human good.

Of the idea of God, Dewey said, "it denotes the unity of all ideal ends arousing us to desire and actions."^[17]

As with the re-emergence of progressive philosophy of education, Dewey's contributions to philosophy as such (he was, after all, much more a professional philosopher than an educator) have also re-emerged with the reassessment of pragmatism, beginning in the late 1970s, by philosophers like Richard Rorty, Richard J. Bernstein and Hans Joas.

Because of his process-oriented and sociologically conscious opinion of the world and knowledge, his ideology is considered sometimes as a useful alternative to both modern and postmodern ideology. Dewey's non-foundational method pre-dates postmodernism by more than half a century. Recent exponents (like Rorty) have not always remained faithful to Dewey's original ideas, though this itself is completely consistent with Dewey's own usage of other writers and with his own philosophy— for Dewey, past doctrines always require reconstruction in order to remain useful for the present time.

Dewey's philosophy has had other names than "pragmatism". He has been called an instrumentalist, an experimentalist, an empiricist, a functionalist, and a naturalist. The term "transactional" may better describe his views, a term emphasized by Dewey in his later years to describe his theories of knowledge and experience.

Epistemology

Main article: *Knowing and the Known*

The terminology problem in the fields of epistemology and logic is partially due, according to Dewey and Bentley,^[18] to inefficient and imprecise use of words and concepts that reflect three historic levels of organization and presentation.^[19] In the order of chronological appearance, these are:

- Self-Action: Prescientific concepts regarded humans, animals, and things as possessing powers of their own which initiated or caused their actions.
- Interaction: as described by Newton, where things, living and inorganic, are balanced against something in a system of interaction, for example, the third law of motion states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.
- Transaction: where modern systems of descriptions and naming are employed to deal with multiple aspects and phases of action without any attribution to ultimate, final, or independent entities, essences, or realities.

A series of characterizations of Transactions indicate the wide range of considerations involved.^[20]

Logic and method

Dewey sees paradox in contemporary logical theory. Proximate subject matter garners general agreement and advance, while the ultimate subject matter of logic generates unremitting controversy. In other words, he challenges confident logicians to answer the question of the truth of logical operators. Do they function merely as abstractions (e.g., pure mathematics) or do they connect in some essential way with their objects, and therefore alter or bring them to light?^[21]

Logical positivism also figured in Dewey's thought. About the movement he wrote that it "eschews the use of 'propositions' and 'terms', substituting 'sentences' and 'words'." ("General Theory of Propositions", in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*) He welcomes this changing of referents "in as far as it fixes attention upon the symbolic structure and content of propositions." However, he registers a small complaint against the use of "sentence" and "words" in that without careful interpretation the act or process of transposition "narrows unduly the scope of symbols and language, since it is not customary to treat gestures and diagrams (maps, blueprints, etc.) as words or sentences." In other words, sentences and words, considered in isolation, do not disclose intent, which may be inferred or "adjudged only by means of context."^[21]

Yet Dewey was not entirely opposed to modern logical trends. Concerning traditional logic, he states:

Aristotelian logic, which still passes current nominally, is a logic based upon the idea that qualitative objects are existential in the fullest sense. To retain logical principles based on this conception along with the acceptance of theories of existence and knowledge based on an opposite conception is not, to say the least, conducive to clearness – a consideration that has a good deal to do with existing dualism between traditional and the newer relational logics. —(Qualitative Thought 1930)

Louis Menand argues in *The Metaphysical Club* that Jane Addams had been critical of Dewey's emphasis on antagonism in the context of a discussion of the Pullman strike of 1894. In a later letter to his wife, Dewey confessed that Addams' argument was

the most magnificent exhibition of intellectual & moral faith I ever saw. She converted me internally, but not really, I fear.... When you think that Miss Addams does not think this as a philosophy, but believes it in all her senses & muscles-- Great God... I guess I'll have to give it [all] up & start over again.

He went on to add,

I can see that I have always been interpreting dialectic wrong end up, the unity as the reconciliation of opposites, instead of the opposites as the unity in its growth, and thus translated the physical tension into a moral thing... I don't know as I give the reality of this at all,... it seems so natural & commonplace now, but I never had anything take hold of me so.^[22]

In a letter to Addams herself, Dewey wrote, clearly influenced by his conversation with her:

Not only is actual antagonizing bad, but the assumption that there is or may be antagonism is bad-- in fact, the real first antagonism always comes back to the assumption.

Aesthetics

Main article: *Art as Experience*

Art as Experience (1934) is Dewey's major writing on aesthetics. It is, according to his place in the Pragmatist tradition that emphasizes community, a study of the individual art object as embedded in (and inextricable from) the experiences of a local culture. See his Experience and Nature for an extended discussion of 'Experience' in Dewey's philosophy.

On democracy

The overriding theme of Dewey's works was his profound belief in democracy, be it in politics, education or communication and journalism. As Dewey himself stated in 1888, while still at the University of Michigan, "Democracy and the one, ultimate, ethical ideal of humanity are to my mind synonymous."^[23]

With respect to technological developments in a democracy:

Persons do not become a society by living in physical proximity any more than a man ceases to be socially influenced by being so many feet or miles removed from others. —John Dewey from Andrew Feenberg's "Community in the Digital Age"

On education

Main article: *Democracy and Education*

Dewey's educational theories were presented in My Pedagogic Creed (1897), The School and Society (1900), The Child and the Curriculum (1902), Democracy and Education (1916) and Experience and Education (1938). Throughout these writings, several recurrent themes ring true; Dewey continually argues that education and learning are social and interactive processes, and thus the school itself is a social institution through which social reform can and should take place. In addition, he believed that students thrive in an environment where they are allowed to experience and interact with the curriculum, and all students should have the opportunity to take part in their own learning.

The ideas of democracy and social reform are continually discussed in Dewey's writings on education. Dewey makes a strong case for the importance of education not only as a place to gain content knowledge, but also as a place to learn how to live. In his eyes, the purpose of education should not revolve around the acquisition of a pre-determined set of skills, but rather the realization of one's full potential and the ability to use those skills for the greater good. He notes that "to prepare him for the future life means to give him command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities" (1897, p. 6).^[24] In addition to helping students realize their full potential, Dewey goes on to acknowledge that education and schooling are instrumental in creating social change and reform. He notes that "education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction" (1897, p. 16).

In addition to his ideas regarding what education is and what effect it should have on society, Dewey also had specific notions regarding how education should take place within the classroom. In The Child and the Curriculum (1902), Dewey discusses two major conflicting schools of thought regarding educational pedagogy. The first is centered on the curriculum and focuses almost solely on the subject matter to be taught. Dewey argues that the major flaw in this methodology is the inactivity of the student; within this particular framework, "the child is simply the immature being who is to be matured; he is the superficial being who is to be deepened" (1902, p. 13).^[25] He argues that in order for education to be most effective,

content must be presented in a way that allows the student to relate the information to prior experiences, thus deepening the connection with this new knowledge.

At the same time, Dewey was alarmed by many of the "child-centered" excesses of educational-school pedagogues who claimed to be his followers, and he argued that too much reliance on the child could be equally detrimental to the learning process. In this second school of thought, "we must take our stand with the child and our departure from him. It is he and not the subject-matter which determines both quality and quantity of learning" (Dewey, 1902, p. 13-14). According to Dewey, the potential flaw in this line of thinking is that it minimizes the importance of the content as well as the role of the teacher.

In order to rectify this dilemma, Dewey advocated for an educational structure that strikes a balance between delivering knowledge while also taking into account the interests and experiences of the student. He notes that "the child and the curriculum are simply two limits which define a single process. Just as two points define a straight line, so the present standpoint of the child and the facts and truths of studies define instruction" (Dewey, 1902, p. 16). It is through this reasoning that Dewey became one of the most famous proponents of hands-on learning or experiential education, which is related to, but not synonymous with experiential learning. He argued that "if knowledge comes from the impressions made upon us by natural objects, it is impossible to procure knowledge without the use of objects which impress the mind" (Dewey, 1916/2009, p. 217-218).^[26] Dewey's ideas went on to influence many other influential experiential models and advocates. Many researchers even credit him with the influence of Project Based Learning (PBL) which places students in the active role of researchers.

Dewey not only re-imagined the way that the learning process should take place, but also the role that the teacher should play within that process. According to Dewey, the teacher should not be one to stand at the front of the room doling out bits of information to be absorbed by passive students. Instead, the teacher's role should be that of facilitator and guide. As Dewey (1897) explains it:

The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences (p. 9).

Thus the teacher becomes a partner in the learning process, guiding students to independently discover meaning within the subject area. This philosophy has become an increasingly popular idea within present-day teacher preparatory programs.

As well as his very active and direct involvement in setting up educational institutions such as the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools (1896) and The New School for Social Research (1919), many of Dewey's ideas influenced the founding of Bennington College in Vermont, where he served on the Board of Trustees. Dewey's works and philosophy also held great influence in the creation of the short-lived Black Mountain College in North Carolina, an experimental college focused on interdisciplinary study, and whose faculty included Buckminster Fuller, Willem de Kooning, Charles Olson, Franz Kline, Robert Duncan, and Robert Creeley, among others. Black Mountain College was the locus of the "Black Mountain Poets" a group of avant-garde poets closely linked with the Beat Generation and the San Francisco Renaissance.

On journalism

Main article: *The Public and its Problems*

Since the mid-1980s, Deweyan ideas have experienced revival as a major source of inspiration for the public journalism movement. Dewey's definition of "public," as described in *The Public and its Problems* has profound implications for the significance of journalism in society. As suggested by the title of the book, his concern was of the transactional relationship between publics and problems. Also implicit in its name, public journalism seeks to orient communication away from elite, corporate hegemony toward a civic public sphere. "The 'public' of public journalists is Dewey's public."

Dewey gives a concrete definition to the formation of a public. Publics are spontaneous groups of citizens who share the indirect effects of a particular action. Anyone affected by the indirect consequences of a specific action will automatically share a common interest in controlling those consequences, i.e., solving a common problem.^[27] Since every action generates unintended consequences, publics continuously emerge, overlap, and disintegrate.

In *The Public and its Problems*, Dewey presents a rebuttal to Walter Lippmann's treatise on the role of journalism in democracy. Lippmann's model was a basic transmission model in which journalists took information given them by experts and elites, repackaged that information in simple terms, and transmitted the information to the public, whose role was to react emotionally to the news. In his model, Lippmann supposed that the public was incapable of thought or action, and that all thought and action should be left to the experts and elites.

Dewey refutes this model by assuming that politics is the work and duty of each individual in the course of his daily routine. The knowledge needed to be involved in politics, in this model, was to be generated by the interaction of citizens, elites, experts, through the mediation and facilitation of journalism. In this model, not just the government is accountable, but the citizens, experts, and other actors as well.

Dewey also said that journalism should conform to this ideal by changing its emphasis from actions or happenings (choosing a winner of a given situation) to alternatives, choices, consequences, and conditions, in order to foster conversation and improve the generation of knowledge. Journalism would not just produce a static product that told what had already happened, but the news would be in a constant state of evolution as the public added value by generating knowledge. The "audience" would end, to be replaced by citizens and collaborators who would essentially be users, doing more with the news than simply reading it. Concerning his effort to change journalism, he wrote in *The Public and its Problems*: "Till the Great Society is converted in to a Great Community, the Public will remain in eclipse. Communication can alone create a great community" (Dewey, p. 142).

Dewey believed that communication creates a great community, and citizens who participate actively with public life contribute to that community. "The clear consciousness of a communal life, in all its implications, constitutes the idea of democracy." (*The Public and its Problems*, p. 149). This Great Community can only occur with "free and full intercommunication." (p. 211) Communication can be understood as journalism.

On humanism

Dewey participated with a variety of humanist activities from the 1930s into the 1950s, which included sitting on the advisory board of Charles Francis Potter's First Humanist Society of New York (1929); being one of the original 34 signatories of the first Humanist Manifesto (1933) and being elected an honorary member of the Humanist Press Association (1936).^[28]

His opinion of humanism is best summarised in his own words from an article titled "What Humanism Means to Me", published in the June 1930 edition of *Thinker 2*:

"What Humanism means to me is an expansion, not a contraction, of human life, an expansion in which nature and the science of nature are made the willing servants of human good." — John Dewey, "What Humanism Means to Me"^[29]

Social and political activism

As a major advocate for academic freedom, in 1935 Dewey, together with Albert Einstein and Alvin Johnson, became a member of the United States section of the International League for Academic Freedom,^[30] and in 1940, together with Horace M Kallen, edited a series of articles related to the infamous Bertrand Russell Case.

As well as being active in defending the independence of teachers, and opposing a communist takeover of the New York Teachers' Union,[citation needed] Dewey was involved in the organization that eventually became the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

He directed the famous Dewey Commission held in Mexico in 1937, which cleared Leon Trotsky of the charges made against him by Joseph Stalin,^[31] and marched for women's rights, among many other causes.

In 1950, Dewey, Bertrand Russell, Benedetto Croce, Karl Jaspers, and Jacques Maritain agreed to act as honorary chairmen of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.^[32]

Other interests

Dewey's interests and writings included many topics, and according to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "a substantial part of his published output consisted of commentary on current domestic and international politics, and public statements on behalf of many causes. (He is probably the only philosopher in this encyclopedia to have published both on the Treaty of Versailles and on the value of displaying art in post offices.)"^[33]

In 1917, Dewey met F. M. Alexander in New York City and later wrote introductions to Alexander's *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (1918), *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (1923) and *The Use of the Self* (1932). Alexander's influence is referenced in "Human Nature and Conduct" and "Experience and Nature."^[34]

As well as his contacts with people mentioned elsewhere in the article, he also maintained correspondence with Henri Bergson, William M. Brown, Martin Buber, George S. Counts, William Rainey Harper, Sidney Hook, and George Santayana.

Criticism

Dewey is considered the epitome of liberalism by many conservative pundits today[who?] (see *The Closing of the American Mind*), even being "portrayed as dangerously radical" during the era of McCarthyism.^[35] Meanwhile, Dewey was critiqued strongly by American communists because he argued against Stalinism and had philosophical differences with Marx, despite identifying himself as a democratic socialist.^[36]

Other criticisms of him include his opinions of both the First and the Second World Wars, as well as, despite having been involved with the initiation of the NAACP, not having written more directly against racism.[citation needed]

Another source of criticism has been religion. While one biographer, Steven C. Rockefeller, traced Dewey's democratic convictions to his childhood attendance at the Congregational Church, with its strong proclamation of social ideals,^[37] another, Edward A. White, a Stanford University professor of history, suggested in *Science and Religion in American Thought* (1952) that Dewey's work had led to the 20th century rift between religion and science. However, in reviewing the book in *The Quarterly Review of Biology* (1954), noted geneticist H. Bentley Glass openly wondered if the controversy between religion and science would have been much the same, even if there had not been a John Dewey.^[38]

Publications

Besides publishing prolifically himself, Dewey also sat on the boards of scientific publications such as *Sociometry* (advisory board, 1942) and *Journal of Social Psychology* (editorial board, 1942), as well as having posts at other publications such as *New Leader* (contributing editor, 1949).

The following publications by John Dewey are referenced or mentioned in this article. A more complete list of his publications may be found at [List of publications by John Dewey](#).

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- *Psychology* (1887)
- *Leibniz's New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding* (1888)
- "The Ego as Cause" *Philosophical Review*, 3,337-341. (1894)

- "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" (1896)
- "My Pedagogic Creed" (1897)
- *The School and Society* (1900)
- *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902)
- "The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism" (1905)
- *Moral Principles in Education* (1909) The Riverside Press Cambridge Project Gutenberg
- *How We Think* (1910)
- [*German Philosophy and Politics*](#) (1915)
- *Democracy and Education: an introduction to the philosophy of education* (1916)
- [*Reconstruction in Philosophy*](#) (1919)
- *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*
- [*Experience and Nature*](#) (1925)
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- The Sources of a Science of Education (1929) The Kappa Delta Pi Lecture Series
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- *A Common Faith* (1934)
- *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935)
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See also

- *The Essential Dewey: Volumes 1 and 2*. Edited by Larry Hickman and Thomas Alexander (1998). Indiana University Press
- *The Philosophy of John Dewey* Edited by John J. McDermott (1981). University of Chicago Press

Dewey's Complete Writings is available in 3 multi-volume sets (37 volumes in all) from Southern Illinois University Press:

- *The Early Works: 1892-1898* (5 volumes)
- *The Middle Works: 1899-1924* (15 volumes)
- *The Later Works: 1925-1953* (17 volumes)
- *Posthumous Works: 1956-2009*

The Correspondence of John Dewey is available in 4 volumes via online subscription and also in TEI format for university servers. (The CD-ROM has been discontinued).

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See also

- List of American philosophers
- Centre for Dewey Studies
- Democratic education
- John Dewey Society
- [Inquiry-based science](#)
- Laboratory school
- Learning by teaching

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- Dewey, *Impressions of Soviet Russia*
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- John Dewey: His Life and Work 4-minute clip from a documentary film used primarily in higher education.
- More information about John Dewey and F. Mathias Alexander
- Article on Dewey's Moral Philosophy in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- Article on Dewey's Political Philosophy in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- Dewey page from Pragmatism Cybrary

Welcome to John Dewey²

Philosophy is criticism; criticism of the influential beliefs that underlie culture; a criticism which traces the beliefs to their generating conditions as far as may be, which tracks them to their results, which considers the mutual compatibility of the elements of the total structure of beliefs. Such an examination terminates, whether so intended or not, in a projection of them into a new perspective which leads to new surveys of possibilities. [*John Dewey, "Context and Thought" 1931 (LW6:19)*]

In many ways, John Dewey epitomizes what an intellectual life can be. An enormously productive scholar, teacher, family man, and prominent public intellectual, Dewey's ideas were keenly attended by both academic and lay audiences over the course of three generations. As a public figure, he lectured extensively at home and abroad, including travel to China, Turkey, Mexico, and the Soviet Union. While he did engage in the specialized dialectic of philosophers, Dewey also spoke to ordinary people about issues of broad moral significance such as economic alienation, war and peace, human freedom, race relations, women's suffrage, and educational goals and methods. Frequently, he did more than write or lecture; Dewey was founder and first president of the American Association of University Professors, first president of the League for Independent Political Action, president of the American Psychological Association; he helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and was deeply involved in the teacher's union movement in New York City.

As a scholar and writer, Dewey's oeuvre is extraordinary: forty books and approximately seven hundred articles in over one hundred and forty journals. Many of his most renowned works were published after he was sixty years old. He had an eminent career as a professional philosopher, and is universally considered (along with William James and Charles S. Peirce) as a primary founder of American pragmatism. Dewey also served as an early president of the American Philosophical Association and was invited to speak in philosophy's most prestigious lecture series.

² "The Place to Get Straight About Dewey": Brief introduction to John Dewey, from *John Dewey: A Beginner's Guide* by David L Hildebrand (Oneworld Press, 2008) (downloaded February 2011)

Dewey's biography is complex, but several facts are worth mentioning. Born in 1859, he grew up in a merchant-class family in New England, strongly influenced by a devoutly religious mother. After college, Dewey taught high school before taking up graduate studies at Johns Hopkins with Charles S. Peirce, George Sylvester Morris, and G.S. Hall—a pragmatist, Hegelian, and experimental psychologist, respectively. (Dewey's dissertation critiqued Kant's psychology and earned him a Ph.D. in 1884.) In retrospect, Dewey credited his graduate study of Hegelianism with liberating him from difficult both personal and philosophical divisions. This early liberation initiated Dewey's lifelong enterprise of treating various experiences (bodily, psychical, imaginative, practical) as capable of integration into dynamic wholes. Though Dewey's work became increasingly less Hegelian, the basic intent (of framing phenomena in a synthetically organized way) remained influential throughout his career.

Dewey's family and reputation as a philosopher and psychologist grew while he taught at various universities, including the University of Michigan. In 1894 he landed two major positions at the University of Chicago, chairing departments in Philosophy (including psychology) and Pedagogy (including the directorship of the Laboratory School). In Chicago, Dewey became active in social and political causes, including Jane Addams' Hull House. Over conflicts related to the Laboratory School, Dewey resigned his Chicago positions in 1904, soon accepting a position at Columbia University in New York City. Dewey spent the rest of his teaching career (1905 to 1930) at Columbia (including Teacher's College). Almost two decades after his wife died, Dewey married Roberta Lowitz Grant. John Dewey died of pneumonia in his home in New York City on June 1, 1952.

Dewey's popularity has surged over the past couple of decades. While some of this may be due to the rediscovery of his particular genius, several other contributing reasons seem likely. One reason is that Dewey appeals to people as a thinker who is both intelligent and engaged. By keeping his scholarly work connected to practical affairs beyond the academy, Dewey ensured wider interest (and test) of his ideas. Such public intellectuals are rare today, and renewed interest in Dewey may indicate a general yearning for more responsible and informed discussion of contemporary moral and political issues. Another explanation of Dewey's resurgence may derive from some important historical parallels. Dewey's early 20th century America was searching for guidance for many problems which concern people today: problems of unemployment, homelessness, and the lack of medical services for the poor; indifference of the wealthy toward the poor and working poor; the balkanization of pluralistic societies into economically and culturally stratified suburbs; the isolation brought about by consumerism and hyper-individualism. As such problems have captured the attention of philosophers and political scientists; there has been increased interest in "communitarian" moral and political philosophy. Insofar as Dewey is regarded as a philosopher deeply concerned with democracy, "the public," and "the Great Community," contemporary scholars are looking back to his work for insight.

Two keys to understanding Dewey

The chapters that follow will thoroughly acquaint readers with Dewey's philosophical ideas and methods. Here, I outline two beliefs fundamental to Dewey which will aid readers in their understanding of the occasionally complicated terrain that lies ahead.

Practical Starting Point. The first guiding belief concerns one's approach or stance toward the activity of philosophy. For too long, philosophy has been largely concerned with logical demonstration based on certain premises—it has approached issues with a 'top down' rather than 'bottom up' method. The top-down method may be said to use a 'theoretical starting point' because it already assumes much about what must be discovered prior to any actual philosophical inquiry. For example, investigations into the nature of perception that start out with fairly definite presumptions about, say, 'subjects' and the 'objects' they are perceiving; or, investigations into moral questions that presume that, whatever particular answers are found, morality consists in one overarching and universal principle.

Why, Dewey asks, should each successive generation of philosophers accept these theoretical assumptions? Why should it be assumed that there is, for example, a single overarching principle of morality—or a dualism between subject and object in perception? Such predeterminations are unfounded; moreover, Dewey argues,

they lead philosophical inquiry into insoluble problems and dead ends. They divert philosophical talent away from addressing practical problems.

Instead, Dewey urges a practical starting point, a bottom-up approach to philosophical inquiry. Drawing strongly upon William James's 'radical empiricism' Dewey proposes that philosophers avoid prejudicial frameworks and assumptions and accept experience as it is lived. Such an approach is self-consciously empirical, fallible, and social; employing it, Dewey writes, can 'open the eyes and ears of the mind ...[with sensitivity] to all the varied phases of life and history' (LW1:373). By recommending a more humble and mindful respect for experience, Dewey is not suggesting a surrender to irrationality; after all, it is in experience that one finds patterns of inquiry and logic useful for ordering and directing future events. Rather, he is suggesting that philosophy seek greater coherence with life as experienced throughout the day. Thus, this practical starting point is more than a strategy for doing philosophy; it is the profound and consequential acknowledgement that philosophy's inquiries are similar to many others: done by particular people, with particular perspectives, at a definite time and place, with consequences that must be considered. In other words, philosophy must be done as if it actually matters.

Melioristic Motive. The second guiding belief is the view that philosophical questions about knowledge and truth can never be completely walled off from efforts to create and preserve value. Dewey is an inveterate arguer whose works frequently begin with devastating critiques of traditional positions. But however diverse the subject matter, these critiques are frequently unified by Dewey's meliorism. Meliorism is the belief that this life is neither perfectly good nor bad; it can be improved only through human effort. Philosophy's motive for existing, then, is to make life better. This is no blind faith, tossed off sentimentally by Dewey; it is a working hypothesis, drawn from experience. To accept the challenge implied by the melioristic hypothesis is to admit that the proper purpose of intellectual inquiry is to search for ways (ideas, practices) to improve this life rather than to look for absolute value or reality per se. If philosophy is more than intellectual recreation, it must somehow engage with 'the problems of men.' This is Dewey's touchstone.

Dewey's entreaties—that philosophy start from lived experience (practically), motivated by moral ends (meliorism)—are prescriptive but necessarily vague. They pose a challenge to professionalized philosophers, who tend to respond by demanding specifics: Which cherished philosophical problems should be abandoned—and when? Where should philosophical investigations be focused instead? What happens to the identity of philosophy once it abandons traditional problems? Dewey's general retort to such responses is 'look around.' Philosophy can discover new problems in the crucible of common life if its parishioners have the courage and emotional intelligence to trade certain answers for questions which aim to make life better.

John Dewey and Informal Education³

Arguably the most influential thinker on education in the twentieth century, Dewey's contribution lies along several fronts. His attention to experience and reflection, democracy and community and to environments for learning have been seminal.

John Dewey (1859 - 1952) has made, arguably, the most significant contribution to the development of educational thinking in the twentieth century. Dewey's philosophical pragmatism, concern with interaction, reflection and experience, and interest in community and democracy, were brought together to form a highly suggestive educative form. John Dewey is often misrepresented - and wrongly associated with child-centred education. In many respects his work cannot be easily slotted into any one of the curriculum traditions that have dominated North American and UK schooling traditions over the last century. However, John Dewey's influence can be seen in many of the writers that have influenced the development of informal education over the same period. For example, Coyle, Kolb, Lindeman and Rogers drew extensively on his work.

John Dewey's significance for informal educators lies in a number of areas. First, his belief that education must engage with and enlarge experience has continued to be a significant strand in informal education practice. Second, and linked

³ Mark K. Smith 2001 (*Infed website*) (downloaded February 2011)

to this, Dewey's exploration of thinking and reflection - and the associated role of educators - has continued to be an inspiration. We can see it at work, for example, in the models developed by writers such as David Boud and Donald Schon. Third, his concern with interaction and environments for learning provide a continuing framework for practice. Last, his passion for democracy, for educating so that all may share in a common life, provides a strong rationale for practice in the associational settings in which informal educators work.

Key texts: Three key 'educational' texts that seem to appeal most strongly to informal educators are:

Dewey, J. (1916) *Democracy and Education*. An introduction to the philosophy of education (1966 edn.), New York: Free Press. Classic discussion of education for democracy ('sharing in a common life') that includes an important reconceptualization of vocational learning. It remains (for me at least) an infuriating book to read. At times ideas are not expressed with the clarity they deserve; there is repetition; and not enough signposting for readers. But... there is gold in these hills.

Dewey, J. (1933) *How We Think*. A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process (Revised edn.), Boston: D. C. Heath. Brilliant, accessible exploration of thinking and its relationship to learning. Dewey's concern with experience, interaction and reflection - and his worries about linear models of thinking still make for a rewarding read. The book's influence lives on in the recent concern with experience and reflection in writers like Boud, Kolb and Scholl.

Dewey, J. (1938) *Experience and Education*, New York: Collier Books. (Collier edition first published 1963). In this book Dewey seeks to move beyond dualities such as progressive / traditional - and to outline a philosophy of experience and its relation to education.

To approach Dewey's concern with experience and knowledge in more detail:

Dewey, J. (1929) *Experience and Nature*, New York: Dover. (Dover edition first published in 1958). Explores the relationship of the external world, the mind and knowledge.

Biographies: There have been a couple of excellent and fairly recent intellectual biographies:

Campbell, J. (1995) *Understanding John Dewey*. Nature and co-operative intelligence, Chicago: Open Court. Good, new, general introduction to Dewey's work. Campbell, as his subtitle suggests, focuses on the evaluative power of intelligence not as an individual possession but as a possession of the group.

Ryan, A. (1995) *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*, New York: W. W. Norton. Clear and fair-minded evaluation of Deweyian liberalism.

Websites: Visit the Centre for Dewey Studies, Carbondale. It gives details of his collected works; and access to the John Dewey Internet discussion group. You can also hear Dewey talk. Centre for Dewey Studies. There is also a useful short guide to his publications and access to other sites on a Colorado site. You can get the full text of *Democracy and Education*. John Dewey Links.

JEROME BRUNER⁴

An American psychologist, Jerome Seymour Bruner (born 1915) made outstanding contributions to the study of perception, cognition, and education. He taught in universities in both the United States and England and was the author of many articles and books in the field of psychology and education.

Jerome Seymour Bruner was born on October 1, 1915, to Polish immigrant parents, Herman and Rose (Gluckmann) Bruner. He was born blind and did not achieve sight until after two cataract operations while he was still an infant. He attended public schools, graduating from high school in 1933, and entered Duke University where he majored in psychology, earning the AB degree in 1937. Bruner then pursued graduate study at Harvard University, receiving the MA in 1939 and the Ph.D. in 1941. During World War II, he served under General Eisenhower in the Psychological Warfare Division of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force Europe. After the war he joined the faculty at Harvard University in 1945.

When Bruner entered the field of psychology, it was roughly divided between the study of perception and the analysis of learning. The first was mentalistic and subjective, while the second was behavioristic and objective. At Harvard the psychology department was dominated by behaviorists who followed a research program called psychophysics, the view that psychology is the study of the senses and how they react to the world of physical energies or stimuli. Bruner revolted against behaviorism and psychophysics and, together with Leo Postman, set out on a series of experiments that would result in the "New Look," a new theory of perception. The New Look held that perception is not something that occurs immediately, as had been assumed in older theories. Rather, perception is a form of information processing that involves interpretation and selection. It was a view that psychology must concern itself with how people view and interpret the world, as well as how they respond to stimuli.

Bruner's interest moved from perception to cognition - how people think. This new direction was stimulated by Bruner's discussions in the early 1950s with Robert Oppenheimer, the nuclear physicist, around whether the idea in the scientist's mind determined the natural phenomenon being observed. A major publication to come out of this period was *A Study of Thinking* (1956), written with Jacqueline Goodnow and George Austin. It explored how people think about and group things into classes and categories. Bruner found that the choice to group things almost invariably involves notions of procedures and criteria for grouping. It may also involve focusing on a single indicator as a "home base" and grouping things according to the presence of that indicator. Furthermore, people will group things according to their own attention and memory capacity; they will choose positive over negative information; and they will seek repeated confirmation of hypotheses when it is often not needed. *A Study of Thinking* has been called one of the initiators of the cognitive sciences.

Centre for Cognitive Studies

Soon Bruner began collaborating with George Miller on how people develop conceptual models and how they code information about those models. In 1960 the two opened the Center for Cognitive Studies at Harvard. Both shared a conviction that psychology should be concerned with the cognitive processes - the distinct human forms of gaining, storing, and working over knowledge. Bruner was drawn toward new developments in philosophy and anthropology: linguistic philosophy for insight into human language capacities and how thoughts are organized into logical syntax and cultural anthropology for insight into how thinking is culturally conditioned. To the centre came some of the leading figures in psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and related disciplines who made contributions to the study of cognitive processes. In retrospect, Bruner said of those years that what he and his colleagues most sought was to show "a higher order principle" that human thought included language capacities and cultural conditions and not only a mere response to a stimulus.

In spite of his many contributions to academic psychology, Bruner is perhaps best known for his work in education, most of which he undertook during his years with the Centre for Cognitive Studies. He held the position that the human species had taken charge of its own evolution by technologically shaping the environment. The passing on of this technology and cultural heritage involved the very survival of the species. Hence, education was of supreme importance. As Bruner admitted, he

⁴ *Gals Encyclopedias Biography; from www.answers.com (downloaded January 2011)*

was not fully appreciative of this importance until he was drawn into the educational debate gripping the United States following the launching of Sputnik, the first satellite, in 1957 by the former Soviet Union.

In 1959 Bruner was asked to head a National Academy of Sciences curriculum reform group that met at Woods Hole on Cape Cod. Some 34 prominent scientists, scholars, and educators met to hammer out the outlines of a new science curriculum for America's schools. Although numerous work area reports were issued, to Bruner fell the task of writing a chairman's report. The end result was *The Process of Education*, which became an immediate best-seller and was eventually translated into 19 languages. Bruner centred on three major considerations: a concept of mind as method applied to tasks - e.g., one does not think *about* physics, one thinks physics, the influence of Jean Piaget, particularly that the child's understanding of any idea will be contingent upon the level of intellectual operations he has achieved, and the notion of the structure of knowledge - the important thing to learn is how an idea or discipline is put together. Perhaps the element that is most remembered is Bruner's statement that "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development."

A Controversial Curriculum

Bruner's educational work led to an appointment on the Education Panel of the Presidents Science Advisory Committee. He also worked on a new social studies curriculum for Educational Services, Incorporated. Called "Man: A Course of Study," the controversial, federally funded project drew the ire of various conservative and rightwing pressure groups because it did not push values and traditions they felt were important. The controversy led some school districts to drop the program, and federal funds were withdrawn from any additional development. The program was continued in some American school districts, and it was also adopted by many schools in Britain and Australia.

In 1972 the Centre for Cognitive Studies was closed, and Bruner moved to England upon being appointed Watts Professor of Psychology and Fellow of Wolfson College at Oxford University. His research now came to focus on cognitive development in early **infancy**. In 1980 he returned to the United States and for a short time served again at Harvard until, in 1981, he was appointed to the position of the George Herbert Mead professorship at the New School for Social Research in New York and director of the New York Institute for the Humanities.

Bruner never tried, in his own words, to construct "a 'grand' or overarching system of thought." His main interest was on "psychology of the mind," particularly perception and cognition, as well as education, during a long and productive career.

Later Works and Publications

Bruner published a series of lectures in 1990, *Acts of Meaning*, wherein he refutes the "digital processing" approach to studies of the human mind. He reemphasizes the fundamental cultural and environmental aspects to human cognitive response. In 1986 he had put his own professional slant on varied topics such as literature and anthropology in his book *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. During that same year he participated in a **symposium** at Yale University on the implications of affirmative action within the context of the university. Bruner also contributed to an educational videocassette, *Baby Talk* (1986), which provides excellent insight to the processes by which children acquire language skills.

Further Reading

The single best source on Bruner's life is his autobiography, *In Search of Mind* (1983). A good, concise overview of his work up to 1972 may be found by Jeremy Anglin in the introduction to *Beyond the Information Given* (1973). This volume is a collection of some of Bruner's more important essays, edited and arranged by Anglin. For a collection of essays on some of Bruner's speculative thought, see *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand* (Expanded Edition, 1979). For additional reading on Bruner's educational ideas, see *The Relevance of Education* (1971).

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Bruner's ideas are based on categorization: "To perceive is to categorize, to conceptualize is to categorize, to learn is to form categories, to make decisions is to categorize." Bruner maintains people interpret the world in terms of its similarities and differences. He has also suggested that there are two primary modes of **thought**: the narrative mode and the paradigmatic mode. In narrative thinking, the mind engages in sequential, action-oriented, detail-driven thought. In paradigmatic thinking, the mind transcends particularities to achieve systematic, categorical cognition. In the former case, thinking takes the form of stories and "gripping drama." In the latter, thinking is structured as propositions linked by logical operators.

Bruner – an instructional designer

In his research on the development of children (1966), Bruner proposed three modes of representation: enactive representation (action-based), iconic representation (image-based), and symbolic representation (language-based). Rather than neatly delineated stages, the modes of representation are integrated and only loosely sequential as they "translate" into each other. Symbolic representation remains the ultimate mode, for it "is clearly the most mysterious of the three." Bruner's theory suggests it is efficacious when faced with new material to follow a progression from enactive to iconic to symbolic representation; this holds true even for adult learners. A true instructional designer, Bruner's work also suggests that a learner (even of a very young age) is capable of learning any material so long as the instruction is organized appropriately, in sharp contrast to the beliefs of Piaget and other stage theorists. (Driscoll, Marcy). Like Bloom's Taxonomy, Bruner suggests a system of coding in which people form a hierarchical arrangement of related categories. Each successively higher level of categories becomes more specific, echoing Benjamin Bloom's understanding of knowledge acquisition as well as the related idea of instructional scaffolding. In accordance with this understanding of learning, Bruner proposed the **spiral curriculum**, a teaching approach in which each subject or skill area is revisited at intervals, at a more sophisticated level each time. In 1987 he was awarded the Balzan Prize for Human Psychology "for his research embracing all of the most important problems of human psychology, in each of which he has made substantial and original contributions of theoretical as well as practical value for the development of the psychological faculties of man" (motivation of the Balzan General Prize Committee).

The Narrative Construction of Reality

In 1991, Bruner published an article in *Critical Inquiry* entitled "The Narrative Construction of Reality." In this article, he argued that the **mind** structures its sense of **reality** using mediation through "cultural products, like language and other symbolic systems" (3). He specifically focuses on the idea of **narrative** as one of these cultural products. He defines narrative in terms of ten things:

1. Narrative diachronicity: The notion that narratives take place over some sense of time.
2. Particularity: The idea that narratives deal with particular events, although some events may be left vague and general.
3. Intentional state entailment: The concept that characters within a narrative have "beliefs, desires, theories, values, and so on" (7).
4. Hermeneutic composability: The theory that narratives are that which can be interpreted in terms of their role as a selected series of events that constitute a "story." See also Hermeneutics
5. Canonicity and breach: The claim that stories are about something unusual happening that "breaches" the canonical (i.e. normal) state.

6. Referentiality: The principle that a story in some way references reality, although not in a direct way; narrative truth can offer verisimilitude but not verifiability.
7. Genericness: The flip side to particularity, this is the characteristic of narrative whereby the story can be classified as a genre.
8. Normativeness: The observation that narrative in some way supposes a claim about how one ought to act. This follows from canonicity and breach.
9. Context sensitivity and negotiability: Related to hermeneutic composability, this is the characteristic whereby narrative requires a negotiated role between author or text and reader, including the assigning of a context to the narrative, and ideas like suspension of disbelief.
10. Narrative accrual: Finally, the idea that stories are cumulative, that is, that new stories follow from older ones.

Bruner observes that these ten characteristics at once describe narrative and the reality constructed and posited by narrative, which in turn teaches us about the nature of reality as constructed by the human mind via narrative.

Man: A Course of Study

Man: A Course of Study (usually known by the acronym MACOS or MACOS) was an American humanities teaching program based upon Bruner's theories, particularly his concept of the "spiral curriculum". Popular in America and Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, the course was much criticized in the United States because of its emphasis upon questioning aspects of life, including belief and morality.

Red spade experiment

A classic psychological experiment performed by Bruner and Leo Postman showed slower reaction times and less accurate answers when a deck of playing cards reversed the color of the suit symbol for some cards (e.g. red spades and black hearts).

Quotations

Acts of Meaning (The Jerusalem-Harvard Lectures, 1990)

It was, we thought, an all-out effort to establish meaning as the central concept of psychology - not stimuli and responses, not overtly observable behavior, not biological drives and their transformation, but meaning. It was not a revolution against behaviorism with the aim of transforming behaviorism into a better way of pursuing psychology by adding a little mentalism to it. Edward Tolman had done that, to little avail. It was an altogether more profound revolution than that. Its aim was to discover and to describe formally the meanings that human beings created out of their encounters with the world, and then to propose hypotheses about what meaning-making processes were implicated. It focused on the symbolic activities that human beings employed in constructing and making sense not only of the world, but of themselves. (p. 2)

Very early on, emphasis began shifting from 'meaning' to 'information', from the construction of meaning to the processing of information. These are profoundly different matters. The key factor in the shift was the introduction of computation as the ruling metaphor and of computability as a necessary criterion of a good theoretical model. Information is indifferent with respect to meaning... (p. 4)

Given pre-established meaning categories well-formed enough within a domain to provide a basis for an operating code, a properly programmed computer could perform prodigies of information processing with a minimum set of operations, and that is technological heaven. Very soon, computing became the model of the mind, and in place of the concept of meaning there emerged the concept of computability. Cognitive processes were

equated with the programs that could be run on a computational device, and the success of one's efforts to 'understand', say, memory or concept attainment, was one's ability realistically to simulate such human conceptualizing or human memorizing with a computer program. (p. 6)

If the cognitive revolution erupted in 1956, the contextual revolution (at least in psychology) is occurring today. (pp. 105-6)

Jerome Bruner argues that the cognitive revolution, with its current fixation on mind as "information processor," has led psychology away from the deeper objective of understanding mind as a creator of meanings. Only by breaking out of the limitations imposed by a computational model of mind can we grasp the special interaction through which mind both constitutes and is constituted by culture. (Review of Harvard University Press)

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IVAN ILLICH⁵

Born	September 4, 1926, Vienna, Austria
Died	December 2, 2002 (aged 76)
Era	Contemporary philosophy
Region	Western philosophy
School	Anarchism, Catholicism
Main	Philosophy of education,
Interests	Philosophy of technology

Influenced by

Arnold J. Toynbee, Everett Reimer, Jacques Maritain, Leopold Kohr, Jacques Ellul, Hugh of Saint Victor, Emmanuel Levinas

Influenced

Everett Reimer, Andre Gorz, Lee Felsenstein, Wolfgang Sachs, Kevin Carson, Bob Black, John Zerzan

Ivan Illich was an Austrian philosopher, Roman Catholic priest and critic of the institutions of contemporary western culture and their effects on the provenance and practice of education, medicine, work, energy use, and economic development.

Personal life

Illich was born in Vienna to a Croatian father—engineer Ivan Peter Illich and Sephardic Jewish mother—Ellen née Regenstreif-Ortlieb and had Italian, Spanish, French and German as native languages. He later learned Croatian, the language of his grandfathers, then Ancient Greek and Latin, in addition to Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, English, and other languages. Thereafter, he studied histology and crystallography at the University of Florence (Italy) as well as theology and philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University in the Vatican (from 1942 to 1946), and medieval history in Salzburg.

He wrote a dissertation focusing on the historian Arnold J. Toynbee and would return to that subject in his later years. In 1951, he was assigned as an assistant parish priest in New York City. In 1956, at the age of 30, he was appointed as the vice rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico. It was in Puerto Rico that Illich met Everett Reimer and the two began to analyze their own functions as "educational" leaders. In 1959, he traveled throughout South America on foot and by bus.

In 1961, Illich founded the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC, or Intercultural Documentation Centre) at Cuernavaca in Mexico, ostensibly a research centre offering language courses to missionaries from North America and volunteers of the Alliance for Progress program initiated by John F. Kennedy. His real intent was to document the participation of the Vatican in the "modern development" of the so-called Third World. Illich looked askance at the liberal pity or conservative imperiousness that motivated the rising tide of global industrial development. He viewed such emissaries as a form of industrial hegemony and, as such, an act of "war on subsistence." He sought to teach missionaries dispatched by the Church not to impose their own cultural values and to identify themselves instead as guests of the host country [citation needed]

After ten years, critical analysis from the CIDOC of the institutional actions by the Church brought the organization into conflict with the Vatican. Illich was called to Rome for questioning, due in part to a report from the CIA. 131 In 1976, Illich, apparently concerned by the influx of formal academics and the potential side effects of its own "institutionalization," shut the centre down with consent from the other members of the CIDOC. Several of the members subsequently continued language schools in Cuernavaca, of which some still exist. Illich himself resigned from the active priesthood in the late 1960s (having attained the rank of monsignor), but continued to identify as a priest and occasionally performed private masses.

⁵ *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

In the 1970s, Illich was popular among leftist intellectuals in France, his thesis having been discussed in particular by Andre Gorz. However, his influence declined after the 1981 election of Francois Mitterrand as he was considered too pessimistic at a time when the French Left took control of the government.

In the 1980s and beyond, Illich traveled extensively, mainly splitting his time between the United States, Mexico, and Germany. He held an appointment as a Visiting Professor of Philosophy, Science, Technology and Society at Penn State. He also taught at the University of Bremen. [51]

During his later years, he suffered from a cancerous growth on his face that, in accordance with his critique of professionalized medicine, was treated with traditional methods. He regularly smoked opium to deal with the pain caused by this tumour. At an early stage, he consulted a doctor about having the tumor removed, but was told that there was too great a chance of losing his ability to speak, and so he lived with the tumor as best he could. He called it "my mortality. [Citation needed]

Deschooling Society

The book that brought Ivan Illich to public attention was *Deschooling Society* (1971), a critical discourse on education as practised in "modern" economies. Full of detail on contemporary programs and concerns, the book remains as radical today. Giving examples of the ineffectual nature of institutionalized education, Illich posited self-directed education, supported by intentional social relations, in fluid informal arrangements:

Universal education through schooling is not feasible. It would be no more feasible if it were attempted by means of alternative institutions built on the style of present schools. Neither new attitudes of teachers toward their pupils nor the proliferation of educational hardware or software (in classroom or bedroom), nor filially the attempt to expand the pedagogue's responsibility until it engulfs his pupils' lifetimes will deliver universal education. The current search for new educational funnels must be reversed into the search for their institutional inverse: educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring. We hope to contribute concepts needed by those who conduct such counterfoil research on education--and also to those who seek alternatives to other established service industries. —Ivan Illich, [7]

The last sentence makes clear what the title suggests—that the institutionalization of education tends towards the institutionalization of society and that ideas for de-institutionalizing education may be a starting point for a de-institutionalized society.

The book is more than a critique - it contains suggestions for a reinvention of learning throughout society and lifetime. Particularly striking is his call (in 1971) for the use of advanced technology to support "**learning webs**."

The operation of a peer-matching network would be simple. The user would identify himself by name and address and describe the activity for which he sought a peer. A computer would send him back the names and addresses of all those who had inserted the same description. It is amazing that such a simple utility has never been used on a broad scale for publicly valued activity. —Ivan Illich

Tools for Conviviality

Tools for Conviviality (1973) was published only two years after *Deschooling Society*. In this new work Illich generalized the themes that he had previously applied to the field of education: the institutionalization of specialized knowledge, the dominant role of technocratic elites in industrial society, and the need to develop new instruments for the reconquest of practical knowledge by the average citizen. Illich proposed that we should "invert the present deep structure of tools" in order to "give people tools that guarantee their right to work with independent efficiency."

Tools for Conviviality attracted worldwide attention. A resume of it was published by French social philosopher Andre Gorz in *Les Temps Modernes*, under the title "Freeing the Future." The book's vision of tools that would be developed and maintained by a community of users had a significant influence on the first developers of the personal computer, notably Lee Felsenstein.

Medical Nemesis

In his *Medical Nemesis*, first published in 1975, also known as *Limits to Medicine*, Illich subjected contemporary Western medicine to detailed attack. He argued that the medicalization in recent decades of so many of life's vicissitudes—birth and death, for example—frequently caused more harm than good and rendered many people in effect lifelong patients. He marshalled a body of statistics to show what he considered the shocking extent of post-operative side-effects and drug-induced illness in advanced industrial society. He was the first to introduce to a wider public the notion of iatrogenic disease. Others have since voiced similar views, but none so trenchantly, perhaps, as Illich.

Concepts

Counter productivity

The main notion of Ivan Illich is the concept of counterproductivity: when institutions of modern industrial impede their purported aims. For example, Ivan Illich calculated that, in America in the 1970s, if you add the time spent to work to earn the money to buy a car, the time spent in the car (including traffic jam), the time spent in the health care industry because of a car crash, the time spent in the oil industry to fuel cars ...etc., and you divide the number of kilometres travelled per year by that, you obtain the following calculation: 10000 km per year per person divided by 1600 hours per year per American equals 6 km per hour. So the real speed of a car would be about 3.7 miles per hour.

Radical monopoly

He invented the concept of radical monopoly: when a technical medium is or appears to be more effective, it creates a monopoly which denies access to other media. The mandatory consumption of a medium which uses a lot of energy (for example motorised transportation) narrows the fruition of use value (innate transit ability).

By "radical monopoly" I mean the dominance of one type of product rather than the dominance of one brand. I speak about radical monopoly when one industrial production process exercises an exclusive control over the satisfaction of a pressing need, and excludes nonindustrial activities from competition.

Conviviality

Illich worked to open new possibilities. He argued that we need convivial tools as opposed to machines. Tools accept more than one utilisation, sometime even distant from its original means, so a tool accepts expression from its user. On the contrary, with a machine, humans become servants, their role consisting only of running the machine in a unique purpose.

See also

Credentialism
Critical pedagogy
Critique of technology
Development criticism
Ecopedagogy
Holistic education

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External links

Thinking after Illich
Collection of Illich Resources, including MP3s
Ivan Illich Archives
Full text of Tools for Conviviality
Illich's writing on the web at The Preservation Institute
Text of To Hell with Good Intentions - Cuernavaca, Mexico, on April 20, 1968
Ivan Illich with Jerry Brown, KPFA - March 22, 1996
An extensive set of Illich's writings and recordings
Article in The encyclopaedia of informal education
American Educational Research Association Ivan Illich Special Interest Group website
The International Journal of Illich Studies

Ivan Illich⁶

Theologian, educator, and social critic Ivan Illich (born 1926) sought bridges between cultures and explored the bases of people's views of history and reality.

His childhood was spent growing up in the homes of grandparents and wherever his parents might be at the time. His father's career as a diplomat politically protected the Jewish members of his family during the 1930s; yet Ivan was classified as "half-Jew" in 1941 and his family secretly fled from a Hitler-controlled Austria to Italy. In Florence at the age of 15, his father and grandfather having died earlier from natural causes, Ivan began taking care of his mother and younger twin brothers.

He entered the University of Florence where he majored in chemistry. At the age of 24 he graduated from the University of Salzburg with a Ph.D. in history on the work of the popular historian Arnold Toynbee. He prepared for the priesthood at the Gregorian University in Rome and became ordained in 1951. It was here that he met Jacques Maritain, the Catholic philosopher, who was to become his mentor and lifelong friend. Through him, Illich discovered the ideas of Thomas Aquinas and built a Thomistic philosophical foundation for understanding the world.

Stretching the Limits of the Priesthood

In 1951 Illich came to America hoping to study at Princeton University, but his interest quickly changed. On his first day in New York he heard through casual conversations about large numbers of Puerto Ricans migrating into other ethnic neighborhoods. After spending a couple days observing and visiting with them he asked to be assigned to a Puerto Rican parish. In his ministry he sought to make them feel at home in their new country by reinstituting their cultural and religious traditions. He sought to have Spanish materials made available to the children. His popularity among the Puerto Rican community grew and after just five years, in 1956, at age 30 he was made a monsignor and accepted the position of vice-rector of the Catholic University at Ponce in Puerto Rico.

During the decades of the 1950s and 1960s Illich continued his work within the church, yet his commitment often brought him into conflict with those in and outside the church who had different agendas. While in Puerto Rico, and later in Mexico, he threw himself into the study of education and was outspoken in his criticisms of formal schooling. He ridiculed the notion of development in U.S. programs such as the Peace Corps, believing that such volunteer programs damaged not only the people in Latin America but the volunteers themselves. He claimed that the Alliance for Progress was an alliance for the middle classes, and he questioned the motives of missionaries who came to him for further study. He refused to withdraw support from a politician who advocated birth control. He withdrew from his role at the Vatican Council in protest over its political timidity. In essence, he sought de-institutionalization of the church. In 1967 he was summoned to

⁶ *Gale Encyclopedia of Biography Ivan Illich*, www.answers.com (downloaded January 2011).

Rome before the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He refused to answer their questions. Six months later Rome moved against him with documents he claimed were cribbed from U.S. Central Intelligence Agency reports leaked to the Holy See. At that point Illich voluntarily suspended himself from the priesthood, although he never resigned nor was he removed from the priesthood. He insisted that neither his faith, morals, nor theological views were at variance with the gospel and that they were orthodox, even conservative.

Awakening People to New Possibilities

Recognizing that Puerto Rico was perceived largely as a U.S. puppet, Illich moved to Cuernavaca, Mexico, in 1961 and established there the Centre for Intercultural Documentation. The focus of his work remained unchanged as he sought to establish a bridge linking the two Americas and to train individuals for religious work in Latin America. By the mid-1960s the institute through its research seminars was attracting worldwide individuals concerned with social and economic issues. Illich viewed the centre as a place for free, committed, and disciplined intellectual inquiry, yet many participants viewed it as an unstructured forum for political expression. Although still attracting students and economically sound, the centre was not accomplishing its original purpose. Therefore, in 1976 it was closed.

The next several years Illich travelled and studied oriental languages and culture with the dream of writing the history of Western ideas in an oriental language. Subsequently, believing the task to be too great, he returned to an old intellectual home, to the study of 12th-century philosophy. Here, while teaching at the University of Marburg in Germany, he sought to find a fulcrum for lifting contemporary people out of their socially-constructed, conventional perspectives and out of a worsening world situation. He sought to enable them to understand how their commonly viewed reality (what is taken for granted or as certain) was historically constructed and can be changed. In the early 1990s Illich taught part of the year at Pennsylvania State University and continued to reside in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Illich became known as a brilliant satirist and critic of contemporary institutions. In the early 1970s he called for a reexamination of existing social institutions. For example, he argued that schools are a lottery in which everyone invests but few win. As a result of perceived failure, those students who don't succeed in schools are stigmatized and suffer discrimination. In contrast, he proposed to correct this unjust situation by de-schooling society and thereby making it impossible to discriminate on that basis. Later, his thought penetrated to new depths when examining the professions, particularly the medical profession and how it leads individuals to become dependent and to assume less responsibility for their own lives.

In the 1980s Illich's thought shifted and again reached new levels of analysis. He stated that changes in our current situation can be attained if individuals "awaken" to the fact that each person's understanding or perspective of his or her world, a world that each of us takes for granted and as certain, is seen as being formulated and handed down over the centuries. Such conventional perspectives lock individuals into certain solutions and prevent recognition of new ways of living in the world. For example, in his work *ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind* he shows how our way of thinking has made three shifts throughout time. The first shift that changed our ways of seeing resulted from the introduction of the alphabet. A second shift in our thinking came in the 12th century with the development of the written page as we moved from an oral public and a spoken reality to a written reality and a literacy paradigm. And finally, the computer and word processing have created a new watershed of change in which our thoughts were increasingly arranged more by the logic and efficiency of a technical tool than by the natural meanings embodied in a live discourse and spoken tradition.

Further Reading

An extensive six hour interview titled *Part Moon, Part Travelling Salesman: Conversations with Ivan Illich* was broadcasted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1989. Transcripts and this highly informative dialogue can be ordered from Ideas, P.O. Box 6440, Station "A", Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3L4.

A major political article by Francis Duplex is Gray, including biographical information, "Profiles," appeared in the New Yorker (1969). A discussion of Illich's writings was in Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, Volume 10. Articles critical of his view included "The 'Deschooling' Controversy Revisited: A Defense of Illich's 'Participatory Socialism,'" by Carl G. Hedman in Educational Theory (1979); "Towards a Political Economy of Education: A Radical Critique of Ivan Illich's Deschooling Society" by Herbert Gintis in Harvard Educational Review (1972); and "Illich, Kozol, and Rousseau on Public Education," by Jonathan Kozol in Social Theory and Practice (1980). A selected list of major works by Illich which trace the development of his thought included: *Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution*, introduction by Erich Fromm (1970); *De-Schooling Society* (1971); *Tools for Conviviality* (1973); *Medical Nemesis, the Expropriation of Health* (1975); and *ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind*, with Barry Sanders (1988).

Illich was one of a number of critical thinkers who, in the 1970s, questioned the ways in which society was organized. Like Ernst Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful: a Study of Economics as if People Mattered* (1973), designer, architect, engineer, and thinker Richard Buckminster Fuller, author of *Utopia or Oblivion* (1970), and others whose voices were heard in the debates about post-industrialization, Ivan Illich wrote a number of texts that embraced parallel concerns. Most significant among these were *De-Schooling Society* (1971) and *Tools for Conviviality* (1973), in which he argued that Fordist technologies turned people into the adjuncts of bureaucracies and machines. Illich was born in Vienna and later studied theology in Rome and history at the University of Salzburg in the 1940s, writing a doctoral thesis on the historian Aired Toynbee. After being ordained as a priest in Rome in 1951 he moved to Manhattan, where he worked for the Puerto Rican community. After periods in Puerto Rico he moved to New Mexico, where he established the controversial Centre for Intercultural Documentation and, from 1964, organized seminars on 'Institution Alternatives in a Technological Society'. A fiercely critical voice in the Roman Catholic Church he applied his antipathy to bureaucracy in education and other institutions in his search for alternatives to industrial monopolies in a post-industrial age. Although he continued to write prolifically, his influence was at its height in the 1970s.

Quotes by Ivan Illich

The public school has become the established church of secular society.

The compulsion to do good is an innate American trait. Only North Americans seem to believe that they always should, may, and actually can choose somebody with whom to share their blessings. Ultimately this attitude leads to bombing people into the acceptance of gifts.

Modern medicine is a negation of health. It isn't organized to serve human health, but only itself, as an institution. It makes more people sick than it heals.

Exporting Church employees to Latin America masks a universal and unconscious fear of a new Church. North and South American authorities, differently motivated but equally fearful, become accomplices in maintaining a clerical and irrelevant Church. Sacralizing employees and property, this Church becomes progressively more blind to the possibilities of Sacralizing person and community.

There is no greater distance than that between a man in prayer and God.

School divides life into two segments, which are increasingly of comparable length. As much as anything else, schooling implies custodial care for persons who are declared undesirable elsewhere by the simple fact that a school has been built to serve them.

PAULO FREIRE⁷

Born	September 19, 1921, Recife, Brazil
Died	May 2, 1997 (aged 75)
Occupation	Educator, author
School	Anarchism, Catholicism
Main	Theories of education

Influenced by

John –Paul Sartre, Erich Fromm, Louis Althusser, Herbert Marcuse, Karl Marx, Ivan Illich

Influenced

Peter McLaren, Henry Giroux, Joe L Kincheloe, Shiarley R Steinberg

Paulo Freire was born September 19, 1921 to a middle class family in Recife. Freire became familiar with poverty and hunger during the 1929 Great Depression. In 1931 the family moved to the less expensive city of Jaboatão dos Guararapes, and in 1933 his father died. In school he ended up four grades behind, and his social life revolved around playing pick up football with poorer kids, from whom he learned a great deal. These experiences would shape his concerns for the poor and would help to construct his particular educational viewpoint. Freire stated that poverty and hunger severely affected his ability to learn. This influenced his decision to dedicate his life to improving the lives of the poor: "I didn't understand anything because of my hunger. I wasn't dumb. It wasn't lack of interest. My social condition didn't allow me to have an education. Experience showed me once again the relationship between social class and knowledge" (Freire as quoted in Stevens, 2002). [1] Eventually his family's misfortunes turned around and their prospects improved.

Freire enrolled at Law School at the University of Recife in 1943. He also studied philosophy, more specifically phenomenology, and the psychology of language. Although admitted to the legal bar, he never actually practiced law but instead worked as a teacher in secondary schools teaching Portuguese. In 1944, he married Elza Maia Costa de Oliveira, a fellow teacher. The two worked together for the rest of their lives and had five children.

In 1946, Freire was appointed Director of the Department of Education and Culture of the Social Service in the State of Pernambuco. Working primarily among the illiterate poor, Freire began to embrace a non-orthodox form of what could be considered [2] liberation theology. In Brazil at that time, literacy was a requirement for voting in presidential elections.

In 1961, he was appointed director of the Department of Cultural Extension of Recife University, and in 1962 he had the first opportunity for significant application of his theories, when 300 sugarcane workers were taught to read and write in just 45 days. In response to this experiment, the Brazilian government approved the creation of thousands of cultural circles across the country.

In 1964, a military coup put an end to that effort. Freire was imprisoned as a traitor for 70 days. After a brief exile in Bolivia, Freire worked in Chile for five years for the Christian Democratic Agrarian Reform Movement and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In 1967, Freire published his first book, *Education as the Practice of Freedom*. He followed this with his most famous book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in Portuguese in 1968.

On the strength of reception of his work, Freire was offered a visiting professorship at Harvard University in 1969. The next year, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was published in both Spanish and English, vastly expanding its reach. Because of the political feud between Freire, a Christian socialist, and the successive authoritarian military dictatorships, it wasn't published in his own country of Brazil until 1974, when General Ernesto Geisel became the then dictator president beginning the process of a slow and controlled political liberalisation.

⁷ *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (downloaded January 2011)*

After a year in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, Freire moved to Geneva, Switzerland to work as a special education advisor to the World Council of Churches. During this time Freire acted as an advisor on education reform in former Portuguese colonies in Africa, particularly Guinea Bissau and Mozambique.

In 1979, he was able to return to Brazil, and moved back in 1980. Freire joined the Workers' Party (PT) in the city of Sao Paulo, and acted as a supervisor for its adult literacy project from 1980 to 1986. When the PT prevailed in the municipal elections in 1988, Freire was appointed Secretary of Education for Sao Paulo.

In 1986, his wife Elza died. Freire married Maria Araujo Freire, who continues with her own educational work. Freire died of heart failure on May 2, 1997 in Sao Paulo.

Theoretical contributions

There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of generations into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. —Jane L. Thompson, drawing on Paulo Freire [3]

Paulo Freire contributed a philosophy of education that came not only from the more classical approaches stemming from Plato, but also from modern Marxist and anti-colonialist thinkers. In fact, in many ways his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) may be best read as an extension of, or reply to, Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), which emphasized the need to provide native populations with an education which was simultaneously new and modern (rather than traditional) and anti-colonial (not simply an extension of the culture of the colonizer).

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Freire differentiates between the two positions in an unjust society, the oppressor and the oppressed. Although there is no direct reference in his published work, the theory of oppressor and oppressed nations stems back to Lenin's thought on imperialism, self-determination and criticisms of Social Democrats. [4]

That is why the focal point in the Social-Democratic programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the essence of imperialism, and is deceitfully evaded by the social-chauvinists and Kautsky. This division is not significant from the angle of bourgeois pacifism or the philistine Utopia of peaceful competition among independent nations under capitalism, but it is most significant from the angle of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. —Lenin, V.I, The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination [5]

Freire advocates that education allows the oppressed to regain their humanity and overcome their condition; however, he acknowledges that in order for this to take effect, the oppressed have to play a role in their own liberation. As he states:

No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption (Freire, 1970, p. 54). [6]

Likewise, the oppressors must also be willing to rethink their way of life and to examine their own role in the oppression if true liberation is to occur; "those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly (Freire, 1970, p. 60).

Freire believed education to be a political act that could not be divorced from pedagogy. Freire defined this as a main tenet of critical pedagogy. Teachers and students must be made aware of the "politics" that surround education. The way students are taught and what they are taught serves a political agenda. Teachers, themselves, have political notions, they bring into the classroom (Kincheloe, 2008). 11 Freire believed that "education makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves, because women and men are able to take responsibility for themselves as beings capable of knowing — of knowing that they know and knowing that they don't" (Freire, 2004, p. 15) [8]

In terms of actual pedagogy, Freire is best-known for his attack on what he called the "**banking**" concept of education, in which the student was viewed as an empty account to be filled by the teacher. He notes that "it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men and women to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power" (Freire, 1970, p. 77). The basic critique was not new — Rousseau's conception of the child as an active learner was already a step away from tabula rasa (which is basically the same as the "banking concept"). In addition, thinkers like John Dewey were strongly critical of the transmission of mere facts as the goal of education. Dewey often described education as a mechanism for social change, explaining that "education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of [9] social reconstruction" (1897, p. 16). Freire's work, however, updated the concept and placed it in context with current theories and practices of education, laying the foundation for what is now called **critical pedagogy**.

More challenging is Freire's strong aversion to the teacher-student dichotomy. This dichotomy is admitted in Rousseau and constrained in Dewey, but Freire comes close to insisting that it be completely abolished. This is hard to imagine in absolute terms, since there must be some enactment of the teacher-student relationship in the parent-child relationship, but what Freire suggests is that a deep reciprocity be inserted into our notions of teacher and student. He goes so far as to say that "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously students and teachers" (Freire, 1970, p. 72). Freire wants us to think in terms of teacher-student and student-teacher — that is, a teacher who learns and a learner who teaches — as the basic roles of classroom participation. Freire however insists that educator and student, though sharing democratic social relations of education, are not on an equal footing, but the educator must be humble enough to be disposed to relearn that which he/she already thinks she knows, through interaction with the learner. The authority which the educator enjoys must not be allowed to degenerate into authoritarianism: teachers must recognize that "their fundamental objective is to fight alongside the people for the recovery of the people's stolen humanity", not to "win the people over" to their side (Freire, 1970, p. 95).

Global impact

Freire's major exponents in North America are Peter McLaren, Donaldo Macedo, Joe L. Kincheloe, Ira Shor, and Henry Giroux. One of McLaren's edited texts, *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*, expounds upon Freire's impact in the field of critical education. McLaren has also provided a comparative study concerning Paulo Freire and the Argentinian revolutionary icon Che Guevara.

In 1991, the Paulo Freire Institute was established in Sao Paulo to extend and elaborate upon his theories of popular education. The Institute now has projects in many countries and is currently headquartered at UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies where it actively maintains the Freire archives. The director is Dr. Carlos Torres, a UCLA professor and author of Freirean books including *La praxis educativa de Paulo Freire* (1978).

Since the publication of the English edition in 1970, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has achieved near-iconic status in America's teacher-training programs, according to Sol Stern, a social commentator critical of the entry of Freire's Marxist-inspired teachings into the mainstream curriculum.

The Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference is held each spring and is guided by the theory and practice of these two liberatory practitioners. The Conference networks a wide variety of people with interests in Freire and Augusto Boal—liberatory education and theatre, community organizing, community-based analysis, TIE, race/gender/class/sexual orientation/geography analysis, performance/performance art, comparative education models, etc.

The Paulo and Nita Freire Project for International Critical Pedagogy has been founded at McGill University. Here Joe L. Kincheloe and Shirley R. Steinberg have worked to create a dialogical forum for critical scholars around the world to promote research and re-create a Freirean pedagogy in a multinational domain.

Paulo Freire's work also had a profound impact on Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa.

At his death, Freire was working on a book of Ecopedagogy, a platform of work carried on by many of the Freire Institutes and Freirean Associations around the world today. It has been influential in helping to develop planetary education projects such as the Earth Charter as well as countless international grassroots campaigns per the spirit of Freirean popular education generally.

Notes

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3. A Gramsci, Freire, and Adult Education: Possibilities for Transformative Action, by Peter Mayo, Macmillan, 1999, ISBN 1856496147, pg 5
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External links

Digital Library Paulo Freire (Pt-Br)
Pedagogy of the Oppressor, City Journal, Spring 2009
Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire
PopEd Toolkit - Exercises/Links Inspired by Freire's Work
Interview with Maria Araujo Freire on her marriage to Paulo Freire
Interview excerpt with Paulo Freire on liberation theology and Marx
Dialogue with Paulo Freire and Ira Shor (1988)

Paulo Freire⁸

The Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire (1921-1997) developed theories that have been used, principally in Third World countries, to bring literacy to the poor and to transform the field of education.

Paulo Freire was born on the northeastern coast of Brazil in the city of Recife in 1921. Raised by his mother who was a devout Catholic and his father who was a middle-class businessman, Freire's early years paralleled those of the Great Depression. Outward symbols, such as his father always wearing a tie and having a German-made piano in their home, pointed to the family's middle-class heritage but stood in contrast to their actual conditions of poverty. Reflecting on their situation, Freire noted, "We shared the hunger, but not the class." After completing secondary school and with gradual improvement in his family's financial situation, he was able to enter Recife University, preparing to become a teacher of Portuguese.

The Direction for his Later Life

The 15 years following World War II proved to be instrumental in giving direction to his later life. He had previously married a fellow teacher, Elza, in 1944. In addition to their shared careers in teaching, they worked together with middle-class friends in the Catholic Action Movement. This work became unsettling as they struggled with the contradictions between the Christian faith and their friends' lifestyles. In particular they faced strong resistance when suggesting that servants should be dealt with as human beings. Later they decided to work solely with "the people," the large population of the poor in Brazil.

A second experience that gave focus to Freire's later life came when he worked as a labor lawyer for the poor and involved a discussion with workers about the theories of Jean Piaget, a prominent psychologist. Evidently Freire's comments were not comprehended by one of the workers, who noted, "You talk from a background of food, comfort, and rest. The reality is that we have one room, no food, and have to make love in front of the children." Through such experiences and further study, Freire began to realize that the poor had a different sense of reality and that to communicate with them he had to use their syntax of meanings. This recognition served as a basis for his doctoral dissertation in 1959 at Recife University, where he was to soon become professor of history and philosophy of education.

Leading the National Literacy Program

In 1962 the mayor of Recife appointed Freire as head of an adult literacy program for the city. In his first experiment, Freire taught 300 adults to read and write in 45 days. This program was so successful that during the following year the President of Brazil appointed him to lead the National Literacy Program. This program was on its way to becoming similarly

⁸ *Gale encyclopaedia of Biography: Paul Freire in www.answers.com (downloaded January 2011)*

successful, with expected enrolments to exceed two million students in 1964. Under Brazil's constitution, however, illiterates were not allowed to vote. The *O Globo*, an influential conservative newspaper, claimed that Freire's method for developing literacy was stirring up the people, causing them to want to change society, and fomenting subversion. As a consequence of a military overthrow of the government in 1964, Freire was jailed for 70 days, then exiled briefly to Bolivia and then to Chile for five years.

Providing Literacy in Exile

Freire met with opposition from some Chilean citizens who viewed him as a threat to their society. However, the director of a nationwide program for reducing illiteracy employed him to work in the Chilean Agrarian Reform Corporation. This provided him the opportunity over the next few years to become more involved in research and to write three books, the most noted of which is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). In 1969 he accepted an invitation to be a visiting professor at Harvard. He quickly found a large audience of growing support in America primarily through the appearance in English of his publications. He left Harvard in 1970 to join the Office of Education at the World Council of Churches in Geneva. In this office his work over the next decade was marked by efforts to increase literacy and liberty in Third World countries through educational programs. Of particular note were his efforts to rethink and apply his theories in the West African country of Guinea-Bissau.

End of Exile

In 1979 Freire's exile status was lifted, allowing him to return home to Brazil where he became secretary of education in Sao Paulo. During the decade of the 1980s he published widely in the areas of education, politics, and literacy. In these writings he developed themes discussed previously and he continued to rethink their practical application to new situations.

Freire believed that poor peoples of the world are dominated and victims of those who possess political power. What the poor need is liberation, an education giving them a critical consciousness, investing them with an agency for changing, and throwing off the oppressive structures of their society? Such an education would not conform and mould people to fit into the roles expected by society, but it would prepare them to realize their own values and reality, reflect and study critically their world, and move into action to transform it. When working with illiterate adults, Freire proposed the selection of words used by the poor in their everyday lives expressing their longings, frustrations, and hopes. From this list of words a shorter list is developed of possibly 16-17 words that contain the basic sounds and syllables of the language. These words are broken down (decoded) into syllables; afterwards, the learners form new words by making different combinations of syllables. In relatively a short period of time (a few days) they are usually writing simple letters to each other. During their studies a second and deeper level of analysis is occurring simultaneously. That is, the teacher using the very same words helps the students also to decode their cultural and social world. This deeper level of activity leads learners to greater awareness of the oppressive forces in their lives and to the realization of their power to transform them.

Freire wrote 25 books which were translated into 35 languages and was an honorary professor of 28 universities around the world. He maintained that he never would have been arrested or criticized had he stuck to teaching ABCs. He fell into disfavor, he said, because of his theory that illiteracy, not any religious reason, made people poor. He said, "Education is freedom." After his death in 1997, there was a three-day mourning in the state of Pernambuco.

Further Reading

Biography written by Denis Collins, *Paulo Freire: His Life and Thought* (1977). An earlier quotational bibliography compiled by Anne Hartung and John Ohliger is in Stanley M. Grabowshi's edited work, *Paulo Freire: A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator* (1972). One of Freire's co-authors, Donaldo Macedo of Boston University, is writing an authorized biography.

The reader will find Freire's books *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea-Bissau* (1978) excellent introductions to his thought. *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1974) contains concrete and practical examples of his teaching methods. The evolution of his thought and its application to world situation in the last two decades of the 20th century can be found in *The Politics of Education: Cultural Power and Liberation* (1985) and in *Literacy* (1987), written jointly with Donaldo Macedo.

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Paulo Freire⁹

Paulo Regius Neves Freire was a Brazilian educator whose revolutionary pedagogical theory influenced educational and social movements throughout the world and whose philosophical writings influenced academic disciplines that include theology, sociology, anthropology, applied linguistics, pedagogy, and cultural studies. He was born to a middle-class family in Recife, in the state of Pernambuco in the northeast of Brazil. His early work in adult literacy - the most famous being his literacy experiments in the town of Angicos in Rio Grande do Norte - was terminated after the military coup in 1964. That year he went into exile, during which time he lived in Bolivia; then Chile where he worked for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Chilean Institute for Agrarian Reform, and where he wrote his most important work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970); Mexico; the United States where he held a brief appointment at Harvard University's Center for Studies in Development and Social Change; and Switzerland where he worked for the World Council of Churches as the director of their education program. He also served as an adviser for various governments, most notably the government of Guinea-Bissau. In 1980 he returned to Brazil to teach and later to serve as secretary of education for Sao Paulo. He worked as a consultant for revolutionary governments such as the New Jewel Movement in Grenada, the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, and the government of Julius K. Nyerere in Tanzania. From 1985 until his death in 1997, Freire served as the honorary president of the International Council for Adult Education. Freire's conception of education as a deeply political project oriented toward the transformation of society has been crucial to the education of revolutionary societies and societies undergoing civil war, as well as established Western democracies. Freire's work has exercised considerable influence among progressive educators in the West, especially in the context of emerging traditions of critical pedagogy, bilingual education, and multicultural education.

Freire's revolutionary pedagogy starts from a deep love for, and humility before, poor and oppressed people and a respect for their "common sense," which constitutes knowledge no less important than the scientific knowledge of the professional. This humility makes possible a condition of reciprocal trust and communication between the educator, who also learns, and the student, who also teaches. Thus, education becomes a "communion" between participants in a dialogue characterized by a reflexive, reciprocal, and socially relevant exchange, rather than the unilateral action of one individual agent for the benefit of the other. Nevertheless, this does not amount to a celebration of the untrammelled core of consciousness of the oppressed, in which the educator recedes into the background as a mere facilitator. Freire conceived of authentic teaching as enacting a clear authority, rather than being authoritarian. The teacher, in his conception, is not neutral, but intervenes in the educational situation in order to help the student to overcome those aspects of his or her social constructs that are paralyzing, and to learn to think critically. In a similar fashion, Freire validated and affirmed the experiences of the oppressed without automatically legitimizing or validating their content. All experiences - including those of the teacher - had to be interrogated in order to lay bare their ideological assumptions and presuppositions. The benchmark that Freire used for evaluating experiences grew out of a Christianized Marxist humanism. From this position, Freire urged both students and teachers to unlearn their race, class, and gender privileges and to engage in a dialogue with those whose experiences are very different from their own. Thus, he did not uncritically affirm student or teacher experiences but provided the conceptual tools with which to critically interrogate them so as to minimize their politically domesticating influences.

⁹ Gale Encyclopedia of Education P Paulo Freire in www.answers.com (downloaded January 2011)

Conceptual Tools

Banking education. Freire criticized prevailing forms of education as reducing students to the status of passive objects to be acted upon by the teacher. In this traditional form of education it is the job of the teacher to deposit in the minds of the students, considered to be empty in an absolute ignorance, the bits of information that constitute knowledge. Freire called this banking education. The goal of banking education is to immobilize the people within existing frameworks of power by conditioning them to accept that meaning and historical agency are the sole property of the oppressor. Educators within the dominant culture and class fractions often characterize the oppressed as marginal, pathological, and helpless. In the banking model, knowledge is taken to be a gift that is bestowed upon the student by the teacher. Freire viewed this false generosity on the part of the oppressor - which ostensibly aims to incorporate and improve the oppressed - as a crucial means of domination by the capitalist class. The indispensable soil of good teaching consists of creating the pedagogical conditions for genuine dialogue, which maintains that teachers should not impose their views on students, but neither should they camouflage them nor drain them of political and ethical import.

Problem-posing method. Against the banking model, Freire proposed a dialogical problem-posing method of education. In this model, the teacher and student become co-investigators of knowledge and of the world. Instead of suggesting to students that their situation in society has been transcendently fixed by nature or reason, as the banking model does, Freire's problem-posing education invites the oppressed to explore their reality as a "problem" to be transformed. The content of this education cannot be determined necessarily in advance, through the expertise of the educator, but must instead arise from the lived experiences or reality of the students. It is not the task of the educator to provide the answer to the problems that these situations present, but to help students to achieve a form of critical thinking (or conscientization) that will make possible an awareness of society as mutable and potentially open to transformation. Once they are able to see the world as a transformable situation, rather than an unthinkable and inescapable stasis, it becomes possible for students to imagine a new and different reality.

In order, however, to undertake this process, the oppressed must challenge their own internalization of the oppressor. The oppressed are accustomed to thinking of themselves as "less than." They have been conditioned to view as complete and human only the dominating practices of the oppressor, so that to fully become human means to simulate these practices. Against a "fear of freedom" that protects them from a cataclysmic reorganization of their being, the oppressed in dialogue engage in an existential process of dis-identifying with "the oppressor housed within." This dis-identification allows them to begin the process of imagining a new being and a new life as subjects of their own history.

Culture circle. The concrete basis for Freire's dialogical system of education is the culture circle, in which students and coordinator together discuss generative themes that have significance within the context of students' lives. These themes, which are related to nature, culture, work, and relationships, are discovered through the co-operative research of educators and students. They express, in an open rather than propagandistic fashion, the principle contradictions that confront the students in their world. These themes are then represented in the form of codifications (usually visual representations) that are taken as the basis for dialogue within the circle. As students decode these representations, they recognize them as situations in which they themselves are involved as subjects. The process of critical consciousness formation is initiated when students learn to read the codifications in their situationality, rather than simply experiencing them, and this makes possible the intervention by students in society. As the culture circle comes to recognize the need for print literacy, the visual codifications are accompanied by words to which they correspond. Students learn to read these words in the process of reading the aspects of the world with which they are linked.

Although this system of codifications has been very successful in promoting print literacy among adult students, Freire always emphasized that it should not be approached mechanically, but rather as a process of creation and awakening of consciousness. For Freire, it is a mistake to speak of reading as solely the decoding of text. Rather, reading is a process of apprehending power and causal in society and one's location in it. Awareness of the historicity of social life makes it possible for students to imagine its re-creation. Literacy is thus a "self-transformation producing a stance of intervention" (Freire 1988, p. 404). Literacy programs that appropriate parts of Freire's method while ignoring the essential politicization of the process of reading the world as a limit situation to be overcome distort and subvert the process of literacy education. For Freire, authentic education is always a "practice of freedom" rather than an alienating inculcation of skills.

Philosophy of Education

Freire's philosophy of education is not a simple method but rather an organic political consciousness. The domination of some by others must be overcome, in his view, so that the humanization of all can take place. Authoritarian forms of education, in serving to reinforce the oppressors' view of the world, and their material privilege in it, constitute an obstacle to the liberation of human beings. The means of this liberation is a praxis, or process of action and reflection, which simultaneously names reality and acts to change it. Freire criticized views that emphasized either the objective or subjective aspect of social transformation, and insisted that revolutionary change takes place precisely through the consistency of a critical commitment in both word and deed. This dialectical unity is expressed in his formulation, "To speak a true word is to transform the world" (Freire 1996, p. 68).

Freire's educational project was conceived in solidarity with anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movements throughout the world. It calls upon the more privileged educational and revolutionary leaders to commit "class suicide" and to struggle in partnership with the oppressed. Though this appeal is firmly grounded in a Marxist political analysis, which calls for the reconfiguring of systems of production and distribution, Freire rejected elitist and sectarian versions of socialism in favor of a vision of revolution from "below" based on the work of autonomous popular organizations. Not only does Freire's project involve a material reorganization of society, but a cultural reorganization as well. Given the history of European imperialism, an emancipatory education of the oppressed involves a dismantling of colonial structures and ideologies. The literacy projects he undertook in former Portuguese colonies in Africa included an emphasis on the reaffirmation of the people's indigenous cultures against their negation by the legacy of the metropolitan invaders.

Freire's work constitutes a rejection of voluntarism and idealism as well as determinism and objectivism. The originality of Freire's thought consists in his synthesis of a number of philosophical and political traditions and his application of them to the pedagogical encounter. Thus, the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave informs his vision of liberation from authoritarian forms of education; the existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre and Martin Buber makes possible his description of the self-transformation of the oppressed into a space of radical intersubjectivity; the historical materialism of Karl Marx influences his conception of the historicity of social relations; his emphasis on love as a necessary precondition of authentic education has an affinity with radical Christian liberation theology; and the anti-imperialist revolutionism of Ernesto Che Guevara and Frantz Fanon undergird his notion of the "oppressor housed within" as well as his commitment to a praxis of militant anticolonialism.

Freire's pedagogy implies an important emphasis on the imagination, though this is not an aspect that has been emphasized enough in writings about him. The transformation of social conditions involves a rethinking of the world as a particular world, capable of being changed. But the reframing proposed here depends upon the power of the imagination to see outside, beyond, and against what is. More than a cognitive or emotional potential, the human imagination, in Freire's view, is capable of a radical and productive envisioning that exceeds the limits of the given. It is in this capacity that everyone's humanity consists, and for this reason it can never be the gift of the teacher to the student. Rather, educator-student and student-educator work together to mobilize the imagination in the service of creating a vision of a new society. It is here that Freire's notion of education as an ontological vocation for bringing about social justice becomes most clear. For Freire, this vocation is an endless struggle because critical awareness itself can only be a necessary precondition for it. Because liberation as a goal is always underburdened of a necessary assurance that critical awareness will propel the subject into the world of concrete praxis, the critical education must constantly be engaged in attempts to undress social structures and formations of oppression within the social universe of capital without a guarantee that such a struggle will bring about the desired results.

Criticism

Since its first enunciation, Freire's educational theory has been criticized from various quarters. Naturally, conservatives who are opposed to the political horizon of what is essentially a revolutionary project of emancipation have been quick to condemn him as demagogic and utopian. Freire has faced criticism from the left as well. Some Marxists have been suspicious of the Christian influences in his work and have accused him of idealism in his view of popular consciousness.

Freire has also been criticized by feminists and others for failing to take into account the radical differences between forms of oppression, as well as their complex and contradictory instantiation in subjects. It has been pointed out that Freire's writing suffers from sexism in its language and from a patriarchal notion of revolution and subjecthood, as well as a lack of emphasis on domination based on race and ethnicity. Postmodernists have pointed to the contradiction between Freire's sense of the historicity and contingency of social formations versus his vision of liberation as a universal human vocation.

Freire was always responsive to critics, and in his later work undertook a process of self-criticism in regard to his own sexism. He also sought to develop a more nuanced view of oppression and subjectivity as relational and discursively as well as materially embedded. However, Freire was suspicious of postmodernists who felt that the Marxist legacy of class struggle was obsolete and whose antiracist and antisexist efforts at educational reform did little to alleviate - and often worked to exacerbate - existing divisions of labor based on social relations of capitalist exploitation. Freire's insights continue to be of crucial importance. In the very gesture of his turning from the vaults of official knowledge to the open space of humanity, history, and poetry - the potential space of dialogical problem-posing education - Freire points the way for teachers and others who would refuse their determination by the increasingly enveloping inhuman social order. To believe in that space when it is persistently obscured, erased, or repudiated remains the duty of truly progressive educators. Freire's work continues to be indispensable for liberatory education, and his insights remain of value to all who are committed to the struggle against oppression.

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"Poverty is a form of violence" Gandhi

"Tell me I forget, show me I remember, involve me I understand"

Confucius 551-479 B.C.

Lessons to Be Learned From Paulo Freire as Education Is Being Taken Over by the Mega Rich

Tuesday 23 November 2010 by Henry A Giroux, truthout Op-Ed

[This is a much expanded version of "Lessons from Paulo Freire," which appeared in a recent issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education.]

At a time when memory is being erased and the political relevance of education is dismissed in the language of measurement and quantification, it is all the more important to remember the legacy and work of Paulo Freire. Freire is one of the most important educators of the 20th century and is considered one of the most important theorists of "critical pedagogy" - the educational movement guided by both passion and principle to help students develop a consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, empower the imagination, connect knowledge and truth to power and learn to read both the word and the world as part of a broader struggle for agency, justice and democracy. His groundbreaking book, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," has sold more than a million copies and is deservedly being commemorated this year - the 40th anniversary of its appearance in English translation - after having exerted its influence over generations of teachers and intellectuals in the Americas and abroad.

Since the 1980s, there have been too few intellectuals on the North American educational scene who have matched Freire's theoretical rigor, civic courage and sense of moral responsibility. And his example is more important now than ever before: with institutions of public and higher education increasingly under siege by a host of neoliberal and conservative forces, it is imperative for educators to acknowledge Freire's understanding of the empowering and democratic potential of education. Critical pedagogy currently offers the very best, perhaps the only, chance for young people to develop and assert a sense of their rights and responsibilities to participate in governing, and not simply being governed by prevailing ideological and material forces.

When we survey the current state of education in the United States, we see that most universities are now dominated by instrumentalist and conservative ideologies, hooked on methods, slavishly wedded to accountability measures and run by administrators who often lack a broader vision of education as a force for strengthening civic imagination and expanding democratic public life. One consequence is that a concern with excellence has been removed from matters of equity, while higher education - once conceptualized as a fundamental public good - has been reduced to a private good, now available almost exclusively to those with the financial means. Universities are increasingly defined through the corporate demand to provide the skills, knowledge and credentials in building a workforce that will enable the United States to compete against blockbuster growth in China and other Southeast Asian markets, while maintaining its role as the major global economic and military power. There is little interest in understanding the pedagogical foundation of higher education as a deeply civic and political project that provides the conditions for individual autonomy and takes liberation and the practice of freedom as a collective goal.

Public education fares even worse. Dominated by pedagogies that are utterly instrumental, geared toward memorization, conformity and high-stakes test taking, public schools have become intellectual dead zones and punishment centers as far removed from teaching civic values and expanding the imaginations of students as one can imagine. The profound disdain for public education is evident not only in Obama's test-driven, privatized and charter school reform movement, but also in the hostile takeover of public education now taking place among the ultra-rich and hedge fund zombies, who get massive tax breaks from gaining control of charter schools. The public in education has now become the enemy of educational reform. How else can one explain the shameful appointment by Mayor Michael Bloomberg of Cathleen Black, the president of Hearst Magazine, as the next chancellor of the New York City public school system? Not only does she not have any experience in education and is totally unqualified for the job, but her background mimics the worst of elite arrogance and unaccountable power. Surely, one has to take note of the background of someone who should be a model for young people when such a background includes, as reported in The New York Times: "riding horses at a country club where blacks and Jews were not allowed lending a \$47,000 bracelet to a Manhattan museum ... and [refusing] interviews since her appointment." (1) With friends like Rupert Murdoch, it should come as no surprise that she once worked as a chief lobbyist for the newspaper industry in the 1990s "fighting a ban on tobacco advertising," (2) which is

often targeted toward the young. It seems that, when it comes to the elite of business culture, ignorance about education now ranks as a virtue. Then, of course, there is the sticky question of whether such a candidate qualifies as a model of civic integrity and courage for the many teachers and children under her leadership. Public values and public education surely take a nose dive in this appointment, but this is also symptomatic of what is happening to public education throughout the country.

Against the regime of "banking education," stripped of all critical elements of teaching and learning, Freire believed that education, in the broadest sense, was eminently political because it offered students the conditions for self-reflection, a self-managed life and critical agency. For Freire, pedagogy was central to a formative culture that makes both critical consciousness and social action possible. Pedagogy in this sense connected learning to social change; it was a project and provocation that challenged students to critically engage with the world so they could act on it. As the sociologist Stanley Aronowitz has noted, Freire's pedagogy helped learners "become aware of the forces that have hitherto ruled their lives and especially shaped their consciousness."(-) What Freire made clear is that pedagogy at its best is not about training in techniques and methods, nor does it involve coercion or political indoctrination. Indeed, far from a mere method or an a priori technique to be imposed on all students, education is a political and moral practice that provides the knowledge, skills and social relations that enable students to explore for themselves the possibilities of what it means to be engaged citizens, while expanding and deepening their participation in the promise of a substantive democracy. According to Freire, critical pedagogy afforded students the opportunity to read, write and learn from a position of agency - to engage in a culture of questioning that demands far more than competency in rote learning and the application of acquired skills. For Freire, pedagogy had to be meaningful in order to be critical and transformative. This meant that personal experience became a valuable resource that gave students the opportunity to relate their own narratives, social relations and histories to what was being taught. It also signified a resource to help students locate themselves in the concrete conditions of their daily lives, while furthering their understanding of the limits often imposed by such conditions. Under such circumstances, experience became a starting point, an object of inquiry that could be affirmed, critically interrogated and used as resource to engage broader modes of knowledge and understanding. Rather than taking the place of theory, experience worked in tandem with theory in order to dispel the notion that experience provided some form of unambiguous truth or political guarantee. Experience was crucial, but it had to take a detour through theory, self-reflection and critique to become a meaningful pedagogical resource.

Critical pedagogy, for Freire, meant imagining literacy as not simply the mastering of specific skills, but also as a mode of intervention, a way of learning about and reading the word as a basis for intervening in the world. Critical thinking was not reducible to an object lesson in test taking. It was not about the task of memorizing so-called facts, decontextualized and unrelated to present conditions. To the contrary, it was about offering a way of thinking beyond the seeming naturalness or inevitability of the current state of things, challenging assumptions validated by "common sense," soaring beyond the immediate confines of one's experiences, entering into a dialogue with history and imagining a future that would not merely reproduce the present.

By way of illustration, Freirean pedagogy might stage the dynamic interplay of audio, visual and print texts as part of a broader examination of history itself as a site of struggle, one that might offer some insights into students' own experiences and lives in the contemporary moment. For example, a history class might involve reading and watching films about school desegregation in the 1950s and '60s as part of a broader pedagogical engagement with the civil rights movement and the massive protests that developed over educational access and student rights to literacy. It would also open up opportunities to talk about why these struggles are still part of the experience of many North American youth today, particularly poor black and brown youth who are denied equality of opportunity by virtue of market-based rather than legal segregation. Students could be asked to write short papers that speculate on the meaning and the power of literacy and why it was so central to the civil rights movement. These may be read by the entire class, with each student elaborating his or her position and offering commentary as a way of entering into a critical discussion of the history of racial exclusion, reflecting on how its ideologies and formations still haunt American society in spite of the triumphal dawn of an allegedly post-racial Obama era. In this pedagogical context, students learn how to expand their own sense of agency, while recognizing that to be voiceless is to be powerless. Central to such a pedagogy is shifting the emphasis from teachers to students, and making visible the relationships among knowledge, authority and power. Giving students the

opportunity to be problem posers and engage in a culture of questioning in the classroom foregrounds the crucial issue of who has control over the conditions of learning, and how specific modes of knowledge, identities and authority are constructed within particular sets of classroom relations. Under such circumstances, knowledge is not simply received by students, but actively transformed, open to be challenged and related to the self as an essential step toward agency, self-representation and learning how to govern rather than simply be governed. At the same time, students also learn how to engage others in critical dialogue and be held accountable for their views.

Thus, critical pedagogy insists that one of the fundamental tasks of educators is to make sure that the future points the way to a more socially just world, a world in which critique and possibility - in conjunction with the values of reason, freedom and equality - function to alter the grounds upon which life is lived. Though it rejects a notion of literacy as the transmission of facts or skills tied to the latest market trends, critical pedagogy is hardly a prescription for political indoctrination as the advocates of standardization and testing often insist. It offers students new ways to think and act creatively and independently, while making clear that the educator's task, as Aronowitz points out, "is to encourage human agency, not mold it in the manner of Pygmalion."⁽⁴⁾ What critical pedagogy does insist upon is that education cannot be neutral. It is always directive in its attempt to enable students to understand the larger world and their role in it. Moreover, it is inevitably a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge, values, desires and identities are produced within particular sets of class and social relations. For Freire, pedagogy always presupposes some notion of a more equal and just future; and as such, it should always function in part as a provocation that takes students beyond the world they know in order to expand the range of human possibilities and democratic values. Central to critical pedagogy is the recognition that the way we educate our youth is related to the future that we hope for and that such a future should offer students a life that leads to the deepening of freedom and social justice. Even within the privileged precincts of higher education, Freire said that educators should nourish those pedagogical practices that promote "a concern with keeping the forever unexhausted and unfulfilled human potential open, fighting back all attempts to foreclose and pre-empt the further unraveling of human possibilities, prodding human society to go on questioning itself and preventing that questioning from ever stalling or being declared finished."⁽⁵⁾ The notion of the unfinished human being resonated with Zygmunt Bauman notion that society never reached the limits of justice, thus, rejecting any notion of the end of history, ideology or how we imagine the future. This language of critique and educated hope was his legacy, one that is increasingly absent from many liberal and conservative discourses about current educational problems and appropriate avenues of reform.

When I began teaching, Freire became an essential influence in helping me to understand the broad contours of my ethical responsibilities as a teacher. Later, his work would help me come to terms with the complexities of my relationship to universities as powerful and privileged institutions that seemed far removed from the daily life of the working-class communities in which I had grown up. I first met Paulo in the early 1980s, just after my tenure as a professor at Boston University had been opposed by its President John Silber. Paulo was giving a talk at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and he came to my house in Boston for dinner. Given Paulo's reputation as a powerful intellectual, I recall initially being astounded by his profound humility. I remember being greeted with such warmth and sincerity that I felt completely at ease with him. We talked for a long time that night about his exile, how I had been attacked by a right-wing university administration, what it meant to be a working-class intellectual and the risks one had to take to make a difference. I was in a very bad place after being denied tenure and had no idea what the future would hold. On that night, a friendship was forged that would last until Paulo's death. I am convinced that had it not been for Paulo and Donaldo Macedo - a linguist, translator and a friend of Paulo's and mine - I might not have stayed in the field of education. Their passion for education and their profound humanity convinced me that teaching was not a job like any other, but a crucial site of struggle, and that, ultimately, whatever risks had to be taken were well worth it.

I have encountered many intellectuals throughout my career in academe, but Paulo was exceptionally generous, eager to help younger intellectuals publish their work, willing to write letters of support and always giving as much as possible of himself in the service of others. The early 1980s were exciting years in education studies in the United States, and Paulo was really at the center of it. Paulo and I together started a Critical Education and Culture series with Bergin & Garvey Publishers, which brought out the work of more than 60 young authors, many of whom went on to have a significant influence in the university. Jim Bergin became Paulo's patron as his American publisher; Donald became his

translator and co-author; Ira Shor also played a important role in spreading Paulo's work and wrote a number of brilliant books integrating both theory and practice as part of Paulo's notion of critical pedagogy. Together, we worked tirelessly to circulate Paulo's work, always with the hope of inviting him back to America so we could meet, talk, drink good wine and deepen a commitment to critical education that had all marked us in different ways.

Paulo, occupying the often difficult space between existing politics and the as yet possible, spent his life guided by the beliefs that the radical elements of democracy were worth struggling for, that critical education was a basic element of progressive social change and that how we think about politics was inseparable from how we come to understand the world, power and the moral life we aspire to lead. In many ways, Paulo embodied the important but often problematic relationship between the personal and the political. His own life was a testimony not only to his belief in democratic principles, but also to the notion that one's life had to come as close as possible to modeling the social relations and experiences that spoke to a more humane and democratic future. At the same time, Paulo never moralized about politics; he never evoked shame or collapsed the political into the personal when talking about social issues. Private problems were always to be understood in relation to larger public issues. For example, Paulo never reduced an understanding of homelessness, poverty and unemployment to the failing of individual character, laziness, indifference or a lack of personal responsibility, but instead viewed such issues as complex systemic problems generated by economic and political structures that produced massive amounts of inequality, suffering and despair - and social problems far beyond the reach of limited individual capacities to cause or redress. His belief in a substantive democracy, as well as his deep and abiding faith in the ability of people to resist the weight of oppressive institutions and ideologies, was forged in a spirit of struggle tempered by both the grim realities of his own imprisonment and exile and the belief that education and hope are the conditions of social action and political change. Acutely aware that many contemporary versions of hope occupied their own corner in Disneyland, Paulo was passionate about recovering and rearticulating hope through, in his words, an "understanding of history as opportunity and not determinism."⁽⁶⁾ Hope was an act of moral imagination that enabled educators and others to think otherwise in order to act otherwise.

Paulo offered no recipes for those in need of instant theoretical and political fixes. I was often amazed at how patient he always was in dealing with people who wanted him to provide menu-like answers to the problems they raised about education, people who did not realize that their demands undermined his own insistence that critical pedagogy is defined by its context and must be approached as a project of individual and social transformation - that it could never be reduced to a mere method. Contexts indeed mattered to Paulo. He was concerned how contexts mapped in distinctive ways the relationships among knowledge, language, everyday life and the machineries of power. Any pedagogy that calls itself Freirean must acknowledge this key principle that our current knowledge is contingent on particular historical contexts and political forces. For example, each classroom will be affected by the different experiences students bring to the class, the resources made available for classroom use, the relations of governance bearing down on teacher-student relations, the authority exercised by administrations regarding the boundaries of teacher autonomy and the theoretical and political discourses used by teachers to read and frame their responses to the diverse historical, economic and cultural forces informing classroom dialogue. Any understanding of the project and practices that inform critical pedagogy has to begin with recognizing the forces at work in such contexts, and which must be confronted by educators and schools every day. Pedagogy, in this instance, looked for answers to what it meant to connect learning to fulfilling the capacities for self and social determination not outside, but within the institutions and social relations in which desires, agency and identities were shaped and struggled over. The role that education played in connecting truth to reason, learning to social justice and knowledge to modes of self and social understanding were complex and demanded a refusal on the part of teachers, students and parents to divorce education from both politics and matters of social responsibility. Responsibility was not a retreat from politics, but a serious embrace of what it meant to both think and act politics as part of a democratic project in which pedagogy becomes a primary consideration for enabling the formative culture and agents that make democratization possible.

Paulo also acknowledged the importance of understanding these particular and local contexts in relation to larger global and transnational forces. Making the pedagogical more political meant moving beyond the celebration of tribal mentalities and developing a praxis that foregrounded power, history, memory, relational analysis, justice (not just representation) and ethics as the issues central to transnational democratic struggles."⁽⁷⁾ Culture and politics mutually informed each other in ways that spoke to histories, whose presences and absences had to be

narrated as part of a larger struggle over democratic values, relations and modes of agency. Freire recognized that it was through the complex production of experience within multilayered registers of power and culture that people recognized, narrated and transformed their place in the world. Paulo challenged the separation of cultural experiences from politics, pedagogy and power itself, but he did not make the mistake of many of his contemporaries by conflating cultural experience with a limited notion of identity politics. While he had a profound faith in the ability of ordinary people to shape history and their own destinies, he refused to romanticize individuals and cultures that experienced oppressive social conditions. Of course, he recognized that power privileged certain forms of cultural capital - certain modes of speaking, living, being and acting in the world - but he did not believe that subordinate or oppressed cultures were free of the contaminating effects of oppressive ideological and institutional relations of power. Consequently, culture - as a crucial educational force influencing larger social structures as well as in the most intimate spheres of identity formation - could be viewed as nothing less than an ongoing site of struggle and power in contemporary society.

For critical educators, experience is a fundamental element of teaching and learning, but its distinctive configuration among different groups does not guarantee a particular notion of the truth: as I stated earlier, experience must itself become an object for analysis. How students experience the world and speak to that experience is always a function of unconscious and conscious commitments, of politics, of access to multiple languages and literacies - thus, experience always has to take a detour through theory as an object of self-reflection, critique and possibility. As a result, not only do history and experience become contested sites of struggle, but the theory and language that give daily life meaning and action a political direction must also be constantly subject to critical reflection. Paulo repeatedly challenged as false any attempt to reproduce the binary of theory versus politics. He expressed a deep respect for the work of theory and its contributions, but he never reified it. When he talked about Freud, Fromm or Marx, one could feel his intense passion for ideas. Yet, he never treated theory as an end in itself; it was always a resource whose value lay in understanding, critically engaging and transforming the world as part of a larger project of freedom and justice.

Vigilant in bearing witness to the individual and collective suffering of others, Paulo shunned the role of the isolated intellectual as an existential hero who struggles alone. He believed that intellectuals must respond to the call for making the pedagogical more political with a continuing effort to build those coalitions, affiliations and social movements capable of mobilizing real power and promoting substantive social change. Politics was more than a gesture of translation, representation and dialogue: to be effective, it had to be about creating the conditions for people to become critical agents alive to the responsibilities of democratic public life. Paulo understood keenly that democracy was threatened by a powerful military-industrial complex, the rise of extremists groups and the increased power of the warfare state. He also recognized the pedagogical force of a corporate and militarized culture that eroded the moral and civic capacities of citizens to think beyond the common sense of official power and the hate mongering of a right-wing media apparatus. Paulo strongly believed that democracy could not last without the formative culture that made it possible. Educational sites both within schools and the broader culture represented some of the most important venues through which to affirm public values, support a critical citizenry and resist those who would deny the empowering functions of teaching and learning. At a time when institutions of public and higher education have become associated with market competition, conformity, disempowerment and uncompromising modes of punishment, making known the significant contributions and legacy of Paulo work is now more important than ever before.

Footnotes

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HENRY SCHOENHEIMER¹⁰

Henry Schoenheimer (1918-1976), educationist, was born on 12 October 1918 in South Brisbane, son of Australian-born Jewish parents Ferdinand Arthur Schoenheimer, motor mechanic, and his wife Abigail Elizabeth, née Moss. Henry's childhood was at times unhappy, and he left home and Brisbane Grammar School in 1934. He began teaching in North Queensland, at Bloomsbury State School, then transferred to Beatrice River, near Innisfail, in 1936, to Taringa, Brisbane, in 1941, and to Charleville in 1946. While teaching, he studied at the University of Queensland (B.A., 1952) as an external student. As he gained experience, he came to value highly the student-teacher relationship within the learning process and to see education as a dynamic and interactive experience.

Moving to Melbourne in 1951, Schoenheimer taught in turn at Mount Scopus Memorial College and Malvern Grammar School, and studied at the University of Melbourne (Dip.Ed., 1955; B.Ed., 1956; M.Ed., 1961). On 12 October 1954 at the office of the government statist, Queen Street, he married Elizabeth Linda Andernach, a typist and stenographer. He lectured at Swinburne Technical College, and at Monash (1964-71) and La Trobe (1971-73) universities. An enthusiastic proponent of educational reform, he embraced the child-centred theories of thinkers such as Erich Fromm and A. S. Neill, and the practices of such Australian schools as Margaret Lyttle's Preshil. He used Karl Popper's criticism of Plato to support arguments in his lectures. Many students were drawn to his radical ideas. He strongly believed that university lecturers in education should have a background in teaching to enable them to relate theory to practice.

Schoenheimer published school texts, articles and children's books. In 1965-75 he was education correspondent for the Australian. He became a full-time writer and consultant in 1973 and joined the staff of the Australian Council for Educational Research in 1975. Two of his most influential books, *Good Schools* (Melbourne, 1970) and *Good Australian Schools and their Communities* (1973), discussed schools at home and abroad where teaching was student-based rather than curriculum dominated. As a leader in the alternative education movement of the 1960s and 1970s, he supported the development of innovative schools, among them the Education Reform Association's school at Donvale. He emphasized that schools should provide links between communities and students.

A secular humanist and an independent thinker, Schoenheimer held high hopes for humanity, but had difficulty in reconciling his ideals with his experiences. He thought that educators had a particular responsibility to find new ways of addressing issues such as over-population, the degradation of the natural environment and the exhaustion of non-renewable resources. In his last public address—given to the Australian School Library Association conference in 1976—he expressed his anxiety about the survival of civilization in the face of the Western world's increasing expectation of affluence and its apparent lack of concern for peace and social justice.

Schoenheimer was a striking figure. That he wore his clothes slightly awry indicated his indifference to social convention. Phillip Adams described him as 'one of those rare people who was greedy to give'. To Stephen Murray Smith, he was 'the sanest, most humane and thoughtful of all critics of the Australian education system'. Schoenheimer committed suicide by inhaling carbon monoxide gas on 24 September 1976 at Kangaroo Ground. Survived by his wife, and their two daughters and two sons, he was cremated.

¹⁰ *Australian Dictionary of Biography – online edition in www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A160225b.htm (downloaded January 2011)*
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Herald (Melbourne), 1 Oct 1976; Age (Melbourne), 6 Oct 1976; private information.

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