

Critical Review of the Dewey-Bode Applied Philosophy of Education, Part I: Schooling and Society

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I. The Heritage of the Dewey-Bode Doctrine

In this series of papers I present a Critical review of the Dewey-Bode applied philosophy of public education. It has long been widely held that the education philosophy of John Dewey was the basis for the 20th century education reform movement known as the Progressive Education Movement (PEM). PEM reforms gave the institution of public education in the United States its present content and form. In the last quarter of the 20th century the outcomes of the PEM institution came under widespread criticism and attack by a broad segment of the public and by many educators and researchers in higher education. The criticism is justified, a fact recently upheld by detailed Critique in Wells (2013).^{1,2} During the rancorous controversies that characterize education reform policies since 1974, critics of the PEM institution have widely laid the blame for this institution's shortcomings and enormities at the feet of Dewey and so-called "Deweyism." While it is true that some basic tenets of the Dewey-Bode philosophy are Critically incorrect and had very damaging antisocial effects, to lay the blame on the *whole* of the philosophy for the present state of public education in the United States is to mislay that blame.

It is undeniably true that Dewey's philosophy was the principal factor in setting the direction of the Progressive Education Movement. It is also undeniably true that some of the problems and enormities produced by the PEM reforms are consequences of PEM reformers either misunderstanding or ignoring the principles of Dewey-Bode. Some of the serious flaws in the PEM reforms are in fact policies that stand in direct contradiction to the Dewey-Bode principles and maxims. In some cases the contradictions arose from equivocal passages in the Dewey-Bode corpus in which the authors' meanings do not become sufficiently clear until they are taken in context with the whole of the corpus. In other cases failings of PEM reforms can only be held to be the result of unscientific misapplication of Dewey-Bode theory.

But in some cases, particularly in regard to very serious enormities set up by the Progressive Education Movement, it cannot be truthfully said the fault was the result of a misunderstanding. There are major errors, grounded in an idealist Platonism, in the Dewey-Bode philosophy. These errors are intimately tied to how Dewey saw the relationship between schooling and Society. They arise out of Dewey's conception of an ideal Society, which he improperly called "democracy." Here it must be concluded that the PEM understood Dewey-Bode all too well. It explains much about the character of the PEM in the 20th century as well as lingering adherences still present in the 21st. The PEM set up a system of institutionalized bigotry in education in the United States, the chief mechanisms of which are the differentiated curriculum, the funneling of pupils into socially debilitating curriculum tracks during the years of junior high school, and the institution of educologist Taylorism in school administration [Wells (2013)]. Dewey's theory does follow logically once one accepts certain internally inconsistent and socially unnatural premises. These premises guaranteed the failure of PEM reforms, destroyed the social grounds justifying the institution of *public* education, and belong to the part of Dewey-Bode that must be corrected and replaced in future education reform.

¹ The author's prior works are posted on the Wells Laboratory website and are accessible free of charge at the following web address: <http://www.mrc.uidaho.edu/~rwells/techdocs/>.

² Many Critical technical terms, such as 'school' and 'Society,' are used throughout this paper. The reader is advised to refer to Wells (2012c) for proper technical definitions of Critical terms.

Examined scientifically using principles of Critical metaphysics [Wells (2006)] and the Idea of the American social contract [Wells (2012a)], I find that many principles and maxims of the Dewey-Bode applied philosophy are congruent with the mental physics of human Nature [Wells (2009)] and consistent with Critical social contract theory. Many of its principles and maxims are wholly in accord with the Critical applied metaphysic of empirical science in public instructional education [Wells (2012b)]. It follows that these principles of Dewey-Bode are to be retained in Critical reform of public education. Groundwork laid by Dewey-Bode immediately points to a number of Critical functions in the applied metaphysic of public education that are neglected in the American institution of public education. It is the purpose of this series of papers to review what the Dewey-Bode philosophy actually maintains, to identify those elements of Dewey-Bode that are Critically correct and congruent with the applied metaphysic of the science of public instructional education, and to identify those that are antisocial and harmful to the public.

While Dewey's name is more widely known, the contributions to education philosophy that were made by Boyd Henry Bode are too important to overlook, and Bode's work merits far more attention than it received in the 20th century. Dewey and Bode were complementary contributors to education philosophy. I find a dichotomy in their contributions but this dichotomy is not so crisp as some might suppose. It is not correct to say Bode was merely a follower-apologist for Dewey's theory, as some have supposed. Each man made significant original contributions to the overall body of the applied philosophy. To omit Bode from one's understanding of this philosophy is to omit important parts of the philosophy itself. To paint the roles of each man in broad strokes, it is not too incorrect to characterize their main contributions along the following lines.

It can be said accurately enough that Dewey's work presented philosophical and psychological theses that are pertinent and basic to the institution of public instructional education and are scientifically congruent with human mental Nature. The principles and maxims he presented are for the most part less concerned with specific means for institution and pedagogy and are more addressed at setting out a proper context for public education. It is true that much of what Dewey wrote is given over to discussions of particular examples, but Dewey himself stated that these examples are to be understood in precisely that context – i.e., *as* examples and *not* as prescriptions for general tactics of pedagogy or curricular content. It was his stated intent that his readers should use the examples he provided as a stimulus for thinking and reflection and as a means of better understanding his more abstract foundational principles and maxims. Unfortunately for education reform in the 20th century, this instruction was not followed by the PEM. Many of Dewey's illustrative examples were taken as prescriptions, applied with a too narrow contextual focus, and implemented too literally. Other PEM reforms over-generalized precepts that were merely specific and thereby misapplied more fundamental concepts. It can be correctly said that the PEM fell victim to what Bacon called "the idols of the den" [Bacon (1620), pp. 21, 28-31].

It is not too inaccurate to say Dewey's contributions are primarily theoretical and speculative rather than practical (by which I mean "specifically addressing the issues of reducing them to practice in education"). Dewey wrote as a philosopher addressing other philosophers. While his specific criticisms of education practices at the close of the 19th century are important in the practical sphere of public education, his books are to be viewed as philosophy and not as specific and concrete proposals for the institution of reforms. Dewey was not a social engineer.

Bode wrote as a philosopher addressing educators. His principal books [Bode (1922), (1927)] are textbook-like presentations of a theory of education. He makes continual use of Dewey's principles and maxims, but his writings are more specifically and directly aimed at reducing the philosophy to practice in education institution. It is important to remember that Dewey's key works came first and predated the PEM. Bode's books were concurrent with the movement in its

formative stages. The dichotomy between their contributions has little to do with the philosophical foundations of the theory and mostly to do with the readership audiences these two men were addressing.

Dewey-Bode theory encompasses a large topical scope and a treatise on it would easily fill an entire book. What I have elected to do is to present the theory in a topical succession in a series of shorter papers rather than as a single self-contained treatise. I regard this approach as more efficacious for both setting out the important contextual aspects of the theory as well as for making the material more easily comprehensible for the general reader. The paper before you deals primarily with the relationship between schooling and Society. The principles and maxims of Dewey-Bode were originally presented through a series of eight lectures Dewey gave in 1899 that were thereafter published in book form [Dewey (1915)] and in various chapters in Dewey (1916) and Bode (1922).

These principles and maxims are in large part Critically correct in that they are congruent with human mental Nature. At the same time, however, the social context of public education they presented suffers from theoretical flaws concerning the human nature of Societies and from the inadequate states of sociology and political science as they existed in the early 20th century. More so than any other single factors, these flaws led directly to failed policies and social enormities that were instituted after the Great Depression. They can also be regarded as the seeds of the Social Reconstructionist Movement (SRM) and its divisive failed policies and programs from the mid-1930s through the late 1960s. My principal objective for Part I is to separate the wheat from the chaff in Dewey-Bode in regard to the relationship between public schooling and Society. Doing so is propaedeutic to success in correcting the existing fatal flaws in the institution of public instructional education in the United States.

II. The Mediating Function of Public Schooling in Society

The philosophy of Dewey-Bode can correctly enough be called pragmatism so long as it is borne in mind that Dewey's pragmatism differed at the level of particular details from the schools of pragmatism generally associated with Charles Sanders Peirce or William James. Dewey often used the word 'instrumentalism' to distinguish his school from the other pragmatic schools. Like most 19th and 20th century philosophers, Dewey and Bode gave scant attention to the meta-physical foundations of their theory with the result that it employs underlying metaphysical presuppositions that are recognizably drawn from a mixture of Platonic and Hegelian premises. In the latter half of the 19th century Hegelianism enjoyed wide popularity in American colleges and universities, and Dewey had been trained in it as a student. He later came to fall away from Hegel in the most important aspects of his philosophy work, but remnants of its influence can be seen in how he regarded the phenomenon of human Society. Habitual Hegelian presuppositions are planted at the roots of Dewey-Bode suppositions concerning the nature of Society and these are largely responsible for those aspects of their social theory that are scientifically unnatural.

At the same time, it must be clearly understood that not *all* the precepts of Dewey-Bode are incongruent with human social-nature. As I discuss in Wells (2012a) and (2013), the phenomenon of mini-Communities and mini-Societies is a general characteristic of all human Societies that have risen above the early level of what Santayana called "natural civilizations" [Santayana (1905b)]. The mini-Community phenomenon has largely been ignored by sociology and political science, yet this phenomenon presents the most serious challenges to Order and Progress in every Community and Society comprised of more than just a very few people. Dewey and Bode both noted the phenomenon (describing it in other words) and both correctly saw mini-Communities for what they are: serious challenges to the successful implementation of public instructional education. Dewey wrote,

As a matter of fact, a modern society is many societies more or less loosely connected.

Each household with its immediate extension of friends makes a society; the village or street group of playmates is a community; each business group, each club, is another. Passing beyond these more intimate groups, there is in a country like our own a variety of races, religious affiliations, economic divisions. Inside the modern city, in spite of its nominal political unity, there are probably more communities, more differing customs, traditions, aspirations, and forms of government or control than existed in an entire continent at an earlier epoch. [Dewey (1916), pp. 22-23]

Embedded in this observation is *en passant* recognition of a fact having foundational importance for any empirical science of social-natural sociology. It is this: Every person self-determines his own personal society. That which we call a Society is a mathematical Object comprised of those characteristic marks of the ideas of personal society that its members hold in common through the mediating influence of a social contract.

A corollary to this is: Every person is simultaneously a member of more than one mini-Community and more than one mini-Society. This has direct consequences pertaining to public education. Dewey wrote,

Each such group [mini-Community] exercises a formative influence on the active dispositions of its members. A clique, a club, a gang, a Fagin's household of thieves, the prisoners in a jail, provide educative environments for those who enter into their collective or conjoint activities as truly as a church, a labor union, a business partnership, or a political party. Each of them is a mode of associated or community life quite as much as a family, a town, or a state. There are also communities whose members have little or no direct contact with one another, like the guild of artists, the republic of letters, the members of the professional learned class scattered over the face of the earth. For they have aims in common, and the activity of one member is directly modified by knowledge of what others are doing. . . .

The school has the function of also coordinating within the disposition of each individual the diverse influences of the various social environments into which he enters. One code prevails in the family; another on the street; a third in the workshop or store; a fourth in religious association. As a person passes from one of the environments to another, he is subjected to antagonistic pulls and is in danger of being split into a being having different standards of judgment and emotion for different occasions. This danger imposes upon the school a steady and integrating function. [*ibid.*, pp. 23-24]

Dewey has here mentioned *en passant* the differing "codes" of different mini-Communities. As his reference to "judgment and emotion" hints, he is speaking of *moral* codes. Here we come upon a shortcoming in Dewey-Bode philosophy concerning a divisive factor present in *all* social situations. It is this: Every person makes for himself, through experience, his own peculiar and *private* moral code. In mental physics terms, this moral code is constructed within the individual's manifold of rules in practical Reason and functions as none other than the practical legislation that arises from experience and determines his behaviors in regard to what he will *not* do.

This "free won't" character of human Reason was deduced by Kant in 1788 and is one of the conditions *a priori* necessary for the possibility of human Reason as this is known to us through experience. Kant wrote,

What is essential in every determination of will by the moral law is that, as a free will – and so not only without the cooperation of sensuous impulses but even with the rejection of all of them and with infringement upon all inclinations so far as they could be opposed to that law – it is determined solely by the law. So far, then, the effect of the moral law as mainspring is only negative, and as such this mainspring can be known *a priori*. For all inclination and every sensuous impulse is based on feeling, and the negative effect on

feeling (by infringement upon the inclination that takes place) is itself feeling. Hence we can see *a priori* that moral law, as ground of determination of will, must, by thwarting all our inclinations, effect a feeling that can be called pain; and here we have the first and perhaps the only case in which we can determine *a priori* from concepts the relationship of knowledge (here it is one of pure practical reason) to the feeling of *Lust* and *Unlust* [Kant (1788), 5: 72-73].

Neuroscience research in the early 21st century has found direct psychophysical evidence supporting Kant's discovery. Indeed, the term "free won't" was coined by Obhi and Haggard to describe this observed psychophysical data [Obhi & Haggard (2004)]. Obhi and Haggard seem to have been surprised by their findings but the "negative character of moral laws" has long been noted by philosophers. Santayana, for example, wrote,

The relation between aesthetic and moral judgments, between the spheres of the beautiful and the good, is close but the distinction between them is important. One factor of this distinction is that while aesthetic judgments are mainly positive, that is, perceptions of good, moral judgments are mainly and fundamentally negative or perceptions of evil. . . . The truth is that morality is not mainly concerned with the attainment of pleasure; it is rather concerned, in all its deeper and more authoritative maxims, with the prevention of suffering. . . . The sad business of life is rather to escape certain dreadful evils to which our nature exposes us, – death, hunger, disease, weariness, isolation, and contempt. By the awful authority of these things, which stand like specters behind every moral injunction, conscience in reality speaks [Santayana (1896), pp. 16-17]

While moral judgments are adjudicated by the process of practical judgment in practical Reason, the positive expression of actions is adjudicated by the process of reflective judgment, which is the seat of what Santayana here calls "aesthetic judgments." Put concisely, reflective judgment is an *impetuous* process positively determining action expressions. Practical Reason, acting through the process of practical judgment, exerts a "veto power" over the inclinations of reflective judgment [Wells (2009)]. However, those practical maxims and rules that comprise the individual's manifold of practical rules are *learned* through experience, and the peculiarities of individuals' experiences produces peculiar and quite *personal* moral codes. This is why systems of ethics that are grounded in an ontology-centered metaphysic (as consequentialist and virtue ethics both are) cannot ground a Society's common moral customs. Only a system of ethics that is grounded in an epistemology-centered metaphysic – that is, only a deontological system – offers the possibility for establishing a *communicable* common set of social mores agreeable to *all* members of the Society.

Every durable Society endures because the people who comprise it find practical means of social intercourse whereby sufficient degrees of individual security, civil liberty, communal welfare, and domestic tranquility are achieved despite manifold differences in the private moral codes of its individual members. It is achieved by means of the institution of behavioral maxims that are held in common and respected by all members of the Community, and to which all members *place themselves* under practical rules of mutual Obligation through individual constructions in their practical manifolds of rules. No one can place another person under any Obligation whatsoever; that door is locked from the inside. Each person always makes practical determinations of Obligation for himself and does so only because of stimulations and provocations he encounters in his actual experiences. Providing a social environment conducive to this is the root function performed by moral customs and expressed in the social traditions and familiar folkways that prevail during interludes between the major social challenges every Society is confronted by from time to time. Moral customs always arise immediately from people's experiences, both satisfactory and unsatisfactory, in social intercourse with one another. They are never instituted by government. The form of government in any durable Community is

made to reflect those common ties moral customs give rise to. Montesquieu wrote,

Manners and customs are those habits which are not established by legislators, either because they were not able or were not willing to establish them.

This is the difference between law and manners, that the laws are most adapted to regulate the actions of the subject and manners to regulate the actions of man. There is this difference between manners and customs, that the former principally relate to the interior conduct, the latter to the exterior. [Montesquieu (1748), pg. 300]

Different mini-Communities have different special interests that unite those Communities but separate them from other mini-Communities. An individual's experiences gained from his intercourse with the divers mini-Communities to which he belongs therefore guarantees that, unless some socializing form of experience intervenes on behalf of Society overall, the general Community must become unstable over time, suffering breakdown and disintegration as a consequence of lack of social mores and customs shared in common by the people who comprise the general Community. Dewey and Bode both quite correctly identified public education as a mediating institution for stabilizing Society through *integrating and normalizing* its moral customs. It is what they mean when they refer to the school as having "cultivation" and "growth" as primary tasks. Dewey wrote,

The chief importance . . . is to lead us to note that the only way in which adults consciously control the kind of education which the immature [children] get is by controlling the environment in which they act and hence think and feel. We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment. . . . And any environment is a chance environment unless it has been deliberately regulated with reference to its educative effect. . . . Roughly speaking, [schools] come into existence when social traditions are so complex that a considerable part of the social store is committed to writing and transmitted through written symbols. Written symbols . . . cannot be picked up in accidental intercourse with others. In addition, the written form tends to select and record matters which are relatively foreign to everyday life. The achievements accumulated from generation to generation are deposited in it even though some of them have fallen temporarily into disuse. . . .

The first office of the social organ we call the school is to provide a *simplified* environment. It selects the features which are fairly fundamental and capable of being responded to by the young. . . . In the second place, it is the business of the school environment to eliminate, so far as possible, the unworthy features of the existing environment from influence upon mental habitudes. . . . Every society gets encumbered with what is trivial, with dead wood from the past, and with what is positively perverse. The school has the duty of omitting such things from the environment it supplies, and thereby doing what it can to counteract their influence in the ordinary social environment. By selecting the best for its exclusive use, it strives to reinforce the power of this best. . . . In the third place, it is the office of the school environment to balance the various elements of the social environment, and to see to it that each individual gets the opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into contact with a broader environment. [Dewey (1916), pp. 20-22]

The educating environment provided by the public school must therefore be *designed and implemented in practice* to gradually overcome the naïve egocentrism of childhood by which each child presumes that everyone else sees things the way he does and thinks the way he does. This can be and often is called the socializing function of schooling. To accomplish this socially normalizing task, the individual must be led to a cognizance of *plurality of contexts* (sometimes called "understanding other people's views"). But *context* (*Zusammenhang*) is provided only by the individual's manifold of concepts that he self-develops through no other route than personal experience. Every person is a member of multiple mini-Communities but no person is a member

of all of them that exist in the Society. Public school is the common meeting place of a Society's universe of mini-Communities, hence its mediating and normalizing role. By 'normalizing' I here mean "making mini-Community contexts outside the individual's experience be recognized as not-abnormal." Normalized expectations and habits for social intercourse among the members of Society is what is provided by moral custom in a Society.

Mediating intervention to normalize individuals' understandings of citizenship and civic Duty under the social contract of American Society is one of the functions the American institution of public education ceased to perform in the 20th century as a consequence of PEM reforms. Its abandonment is all in itself one of the derelictions of Duty by the institution in the 20th century. Morality and moral custom are *not* exclusive properties of the diverse churches and religions; indeed, this propriety is impossible to assign because all theology is ontology-centered at its root. What all religions provide is a speculative linkage of moral custom to a 'why' vested in a divine source. As Kant said,

Religion is the contemplation of moral law as divine precept. [Kant (1783-88), 18: 515]

Because public education attempts to educate across mini-Community boundaries, the existence of mini-Communities raises serious issues for the public's expectation of authority they assign to it and its agents. These affect the general Society's establishment of overarching aims and objectives for its institution of public education and public schools. Bode wrote,

Whatever else we may say about it . . . education is a process of growth; it means a liberation of capacity. The aims that we set up in education are just guides and signposts to indicate the direction in which this growth is to take place. These aims are legion. . . .

The fact that there are so many "ultimate" aims justifies a feeling of misgiving and suspicion. Generally speaking, all these aims are worthy and desirable; it is only when any one of them is set up as the supreme aim that it becomes objectionable. The reason is that an aim which is accepted as supreme or all-inclusive tends to place an undesirable restriction on growth by turning it too exclusively in one direction. . . . The educational system is accordingly organized with this end in view; and to prevent these distinctive traits from becoming immersed and lost, the disposition is sometimes fostered in the community to fence itself off from all unnecessary contact with the outside world. An education of this sort may be fairly extensive and yet disagreeably lopsided. An individual thus trained is in America but not of it [Bode (1922), pp. 8-11].

A large part of 20th and 21st century controversies over public education amounts to nothing else than a tug-of-war between competing special-interest mini-Communities, each vying to have its own special interests set up as supreme aims of public instructional education. Thus it is that mini-Community factions foster forms of competition among different members of the general public that are socially debilitating. The 20th century historical record in the United States shows that factionism turned internecine, leading to hostilities among mini-Communities and to the instituting of many unstable and antisocial educational fads of short and disruptive duration. No institution that does not meet the challenges presented by the phenomenon of mini-Communities can endure, nor can it succeed in its institution of *public* education. The PEM perpetrated social enormities wherever its reforms resulted in privileges being granted to favored mini-Communities that worked to the detriment of the general welfare of others.

III. Progressivism and Humanism

Dewey formulated his philosophy in the 1890s, a time when the socio-political movement known as progressivism was on the rise. It is not the aim of this paper to review or Critique this movement but a brief description of it is in order. Progressivism in the United States was a reform

movement provoked largely as a response to political corruption in the state governments and to economic conditions experienced by the majority of urban American wage-earners as a result of the growth of large corporations in the so-called 'Gilded Age' of the late 19th century. It was rooted in so-called 'middle class' America and was closely allied with the political populism, conservationism, and antitrust policies of prominent politicians such as William Jennings Bryant, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson. "Democracy" was a word regarded so highly by the progressives as to function as an almost sacred term. As such, it was a term that could be used for purposes of political propaganda with great effect. Progressives did in fact use it for this purpose so as to cloak progressive reforms in an aura of righteousness and to paint its opponents and critics in a villainous hue. Three Amendments to the U.S. Constitution can be directly imputed to progressivism in the early 20th century: the 16th (the 'income tax amendment' of 1913); the 17th (the 'popular election of senators' amendment of 1913); and the 18th (the Prohibition amendment of 1917). However, progressivism had its own private meaning for the word "democracy."

Although associated with no one political party, progressivism in the first third of the 20th century had sharp political teeth. Generally speaking, progressivism tended to favor greater power for the general and local governments and less power for the state governments. It intimidated state governments to press for passage of the 17th Amendment, which is the Amendment that neutered the power of state governments at the national level. Present day political rhetoric over "states' rights" is disingenuous when governors and state legislators imply the general government "seized" too much power from the states. The state governments, not the general government in Washington, DC, pushed the 17th Amendment through a reluctant Congress.

To most Americans "democracy" was and still is a word that implies a form of government based on popular election of the agents of government under the principle of 'one person, one vote.' It likewise still evokes the same emotional attachment, and hence the same propaganda value, it had during the progressivism movement. It has long been forgotten that to the Framers of the U.S. Constitution the idea of "democracy" was intended to be only *one part* of the constitution of the general government. It was intended to serve as part of the checks and balances they wrote into the Constitution to guard against the danger of an aristocratic tyranny in the general government, to protect the rights of minorities, and to preserve the prerogatives and rights of the individual states in the Union against the tyranny of populism manifested in what Madison had called the "national" form of government [Farrand (1911), Hamilton *et al.* (1787-88)].

By 1890 the word "democracy" had long lost its more or less crisp distinction from the word "republic" that it had in the 18th century at the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia and in the writings of Montesquieu, Rousseau, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Adams. Three labels introduced in the 19th and 20th century ("representative democracy"; "representative government"; and "democratic republic") are more or less synonymous with today's vulgar use of "democracy." Ambiguities that arose from erasing the distinction between a republic and a democracy are still with us today, rendering both words more or less technically meaningless by confounding ideas of a *system* of government with *mechanisms* by which agents of government are selected. The softening of these words began with the birth of the Democratic Party in the 1820s and developed during the 'Age of Jackson.' It accelerated with Tocqueville's popular *Democracy in America* and mid-19th century European political theory such as that presented in the writings of John Stuart Mill. This softening is also symptomatic of the devolution of political science from being a social-natural science, as it was at the end of the 18th century, to its present-day standing as a so-called "social science" that has lost its root connection to the social atoms of all political and social phenomena, namely, individual human beings.

The softening and blurring of words that were originally introduced in order to draw important distinctions between closely related phenomena is antithetical to purposes of science and serves the purposes of propaganda. As Lavoisier correctly noted,

The impossibility of separating the nomenclature of a science from the science itself is owing to this, that every branch of physical science must consist of three things: the series of facts which are the objects of the science; the ideas which represent these facts; and the words by which these ideas are expressed. Like three impressions of the same seal, the word ought to produce the idea, and the idea to be a picture of the fact. And, as ideas are preserved and communicated by means of words, it necessarily follows that we cannot improve the language of any science without at the same time improving the science itself; neither can we, on the other hand, improve a science without improving the language or nomenclature which belongs to it. However certain the facts of any science may be, and however just the ideas we may have formed of these facts, we can only communicate false impressions to others while we want words by which these may be properly expressed. [Lavoisier (1789), pp. xiv-xv]

What Lavoisier said of physical-natural sciences holds equally for social-natural sciences. To justify the aims of progressivism, the movement's philosophers introduced a softened, falsely-generalized new "definition" for the idea of democracy. Thus, while claiming to champion science in the social arena, the movement in fact behaved oppositely of what scientific practice requires. It was appropriate that the movement's most prominent American philosophers, Dewey and William James, called its philosophizing attitude "humanism."

It has been not-uncommon for historians to tell us that progressivism had its philosophical roots in American pragmatism "which was primarily developed by John Dewey and William James" (some of them also remember to credit Charles Sanders Peirce, who was one of the founders of pragmatism). This summary fails to note the fact that the Dewey, James, and Peirce versions of pragmatism were distinctly different schools of thought containing pronounced basic differences. "Pragmatism" as it has been often presented by historians is only the name of a genus under which the Peirce, James, and Dewey "schools" stand. James distinguished between what he called "wider" pragmatism and "narrower" pragmatism. He wrote,

First, as to the word 'pragmatism.' I myself have only used the term to indicate a method of carrying on abstract discussion. The serious meaning of a concept, says Mr. Peirce, lies in the concrete difference to someone which its being true will make. Strive to bring all debated conceptions to that 'pragmatic' test, and you will escape vain wrangling . . .

All that the pragmatic method implies . . . is that truths should *have* practical consequences. In England the word has been used more broadly still, to cover the notion that the truth of any statement *consists* in the consequences, and particularly in their being good consequences. Here we get beyond affairs of method altogether; and since my pragmatism and this wider pragmatism are so different, and both are important enough to have different names, I think that Mr. Schiller's proposal to call the wider pragmatism by the name of 'humanism' is excellent and ought to be adopted. The narrower pragmatism may still be spoken of as the 'pragmatic method.' . . .

Messrs. Dewey's and Schiller's thought is eminently an induction, a generalization working itself free from all sorts of entangling particulars. If true, it involves much restatement of traditional notions. This is a kind of intellectual product that never attains a classic form of expression when first promulgated. The critic ought therefore not to be too sharp and logic-chopping in his dealings with it, but should weigh it as a whole, and especially weigh it against its possible alternatives. One should also try to apply it first to one instance, and then to another to see how it will work. . . . Humanism is in fact much more like one of those secular changes that come upon public opinion overnight, as it were, borne upon tides 'too deep for sound or foam' [James (1904), pp. 51-54].

James' characterization of Dewey's theory as "a generalization working itself free from all sorts of entangling particularities" and involving "much restatement of traditional notions" is key for

understanding how and why Dewey came to write into his philosophy of education particular precepts that otherwise stand in stark internal inconsistencies with each other. These inconsistent precepts pertain to Society and its relationship with schooling.

IV. The Antisocial Ideal of Deweyan "Democracy"

The ground for justification of universal public schooling in America has always been: To serve the purposes of Order and Progress in American Society. This idea of public schooling *in service to* its parent Society was codified in the Massachusetts Laws of 1642 and 1647 in Puritan New England [Cubberley (1919), pp. 15-19]. The relationship between public schooling and Society held throughout 18th and 19th century America was one of public schooling as a *public good* serving government and citizen alike. Wherever public schools were established, the role of the school was seen as one of transmitting the social and moral customs of its Community to the young. The same was locally true for mini-Communities' parochial schools. Dewey wrote,

With the renewal of physical existence goes, in the case of human beings, the re-creation of beliefs, ideals, hopes, happiness, misery, and practices. The continuity of any experience, through renewing of the social group, is a literal fact. Education in its broadest sense is the means of the continuity of life. . . . Each individual, each unit who is the carrier of the life-experience of his group, in time passes away. Yet the life of the group goes on. [Dewey (1916), pp. 2-3]

There is a great deal of both literal and metaphorical truth in what Dewey says. However, there is a very subtle error of presupposition latent in this, one so subtle that only a person habituated to be on the lookout for it is likely to see it: Dewey reifies the idea of Society. It is one thing to speak *metaphorically* of Society as if it were a living thing. But it is not. As the analysis in Wells (2012a), chapter 10, showed, Society is a *mathematical* Object, not an ontological thing. A Society is a mathematical intersect of concepts its members make in their Self-definitions of their *personal* societies. To regard a mathematical Object as an ontological thing is an error of what Kant called the transcendental dialectic of human Reason [Kant (1787), B: 349-359].

Dewey's reification of Society might seem to be a minor matter – a target for metaphysical nitpicking – but Kant showed in *Critique of Pure Reason* how the transcendental dialectic of pure Reason leads to the most serious kinds of errors in understanding and judgment. This is the case for Dewey's reification of Society. With it the doctrine took a sharp turn into a Hegelianism that steered the PEM into setting antisocial policies causing great damage to the political, economic, and moral environment of America. Dewey correctly said,

Society exists through a process of transmission quite as much as biological life. This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from those members of society who are passing out of the group to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive. [Dewey (1916), pg. 3]

But progressivism promoted a very different view of the relative relationship between schooling and Society, namely: that Society ought to be planned and developed, and responsibility for determining how that Society should evolve properly belonged to the authority of agents of public instructional education. But it is *never* the role of the servant to rule those who are to be served. The Progressive Education Movement came to seek a reversal of Sovereign power in American Society by subordinating the power of its citizens to the authority and moral premises of educologists and school administrators in regard to education. With this usurpation of authority, the PEM reforms effected fundamental changes in those "ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, and opinions" away from the Republic's socio-economic roots and socio-political mores.

Those changes – radical, in contradiction to the American social contract, and contrary to the aims and ideas of the American Revolution – were *not* explicit aims in Dewey's theory or of the PEM. Indeed, in its beginning the Dewey theory sought to make public education *better* serve American Society by making it more closely coupled to actual social-natural developments and social conditions. This is an entirely proper aim and it is a deontological Duty for all agents of public instructional education. In an 1899 lecture Dewey said,

We are apt to look at the school from an individualist standpoint as something between teacher and pupil or between teacher and parent. That which interests us most is naturally the progress made by the individual child of our acquaintance, his physical development, his advance in ability to read, write, and figure, his growth in the knowledge of geography and history, improvement in manners, habits of promptness, order, and industry – it is from such standards as these that we judge the work of the school. And rightly so. Yet the range of the outlook needs to be enlarged. What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. . . . All that society has accomplished for itself is put, through the agency of the school, at the disposal of its future members. . . . Only by being true to the full growth of all the individuals who make it up can society by any chance be true to itself. . . .

Whenever we have in mind the discussion of a new movement in education, it is especially necessary to take the broader, or social, view. Otherwise changes in the school institution and tradition will be looked upon as the arbitrary inventions of particular teachers; at the worst transitory fads, and at the best merely improvements in certain details . . . The modification going on in the method and curriculum of education is as much a product of the changed social situation, and as much an effort to meet the needs of the new society that is forming, as are changes in modes of industry and commerce. . . . [The 'New Education'] will appear as part and parcel of the whole social evolution and, in its more general features, as inevitable. [Dewey (1915), pg. 6]

There is in this nothing calling for radical change in the relationship between public education and the sovereignty of citizens. Dewey merely states an empirical fact – that schooling had come to be popularly viewed as 'individualistic' – and re-states the role of public education as service to the Community and Society as a whole. There is in this nothing in fundamental conflict with the social contract nor with the justification of an institution of education supported by public funding. Yet by the 1920s the focus of progressive reforms had subtly shifted away from this social-natural grounding and drifted into what might be called a rational-humanism perspective that set itself squarely in conflict with the social contract and the expectations for authority granted to the agents of public education by the citizens of the United States. How did such a radical reversal come to occur?

There was a twofold cause for this. First, the Dewey-Bode doctrine fell under presuppositions that can only be called Hegelian ("the 'New Education' [is] part and parcel with social evolution and is inevitable"). Second, it was fouled by unreal Platonic speculation that made transcendent idealizations of a utopian Society and its necessary governance. Here is where what James noted about humanism's "restatement of traditional notions" is especially pertinent to the story of progressivism in education. James was not saying this restatement *is necessary*; he was saying it is *made necessary* (necessitated) by the premises of humanism. Rather than fitting theory to social reality, the Hegelian-Platonic premises contained under Dewey's notion of "democracy" resulted in educologists attempting to force Society to fit the theory. Most of this paper addresses the particulars of how the original and just intentions of education progressivism became subverted during its efforts to descend from its Platonic eyrie to deal with the particularities of detail in the actual instituting of reforms. What happened is an old and frequent tale in the history of Mankind's grander endeavors: the press of particular problems and challenges came to be viewed as paramount while the original intentions and objectives of the movement were

forgotten. Santayana wrote,

Fanaticism consists in redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim.
[Santayana (1905a), pg. 13]

Under this connotation of the word, it is correctly said that the PEM fell into fanaticism.

As noted earlier, Dewey and Bode both recognized that the phenomenon of mini-Communities is an empirical fact of human Society and poses what are arguably the most difficult challenges that face the governance of a Society and the design of its institutions. The bulk of Dewey-Bode doctrine is given over to the details of instituting public education through schooling, but many details in this instituting are oriented by Dewey's humanism prescription for dealing with the challenges posed by mini-Communities within the greater Society. This prescription was in turn oriented by Dewey's idea of a form of Society he called "democracy." He based the formulation of his concept using ontology-centered presuppositions that could only, and did, lead him into speculation – transcendental illusions – ungrounded in objectively valid principles of human Nature. What was this concept and how did he come to it? Dewey wrote,

Society is one word but many things. Men associate together in all kinds of ways and for all kinds of purposes. One man is concerned in a multitude of diverse groups, in which his associations may be quite different. . . . Within every larger social organization there are numerous minor groups: not only political subdivisions but industrial, scientific, religious associations. . . . The terms society, community are thus ambiguous. They have both a eulogistic or normative sense, and a descriptive sense; a meaning *de jure* and a meaning *de facto*. In social philosophy the former connotation is always uppermost. [Dewey (1916), pp. 89-90]

Here lurks his next ontology-centered error. It is true that social speculations are made in both contexts that he notes here. A normative connotation is, by definition of 'normative,' a viewpoint that regards the Object of speculation according to merely subjective judgments of taste. A norm is a rule for determination of actions or behaviors. A normative structure is a system of norms with rules of transformations that provide a canonical method or convention for evaluating observations according to a theory. Calling this normative convention "eulogistic" focuses the norms of evaluation on what is held to be praiseworthy of the Object. But praiseworthy in whose estimation? Here we have not only subjectivism but, more importantly, the entry of precepts of morality. It is not possible for *any* ontology-centered ethic or doctrine of morality to ever attain to universal agreement among all persons. People whose moral maxims tend to consequentialist tenets tend to see an object-matter in one way; those whose moral maxims tend to virtue ethics will see the same object-matter in a different and often contrary light. As Dewey-Bode doctrine develops, it soon becomes clear that it premises consequentialism (this tends to be a general feature of pragmatism), and in this moral context "the ends justify the means." The moral context goes far to explain how well-intentioned PEM reformers could come to accept and excuse the perpetration of serious enormities and to set up a system of institutionalized bigotry in education on the basis of unproven psychological speculations and mechanized by means of IQ testing, differentiated curricula, and funneling pupils into curriculum "tracks" on the basis of prejudicial fiat of the social roles twelve-year-olds were to fill [Wells (2013), pp. 528-531, 548-553].

Dewey also accepts the verdict of a "social philosophy." In point of fact, there was no *one* social philosophy, then or now, and there were *no* social philosophies grounded in an epistemology-centered metaphysic. The "philosophy" to which he refers can be none other than the pseudo-philosophy of humanism. I say this because the fingerprints of humanism are found throughout Dewey's (and Bode's) writings. Furthermore, Bode puts the philosophical suppositions and attitudes adopted by the doctrine on display in chapter 12 of Bode (1922). *Every* metaphysic

is nothing other than "the way one looks at the world" through his unquestioned presuppositions and habits of thinking. *Every* person constructs for himself his own personal and idiosyncratic metaphysic during childhood. Doctrines rise and fall based on such metaphysical presuppositions and prejudices. *Metaphysics makes a real difference* – a fact of human Nature a pragmatist might well appreciate – and the one used in formulating the Dewey-Bode doctrine of "democracy" was not predicated on objectively valid principles of human Nature. It should surprise no one when an unnatural doctrine grows out of an unnatural metaphysic.

In the case of Dewey-Bode doctrine, the unnatural underlying metaphysic was Platonic in its elements and dialectic in its method. Dewey and Bode both knew this. Bode wrote,

If philosophy is regarded as a substitute for science or as an attempt to do the same sort of work as science, the case against it is most damaging and philosophy stands condemned. The matter appears in a different light, however, if we take the position that the work of philosophy is essentially different from that of science. The difference may be pointed out most simply and clearly in connection with education. As was suggested in the first chapter, formal education brings with it the necessity of reflection on aims. It becomes necessary to determine what kind of result is to be secured. . . . It is not a question of finding out something that is already existent, but of finding out what it is that we should really desire to achieve by means of educational agencies. [Bode (1922), pg. 227]

But the doctrine under discussion is fundamentally the expression of an attitude toward life, an attitude that has been generalized and is therefore called a philosophy. . . . The doctrine is not new. It is discussed in Plato's *Republic* . . . In recent times it has drawn considerable inspiration from the theory of evolution . . . This attitude is a philosophy when we generalize it by interpreting all the relevant facts so as to form a consistent system. [*ibid.*, pp. 230-231]

If philosophy had no other recourse than to be ontology-centered, what Bode says here would be irrefutable and philosophy could never be constituted as a science, much less as a first science. The situation is wholly different when the metaphysical foundations are epistemology-centered, as is the case in the Critical Philosophy. However, it was not recognized by 19th- and most 20th-century philosophers that Kant's doctrine is epistemology-centered, and so no effort at all was made to avoid the hopelessly entangling subjective trap into which Dewey-Bode doctrine fell.

In large part, this lack of recognition traces to philosophers' mistaken beliefs that Fichte, Schelling and Hegel were Kant's "successors" who had "advanced" Kant's philosophy. In point of actual fact, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel *all* abandoned the epistemology-centered doctrine of Kant and turned back to ontology-centered presuppositions and prejudices. Consequently, 19th century philosophers had not even the notion that Kant's Copernican Revolution in metaphysics was the one novelty that, as a pragmatist might say, made all the difference in the world³.

This is the why and where the misstep in Dewey-Bode doctrine occurred in general terms. It is necessary, though, to look at it in its specifics because the misstep did not condemn the *entire* doctrine to mistake and error. Why did it not? The answer to this is bound up in the *applicable contexts* of the error. Those parts of the doctrine that were not bound to these contexts could, and mostly did, escape falling into dialectical error⁴.

³ It is worth noting that the term "epistemology" was not coined until 1854 – fifty years after Kant died.

⁴ This, too, is not the first time something like this has happened in philosophy. A prototype example is found in the ethics theory of Aristotle. Aristotle could find no way to bring his ethics under the principles of his ontology-centered metaphysics. He was forced to "settle for" and "substitute" what today are called epistemology-centered precepts. While Aristotle's entire ontology-centered system of physical-natural science failed, much of his ethical theory ended up being objectively valid and congruent with human

Dewey attempted by induction to formulate a general idea of Community that would, as James put it, "work itself free from all sorts of entangling particulars." Put in other words, he did not work to develop a social-natural theory of Society or Community but, instead, tried to find an Ideal that, in his opinion, a Society *ought to* try to make itself into⁵. If you add a drop of Hegel to the mix then you deceive yourself into thinking this "ought to" is an historical inevitability. If you further abuse and misuse Darwin's theory by setting a task for it that it is incapable of fulfilling then you delude yourself into thinking there is a physical-natural law at work to bring this about⁶. Dewey did all three of these. He tells us,

Society is conceived as one by its very nature. The qualities which accompany this unity – praiseworthy community of purpose and welfare, loyalty to public ends, mutuality of sympathy – are emphasized. . . . Any education given by a group tends to socialize its members, but the quality and value of the socialization depends upon the habits and aims of the group.

Hence, once more, the need of a measure for the worth of any given mode of social life. In seeking this measure, we must avoid two extremes. We cannot set up, out of our heads, something we regard as an ideal society. But, as we have just seen, the ideal cannot simply repeat the traits which are actually found. The problem is to extract the desirable traits of forms of community life which actually exist and employ them to criticize undesirable features and suggest improvements. [Dewey (1916), pp. 90-91]

"Desirable" according to whose judgments of taste? Dewey was perfectly correct to say, "We cannot set up, out of our heads, something we regard as an ideal society" if what we seek is to understand the phenomena of human Society and Community under grounds of causative social-natural laws. But a "eulogistic and normative" model of either is nothing but a mathematical Object with no ontological significance whatsoever. *Whatever* model emerges from speculation of this sort is and can be nothing more than simply the reflection of particular judgments of taste made by particular individuals. Mill wrote,

People are accustomed to believe and have been encouraged in the belief by some who aspire to the character of philosophers that their feelings . . . are better than reasons and render reasons unnecessary. The practical principle which guides them to their opinion on the regulation of human conduct is the feeling in each person's mind that everybody should be required to act as he, and those with whom he sympathizes, would like them to act. No one, indeed, acknowledges to himself that his standard of judgment is his own liking; but an opinion on a point of conduct, not supported by reasons, can only count as one person's preference; and if the reasons, when given, are a mere appeal to similar preference felt by other people, it is still only many people's liking instead of one. To an ordinary man, however, his own preference, thus supported, is not only a perfectly satisfactory reason, but the only one he generally has for any of his notions of morality, taste, or propriety [Mill (1859), pg. 5].

Dewey and the progressives were attempting to impose precisely such a subjective Ideal as a

Nature *because he was forced to make it deontological*. Just because a philosopher or scientist is wrong about one thing, that doesn't make him wrong about every thing; just because he is right about one thing doesn't make him right about every thing.

⁵ It can be noted that Kant tried to do the same thing. Kant had committed the error of slipping back into ontology-centered habits of thinking involving what he called "the moral law within me" and a vaguely posed humanist notion he called "humanity." This error was the principal reason he was unsuccessful in his attempt to correct the various practical problems Rousseau had built into his social contract theory. I have previously discussed Kant's error in Wells (2012a), pp. 177-179.

⁶ I discuss this particular abuse of Darwin's theory in Wells (2013), pp. 549-550.

formulating principle for public education. By doing so they acted in violation of the terms and conditions of the social contract of any Republic predicated upon liberty with justice for all of its citizens. For all of the laudable findings of Dewey-Bode doctrine in aiming to establish social-natural *methods* of instruction congruent with human Nature, the doctrine abandoned social-natural principles in regard to the ideal Society it proposed as the basis for its institution of public education. *This* is the fundamental contradiction in Dewey-Bode doctrine: the real opposition it set up between an *unreal* Platonic ideal and *real* educational Self-development cultivated and guided by public instructional education. We cannot with fidelity to the social contract "set up, out of our heads, something we regard as an ideal society," but that is precisely what Dewey then proceeded to do. This was the inconsistency within the doctrine. He began by noting,

Now in any social group whatever, even in a gang of thieves, we find some interest in common, and we find a certain amount of interaction and cooperative intercourse with other groups. From these two traits we derive our standard. How numerous and varied are the interests which are consciously shared? How full and free is the interplay with other forms of association? [Dewey (1916), pg. 91]

An ideal is an Object that exhibits in its representation *in concreto* the most perfect instantiation of an idea. The idea in play here is the idea of a Society in which is found completely free interaction among people, perfectly cooperative intercourse among groups, unlimited variety of consciously shared interests, and full and free interplay among mini-Communities. Dewey called his vision of such a Society "democracy." He did not produce a more distinct and concise definition of Deweyan "democracy" but Bode, who followed Dewey in this ideal, later provided one:

Democracy, then, may be defined as *a social organization that aims to promote cooperation among its members and with other groups on the basis of mutual recognition of interests.* [Bode (1927), pg. 14]

It is correct to say the democracy of ancient Athens was an imperfect instantiation of a Society that strove, however imperfectly, to practice this aim. But it can also be said with an equal degree of correctness that this was true of Spartan Society, which was not remotely what most of us would recognize as a "democracy." It is correctly said as well of the Roman Republic, the United States under the Articles of Confederation, the United States under the Constitution, a 10th-century Viking *Þing* [Jones (1968), pp. 147-181], the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and a BaMbuti Pygmy band [Turnbull (1961)]. What Dewey had in mind for his standard was a perfect instantiation of what must correctly be described as *civic interaction on the scale of a civil Community-as-a-whole*. It will be exhibited to an adequate degree by *any* stable Society in which civil Order has been achieved and is maintained. His *ideal* of perfection is indistinguishable from Rousseau's ideal body politic associated as a republic [Rousseau (1762)].

Civil Progress, however, is *not* part of the definition – which raises legitimate questions of how "progressive" progressivism actually was. In point of fact the overall design of PEM reforms presupposed a socio-economically *static* Society, not a dynamically growing Society (one in which Progress is being achieved). The Social Reconstructionist Movement in public education during the 1930s was especially prejudicial in holding to this presupposition.

One cannot propose meaningful changes and reforms for an institution based on this rather amorphous notion of Deweyan "democracy" alone. One must find an exemplar and Dewey did present his choice for one: the ant-like communism of Plato's *Politeía* (which is traditionally, and in apparent defiance of common sense, translated into English as *Republic*). Dewey wrote,

No one could better express than did [Plato] the fact that a society is stably organized when

each individual is doing that for which he has aptitude by nature in such a way as to be useful to others (or to contribute to the whole to which he belongs); and that it is the business of education to discover these aptitudes and progressively train them for social use. . . .

Plato's starting point is that the organization of society depends ultimately upon knowledge of the end of existence. If we do not know its end, we shall be at the mercy of accident and caprice. Unless we know the end, the good, we shall have no criterion for rationally deciding what the possibilities are which should be promoted, nor how social arrangements are to be ordered. . . . But how is knowledge of the final and permanent good to be achieved? In dealing with this question we come upon the seemingly insuperable obstacle that such knowledge is not possible save in a just and harmonious social order. Everywhere else the mind is distracted and misled by false valuations and false perspectives. A disorganized and factional society sets up a number of different models and standards. . . . Only a complete whole is full self-consistent. We seem to be caught in a hopeless circle. However, Plato suggested a way out. A few men, philosophers or lovers of wisdom – or truth – may by study learn at least in outline the proper patterns of true existence. . . . An education could be given which would sift individuals, discovering what they are good for, and supplying a method of assigning each to the work in life for which his nature fits him. Each doing his own part, and never transgressing, the order and unity of the whole would be maintained.

It would be impossible to find in any scheme of philosophic thought a more adequate recognition on one hand of the educational significance of social arrangements and, on the other, of the dependence of those arrangements upon the means used to educate the young. [Dewey (1916), pp. 96-98]

Let us take the points in this unnatural antisocial hogwash one by one. Let us start with the presupposition that each individual *has* "an aptitude by nature" for some peculiar job or social role. This is very old hogwash, completely refuted by the mental physics of human Nature, that was characteristic of ancient Greek social philosophy. In the 20th century Darwin's theory was misused in an attempt to sanctify this falsehood by means of a connection between biology and human mental Nature that has ***utterly no objectively valid ground*** in the biological theory of evolution (see footnote 6). Human beings *develop* aptitudes according to their experiences in life and the educating *materia ex qua* to which they have access. A human being is remarkably protean in his potentialities. To maintain that any person has an innate aptitude for this or that vocation or social role is to maintain that he is "fated" for a destiny. But *in mundo non datur fatum*: "fate is not given in the sensible world." The presupposition utterly lacks real objective validity as a principle but does make a handy excuse for treating people as less than human. This Platonic element of Dewey's "democracy" is the excuse for differentiated curricula and tracking.

Next let us take on the transcendent illusion of "knowledge of *the* end of existence" and the equally transcendent notion of "*the* good." The questions of whether or not there is a purpose for existence and, if so, what it is are questions human beings have been asking since at least the beginning of history. Plato enshrined his so-called answer in a reified thing-in-itself he called "the Good" but, notoriously, was never able to say what it was. The notion is at root a religious and theological notion floating forever beyond the reach of *science*. Aristotle lodged the idea of that-which-is-good-in-itself in a *mathematical* process of induction that relied upon assuming that no thing involving a regression to infinity could actually exist. Nothing can come of this but a mere mathematical Object far beyond the horizon of possible human experience. Such an Object has no ontological significance whatsoever. Critically, some thing is a "good" if and only if some human being *judges* it to be one. This is a wholly subjective judgment of taste and can never find any objectively sufficient ground rendering it necessarily universal for the judgment of every human being. It is a *moral idea* and every human being develops his own personal, private, and *practical* moral code, the idiosyncrasy of which defeats all possibility of hauling the Platonic idea down

from the heavens to find a home in actual human sensuous experience.

Dewey tells us that "knowledge of the final and permanent good is not possible save in a just and harmonious social order." Why should we think it is possible even there? There is arguably no Society on Earth that has a more "just and harmonious social order" than a BaMbuti Pygmy band and BaMbuti Society is certainly a stable Society. Explorers seeking the source of the Nile brought back to the Pharaoh reports of encountering the BaMbuti in 2500 BC. The BaMbuti do not concern themselves with "discovering knowledge of the Good." To them the source of all goodness is "the Forest" in which they live and they are content with believing that. The ontological speciousness of Dewey's first Object makes his Platonic Utopia a moot point.

Nor is it immediately clear how one reconciles the word "democracy" with the iron despotism of a monarchy or oligarchy of "philosopher kings" who dictate how the *Politeía* is to be ordered and ruled. No human being enters into a social compact for the purpose of being subjugated by rulers. One can be coerced into complying with a dictator's edicts, but this is mere prudence and establishes no social compact [Rousseau (1762)]. It is, rather, a form of slavery within a caste-rigid uncivil Society. Dewey and Bode both somehow manage to ignore this rather plain feature of the *Politeía* as well as the plain fact that the prescription calls for treating people as means rather as ends-in-themselves. Indeed, both argue that one can have it both ways: subjugation with equality of civil liberty; caste with equal justice; free exchange and cooperative interaction with rigidly defined social roles. Wishing cannot change Plato's *Politeía* into something other than what it is: a proposal for a caste system of slaves under the rule of a dictatorship.

The well-being of one's civil Community under a common social contract is indeed the paramount *common* interest of all its citizens. This common interest is naturally grounded in the terms and conditions of a social contract, freely entered into by each citizen, when he *makes* it a Self-imposed Obligation that he will act to preserve, protect, and defend it:

As men cannot engender new forces, but only unite and direct existing ones, they have no other means of preserving themselves than the formation, by aggregation, of a sum of forces great enough to overcome [the obstacles in the way of self-preservation in the state of nature]. These they have to bring into play by means of a single motive power and cause to act in concert.

This sum of forces can arise only where several persons come together; but, as the force and liberty of each man are the chief instruments of his preservation, how can he pledge them without harming his own interests and neglecting the care he owes to himself? This difficulty . . . may be stated in the following terms:

"The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone and remain as free as before." This is the fundamental problem of which the *Social Contract* provides the solution. [Rousseau (1762), pg. 13]

Any Society thwarting the citizen's civil liberty to Self-develop the powers of his person as he sees fit (within the constraint of observing the covenant of civil rights in his Community) acts in contradiction to the above-stated terms of its social contract. Such a Society travels a road leading to moral secession by its members and its own breakdown, disintegration, and fall.

An institution of schooling that thwarts this liberty by omission – which is what happens when "an education [is] given which [sifts] individuals, discovering what they are good for, and supplying a method of assigning each to the work in life for which his nature fits him" – is a cancer in the body politic. When that sifting and assigning are done by a self-anointed elite, this is not even "democracy" in the ordinary connotation of that word. It is nothing else than despotism

and deontologically criminal transgression of the American social contract. Dewey's assertion that "it would be impossible to find in any scheme of philosophic thought a more adequate recognition on one hand of the educational significance of social arrangements and, on the other, of the dependence of those arrangements upon the means used to educate the young" is *prima facie* false when human Nature is the context and the Object of its practical application.

In recent decades the educologist government of the PEM re-institution of public instructional education has come to be called "the education Establishment" by its critics. Institution of this Establishment was prescribed by the tenets of Deweyan "democracy." The differentiated curriculum and the practice of "tracking" pupils into school programs that deliberately deny them equality in educational opportunity is the means of "sifting and assigning each to his work in life" *chosen* by the fiat of agents of the system. These agents can present no qualifying credentials proving competence to render such rulings. No such expectation of authority was ever granted to them by the Sovereign citizens of the United States of America. Such is the character of the enormity Deweyan "democracy" effected on American Society. That it is an enormity thoroughly laced with nothing but good intentions does not change the facts that it is an enormity, that its perpetuation is a deontological moral crime, or that it destroys the Society it was meant to serve.

V. Concluding Remarks

This paper has focused its discussion on the flaws in the Dewey-Bode doctrine of schooling-and-Society that led to failure of the PEM re-institutionalization of public instructional education in the 20th century. The Critical flaws were ontology-centered prejudice and transcendent speculation in regard to the aims and means of public education. These led to institution of an antisocial system that practices institutionalized bigotry and abets in the production of a socio-economic caste system. The Platonic-Hegelian precepts of sociology in the Dewey-Bode doctrine are the principal chaff that must be discarded in any social-natural reform of the institution of public education. The all-too-common resort of swinging to an opposite extreme – as is promoted by every counterproposal put forward by different mini-Community alliances since 1974 – is no real solution. These proposals would replace one kind of social enormity with another and would perpetrate a different form of deontological moral crime against American Society. What, then, is to be done? That is the question and challenge I will offer to address in the forthcoming volume III of *The Idea of Public Education*.

One should not, however, conclude that the errors in Dewey-Bode sociology justify a blanket rejection of every element of the Dewey-Bode doctrine. The doctrine is more than just ontology-centered sociology. It also includes a number of principles pertaining to the human Nature of learning and effective instruction that escape Platonic-Hegelian fantasies and stand in congruence with human mental Nature and with the American social contract. Indeed, Dewey-Bode correctly anticipated some functions of public instructional education that have never been implemented or even proposed elsewhere but which the Critique of education and Society [Wells (2012b)] finds to be essential factors. Part II of this series begins my review of these principles and tenets.

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