

# A Deweyan Education as a Spiritually Creative Enterprise

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## Abstract

*John Dewey was very much against dividing the spiritual from the material and claimed that both are present in action, typically through the notion of ends-in-view. He argued that genuinely creative actions require individuals with “significant conscious desires”. However this sort of creativity does not often occur due to our “intellectual laziness” which detracts us from making the effort to truly uncover ultimate and significant desires in our lives. It will be argued in this paper that the creativity promoted through a Deweyan education encourages individuals to face their fear of inner freedom and actively inquire into the spiritual dimension of life which is existential rather than idealistic. The case will be made that educated persons should be enabled, through experience, to actively and freely inquire into ends-in-view, including the ultimate and significant issues regarding the meaning and purpose of life.*

## A Deweyan Education

Reviewing the many possible understandings and metaphors that education can be represented by, Dewey argued that it is best understood as a reconstruction. This is in accordance with his views on philosophy, experience, knowledge and society which he explained should all be in a state of reconstruction. So it is appropriate that education too should promote this same pragmatic ideal. Dewey's (1985, p. 82) technical definition for education is that it is the “reconstruction or reorganisation of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience.” Here we can recognise his important criterion of *growth*. Education should not set limits to understandings and abilities but rather should enable continuous development of such abilities. This notion of the reconstruction of experience is not so much the ‘reality’ or noumena behind the phenomena which appear before us, but rather are the *meanings* of the experiences themselves with-which-we-exist in an existential matrix (Dewey, 1991a). They are the meanings by which we understand them to have in relation to ourselves and our world (Dewey, 1991b, p. 176). In order to make this dynamic condition possible, the meanings which are assigned to our various experiences should never be off limits to further review and examination. They should always be open to reconstruction or, in Nietzsche's terms, always be available for a ‘re-evaluation’.

In order to support this dynamic view of understanding as being continually open for further inquiry, Dewey (1991b, p. 13) used the term “suspended conclusions” to indicate that the meanings given to experiences should never be assumed to be permanently fixed. Not surprisingly he disliked using the term ‘knowledge’ as this represented an end to an inquiry, the settlement of an investigation rather than as the best sense that is given to an experience because of the evidence and ideas currently available. Rather than the static and possible absolute characteristics of ‘knowledge’ he much preferred to use knowing or warranted assertions. The implication of this difference for education is that rather than involving the imparting of statements of knowledge comprising the body of the curriculum to be learnt, a Deweyan education involves learners participating in the establishment of *knowing* by being conversant with the warrants which lie behind statements of assertion. Learners do not just come to acquire knowledge as if it was a commodity but rather they should develop the capacity for *knowing*.

A Deweyan education which values knowing over knowledge is mainly characterised with experiences of inquiry. Learners are to be involved in understanding the warrants behind assertions through first-hand experimental experiences rather than only memorising the conclusions of others through what he described

as second-hand experiences. He argued that learners are to be enabled to participate in scientific approaches to various problems. By 'scientific' he did not just mean methods peculiar to the field of natural science but rather he argued for the scientific *attitude* of being willing to question, inquire, test and critique. This so-called scientific approach is not limited to issues related to the concerns of the natural sciences but is pertinent to all aspects of human social endeavours, including morality and religion as it is in these domains that the most important human matters are found and therefore are in the greatest need of critical re-evaluation.

According to Dewey, the educated person is one who can exercise discriminating judgement. This does not simply involve being able to recognise the right from the wrong or the good from the bad but rather involves being able to discriminate between several competing goods "with some consciousness of *why* the better is better and *why* the worse is worse" (Dewey, 1988a, pp. 133-4). The provision of a *why* is understood to be the warrant which he placed so much value and importance upon. Through this *why*, the end-in-view or the purpose of the learner in inquiry is essential to the process of education because personal purposes and desires themselves are to become cultivated.

Dewey's conception of persons was very holistic. He did not reduce learners to 'minds' by a privileging of logic and knowledge. For Dewey education was not just a cognitive affair as he readily acknowledged the more holistic origins of philosophical thinking and reasoning including personal beliefs as well as emotional and social needs (Dewey 1988b). When he wrote of education as enhancing intelligence he particularly meant the notion of social intelligence (1975a, p. 43) which of course plays a central role for his views on social reconstruction. Such intelligence reflects the manner of intellectual thoroughness that should be invested in reconstructing our various meanings including the moral and political aspects. The context for such a social intelligence is cosmic in scale, involving self, local communities, the nation, international organisations and the non-human elements of our environment and planet.

An education based upon a Deweyan perspective is a very creative one – which makes it most relevant for the theme of this conference. Dewey (1988a, p. 133) himself has claimed that "the main traits of a genuinely creative or productive mental activity... [include] independence, initiative, and the exercise of discriminating judgement." In addition to be able to make judgments regarding decisions Dewey claimed that learners should also have the freedom to exercise their own purposes for engaging in particular inquiries. He was against imposing school activities upon learners who must learn what the teacher 'knows' without involving their personal interests and purposes in the experiences themselves. Dewey (1985, p. 84) reported that too often "individuals act capriciously whenever they act under external dictation, or from being told, without having a purpose of their own or perceiving the bearing of the deed upon other acts."

However, this should not be misinterpreted as a promotion that learners should 'do what they want'. A Deweyan education is not a child-centred education which compromises the development of an aptitude for intellectual thoroughness which is often challenging, demanding, difficult and even painful (Dewey, 1985, p. 358). Indeed he argued that if an experience is to be educative it must be an experience which involves thinking. This thoroughness does not just pertain to developing the mental thinking processes which provide the wherewithal for solving problems of logic but also includes developing more valuable personal desires and purposes. Dewey argued that:

It requires a cultivated mind to have significant conscious desires, to know what one really wants. It is easy to take what is suggested in any chance way or by what others are seen to do as what one wants to do, when in reality the so-called want is only a desperate effort to escape from a mental void. (Dewey, 1988a, pp. 132-3)

It can be recognised that this view of Dewey's is similar to Nietzsche's view of the 'given' and Heidegger's view of the 'present-at-hand'. Dewey (1988a, pp. 132 & 134) claimed that our inclination to passively acceptant the norms of society is due to playing "mental truancy" because we are inherently disposed to "intellectual laziness". He claimed that:

The chief difficulty with adults is very much like that from which children suffer in schools. We do not know what we really want and we make no great effort to find out. We, too, allow our purposes and desires to be foisted upon us from without. We, too, are bored by doing what we want to do, because the want has no deep roots in our own judgement of values.” (Dewey, 1988a, p. 133)

Genuine creativity which is characteristic of mental freedom requires independent *thinking* which is free from passive acquiescence to cultural expectations. It must also include a serious and rigorous inquiry into our personal meaning of life, purposes or what Dewey described as ends-in-view. Dewey claimed that if experiences are to be considered as offering educative value then the interests and purposes of the learners should be involved *and* brought to account in order to demonstrate *why* they should be considered valuable. They should not be accepted as having value just because they specifically belong to the independent child. So while a great deal of attention is given to the individual by Dewey he always had an eye on our social responsibilities.

Central to a Deweyan education and to the genuine creativity which he embraced, is the inclusion of an inquiry into the very desires and purposes by which we live and operate by. The reconstruction of the *meanings* of experiences are to include the big-picture understandings from which we give sense to all of our activities and which provide the basis for our values and for the way we conduct our lives in the social and natural environments. If experiences are to be considered educative then Dewey’s criteria of continuity and interaction are to be met. That is, the experiential continuum must lead to ever increasing potential for growth of possibilities rather than an entrenching narrowness of understanding, and must involve the internal factors of learners such as their personal beliefs, attitudes, desires, dispositions and purposes. Dewey (1997, pp. 44-5) argued that “continuity and interaction in their active union with each other provide the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience.” It is such meanings which hold particular significance for a Deweyan education if indeed the creativity developed is to have educative value.

### **Meaning as relevant and significant**

The notion of *meaning* is central to a Deweyan education as a reconstruction of experience. As such this notion of meaning involves something personally significant. Educative experiences involve individual learners coming to appreciate what they understand “to be deeply significant in concrete situations” over and above conventional standards of what is right and good. (Dewey, 1985, p. 243). While Dewey was critical towards what might be understood by the meaning of meaning because it has become so over-analysed that the various interpretations have become almost meaningless, he much preferred the notion of significance because it involves the intentionality of persons and recognises personal *importance* (Dewey & Bentley, 1991, p. 331). Consequently it might be more useful to replace ‘meaning’ with ‘significance’ as even Dewey (1989, p. 235) claimed that “meaning is so consolidated with a thing that we do not dream of separating the thing from its significance”. He even described the test of James’s Pragmatism as one of significance, which draws attention to the importance that an activity has for the user/participator him or herself. For Dewey ‘significance’ involves the participator’s intelligent understanding of expected consequences of certain actions in relation to her plans and purposes for such actions.

While those familiar with a Deweyan education can readily appreciate this emphasis upon significance rather than meaning, this difference is not so readily recognised in the more traditional forms of education where the term ‘meaning’ is also regularly used. In such traditional environments the term meaning could be more usefully replaced by ‘relevance’ rather than ‘significance’ because it marginalises the aspect of personal importance. There are occasions when Dewey’s explanations are not so clear (Greenwood, 1957, p. 84) therefore reference is made to Heidegger in order to offer another explanation although he employs some different terminology.

Relevance can be understood as the initial reference of relations that a particular entity might appear to have. Heidegger used the example of a hammer and described its meaning as an object ready-to-hand (or as an aspect of the Life World) in terms of hammering. He explained that “to be relevant means to let something be together with something else” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 78). So the object of the hammer is to be together with the activity of hammering. The meaning of hammering then might require reference to fastening for example as this other activity makes the hammering relevant. Continuing on with this example he suggested that the meaning of such fastening in turn can emerge with its relevance for building a shelter to be a barrier against bad weather.

Relevance for Heidegger is understood as the usability or the ‘what-for’ of the object. Relevance is not a stand-alone relation between one object and a single activity but is part of what he referred to as ‘total relevance’. A key to understanding this total relevance of Heidegger’s is through his term *Bedeutsamkeit* translated significance. However in order to appreciate the value of his perspective we must first understand his notion of *Da-sein* (translated as ‘there, to be’ and meaning to be there, present, available) as representing the entity of ourselves. According to Heidegger (1996, p. 10), *Dasein* is ontically distinguished amongst all other beings because, as a being, “it is concerned *about* its very being”. *Dasein*’s being cannot be understood piecemeal such as its mind, consciousness or cognition because its nature is unified through a concern or care for one’s being. Due to *Dasein*’s concern for the meaning of its being, it provides the site of struggle to make sense of this ultimate concern. Heidegger refers to the site as a clearing, a place where truth can be participated in thereby allowing entities, including one’s very own purposes which give the total relevance, that is, the significance and meaning to life, to be revealed. Regarding total relevance, Heidegger explained that:

These relations are interlocked among themselves as a primordial totality. They are what they are as this signifying in which *Da-sein* gives itself to understand its being-in-the-world beforehand. We shall call this relational totality of signification *significance*. It is what constitutes the structure of the world, of that in which *Da-sein* as such always already is. (Heidegger, 1996, p. 81)

The example used above regarding the hammer being relevant to building a shelter is given significance through understanding what it means for the person who is considering the hammer with regards to the world in which one is required to live in a shelter. This total relevance depends upon reference to *Dasein* as its relation to this entity providing the “primary ‘what-for’” which “always concerns the being of *Dasein* which is essentially concerned *about* this being itself in its being” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 78). It begins to emerge here that according to Heidegger human persons are beings in relation who relate to these relations which is quite different to conceptualising persons as transcendent egos who make sense of the world only through rational consciousness.

Similarly to Heidegger’s hammer Dewey used the example of a hoe to demonstrate the ‘ready-made’ understanding of the entity. He refers to the end-in-view or consequence of hoeing which gives the tool its meaning. The tool is *used* to systematically pursue an end-in-view or purpose by a person. Without this end-in-view of the person the entity of the hoe could not be understood much beyond immediate sense perception. Many meanings would be possible due to “a vast extension of what the hoe has to say for itself” (Dewey & Bentley, 1991, p. 329). This notion of letting the hoe ‘speak’ to the person who is considering it is very similar to how Heidegger described truth as disclosing and unconcealing.

Meaning can be understood then as being relevant *and* significant. The relevance refers to the immediate togetherness entities have which are the relations which give immediate sense. However meaning also consists of significance – that is, the totality of relevance which is inclusive of the person and her purposes or ends-in-view for participating in particular activities. One can appreciate then that ultimate value is not just the total relevance contained in the initial significance of the need to build a shelter or hoe a field as a source

of food. Ultimate meaningfulness refers to the total significance of *all* the ‘whys’ that we participate with and which give our lives sense, direction, significance and purpose.

## Imagination

Pursuing his quest to make the reconstruction of society possible Dewey (1988b, p. 201) recognised that imagination is a necessary component. He argued that imagination precedes “thinking of the close-knit type” by initially providing a “leap to a suggested conclusion” (Dewey, 1989, pp. 115 & 193). If society is to be reconstructed into something better then a vision of an alternative is required first. This vision cannot be observed because it does not yet exist. Dewey claimed that imagination requires the subjective participation of existing individuals due to its visionary status being “beyond the old and not yet in a new one” (Dewey, 1958, p. 220). Therefore educated persons need more than just the skills necessary for critical observations – they also require an ability to create imaginative possibilities which do not yet exist.

While creative imagination involves abstract thought (Dewey, 1989, p. 278), bringing in view possibilities for familiar objects and ideals it does not mean that imagination is to be equated with fantasy and the fanciful. Dewey (1989, p. 351) explained that “the imaginative is not necessarily the imaginary; that is, the unreal” and that:

A particular ideal may be an illusion, but having ideals is no illusion. It embodies features of existence. Although imagination is often fantastic it is also an organ of nature; for it is the appropriate phase of indeterminate events moving toward eventualities that are now but possibilities. A purely stable world permits of no illusions, but neither is it clothed with ideals. It just exists. (Dewey, 1958, p. 62)

The appeal to the subjective does not reduce the value of creative imagination to subjectivism because Dewey (1997, p. 67) understood imagination not to be an impulse or desire but is a purpose, an end-in-view. Dewey (1958, p. 221) explained that while all thinking and desiring are subjective to a point, they nevertheless perform a preliminary and tentative mode of action. Therefore imagined ends-in-view are not just idealistic but are actively present in our daily conduct and existence. Dewey’s view here is reflective of the pragmatism of James (1956, p. 60) which he explained depended to an extent “on you *the liver*” of life. This subjective aspect of thinking and imagination are an important first step in the process of reconstruction. Alternative possibilities first need to be created.

The importance of this somewhat subjective phase is necessary to involve the *purposes* of persons. Such purposes as James noted, are most important when considering what makes life worth living. Human purposes regarding the meaning of life are often religious or quite subjective. Dewey did not have a problem with this recognition. He even claimed that religion and poetry “are precious things” because they help provide our passion to create (Dewey, 1988b, p. 201). They form the basis and provide the *raison d’être* upon which imaginations are based and which guide any process for a reconstruction of society. A major problem with such purposes which give point, sense and meaning to life is that they tend to remain fixed and are too often considered to be beyond the critique of free and intellectual inquiry. Such inflexible purposes are considered by Derrida to be a threat to the status of truth and reality (Derrida & Ferraris, 2001, p. 5). Dewey argued throughout many of his writings that this disposition to make *fixed* our ends-in-view, our aims and purposes regarding the meaning of life, is part of our quest for certainty. The ideal of certainty has an adherence to a stable notion of truth but Dewey argued that:

dogmatism turns truth into an insurance company. Fixed ends upon one side and fixed ‘principles’ – that is authoritative rules – on the other, are props for a feeling of safety, the refuge of the timid and the means by which the bold prey upon the timid. (Dewey, 1988c, p. 163)

Such a disposition “leads to narrowness; in extreme cases fanaticism, inconsiderateness, arrogance and hypocrisy” (Dewey, 1988c, p. 157). Dewey (1988c, p. 155) claimed that such fixed purposes of life tend to provide “the cornerstone of orthodox moral theory” and are usually embraced with resolute belief in spite of the demonstration of their weaknesses. This is because he understood that persons are primarily *not* logical in nature but conduct themselves largely due to their beliefs and their associated emotional and social dispositions.

The second phase involves what Dewey (1985, p. 186) described as intellectual thoroughness being brought to bear upon the possibilities and alternatives which we imagine. It is during this phase that the value of rational, logical and scientific investigations is readily recognised as these *test* what is proposed via a creative imagination. Much could be written about this phase which is recognised as typical of Dewey’s instrumentalism because a more public and objective critique is employed to experiment and examine. However, what is not so palatable to some conservatives is that a Deweyan education involving free and intellectual inquiry should also be allowed to engage with the value of the very purposes and meanings for life itself because such a liberation is often interpreted as “a menace to organization and established institutions” (Dewey, 1988b, p. 200).

While the scientific approach of inquiring and testing is readily accepted into the ‘realm’ of the material it is not so welcomed into the more spiritual realm consisting of values, morality and religion. Dewey (1929, p. 41) described the problem to be: “How is science to be accepted and yet the realm of values to be conserved?” He observed that affairs regarding *material* concerns have been permitted to be handed over to the *new* sciences and yet the *spiritual* realm with its moral and ideal concerns has continued to be propped up by *old* institutions, customs and beliefs (Dewey, 1991c, p. 371). Recognising this same assumption of two realms Nietzsche (1996, p. 153-4) suggested that we might need a two chamber brain to cope, one part to experience science and the other to experience nonscience.” Neither Nietzsche nor Dewey actually supported such a divide of course and Dewey (1988c, p. 155) recognised that it is most important to introduce critical inquiry associated with the scientific attitude into spiritual issues because such concerns provide the purposes and directions for all of our conduct and because they are so influential require the utmost careful consideration.

Activities are meaningful because of the ends and aims which are behind our reasons for participating in them. Otherwise our actions would be blind, disorderly and mechanised. However Dewey (1988c, p. 157) argued that critical consideration and inquiry into these very ends-in-view or purposes are usually “stilled” with superficial appeals to “justice or charity or professional development”. We have witnessed similar appeals being made by current politicians to ideals such as ‘democracy’ and the ‘free world’ which have been referenced in attempts to justify the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the subsequent restrictions of human rights and acts of torture which have come to light since. However rarely do politicians encourage public forums on what democracy and freedom should mean for a global community. Dewey (1988c, p. 158) argued that “Politicians... almost uniformly act upon the doctrine that the welfare of their own country justifies any measure irrespective of all the demoralization it works.” This indicates that Dewey had a global perspective and he offered the challenge that our ends should never be unquestioningly assumed to have value – especially from a ‘national interest’ perspective.

## **Spirituality**

Encouraging a Deweyan education characterised by free intellectual inquiry not only into issues of material concerns but also into spiritual ones involving our aims and purposes for life, is not a commonly observed recommendation to be found in schooling literature. The spiritual realm or spirituality can be understood variously, but in modern pluralistic organisations it tends to be understood as being much broader than

religion or lists of national values. Basically spirituality refers to the meaning and purpose of life. Using Yalom's (1980) terminology it can refer to the cosmological – “what is *the* meaning of life?” or to the terrestrial – “what is the meaning of *my* life?” Rather than be directed as an either/or it is contended here that spirituality should consist of both the universal and the terrestrial questions where both can have a presence for the ‘seeking spirit’ to which UNESCO (Faure, 1972, p. 149) refers. Traditionally the spiritual domain has been understood in contrast to the material (Delors, 1998, p. 16). However, such a view contributes to a two-realm understanding of reality, one of material objects and another of spiritual elements. This two-realm divide has contributed towards the rather mysterious nature which is often associated with spirituality. Dewey argued similarly with Whitehead (1967) that there is but one realm – that of existence – which is composed of an existential matrix consisting of both biological and cultural aspects.

In England the term spiritual first appeared in educational legislation in the *Education Act* in 1944, where it was at that time regarded as synonymous with Christianity. It was later endorsed by the *Education Reform Act 1988* and again in the *Education Act 2002*, where it is included with the moral, social and cultural dimensions of development. Unlike England, Australia has no Educational Act to oversee a national policy on education. However each State is a signatory to the *Adelaide declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the twenty-first century* (Australian Ministerial Council of Education, 2000). Throughout this document the emphasis is upon schooling rather than education. The preamble to these national goals states that “Schooling provides a foundation for young Australians’ intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development” (Australian Ministerial Council of Education, 2000). The inclusion of the spiritual here is limited to the preamble only and is not included nor described further in any of the eighteen nationally agreed goals.

Rather than being an add-on to the curriculum, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) in England make the claim that spiritual development might in fact be linked to learning more generally. They state that:

A spiritual sense can be seen as a prerequisite for learning since it is the human spirit which motivates us to reach beyond ourselves and existing knowledge to search for explanations of existence. The human spirit engaged in a search for truth could be a definition of education, challenging young people to explore and develop their own spirituality and helping them in their own search for truth. (as quoted by Ofsted, 2004, p. 11)

Not only is spiritual development understood to be a prerequisite for learning but it can be argued that education itself might be defined as a search for truth and it is an individual search at that. Here the role of imagined possibilities becomes so important. Explanations of existence are not universally accepted as existing in any particular body of knowledge but rather they emerge through persons giving sense to their life experiences retrospectively. However, Saul (1997, p. 94, 139) like Dewey, argues that the creativity that could be employed in this regard of giving sense to the meaning of one's life is prevented by the impositions of world views considered as *fixed*.

It is acknowledged here that it tends to be a natural disposition for human persons to have world views which are considered fixed as it is what we believe in after all. To ‘unfix’ one's meaning and purposes of life can be unsettling. Eric Fromm (2001, p. 54) has explained that “by losing his fixed place in a closed world man loses the answer to the meaning of his life; the result is that doubt has befallen him concerning himself and the aim of life.” He argues that we are in fear of exercising personal freedom to create our own meanings for life and prefer instead to be governed by “the anonymous authority of conformity” (Fromm, 1955, p. 102). He describes modern man as being “deeply afraid of taking the risk and the responsibility of giving himself his own aims” and considers that he “would be free to act according to his own will, if he knew what he wanted, thought, and felt. But he does not know” (Fromm, 2001, pp. 218, 220). Here Fromm echoes Dewey's similar claim as was quoted earlier that we do not know what we want because we lack deep roots which go down to our judgement of valuing what is genuinely worthwhile.

## How a Deweyan education is a spiritually creative enterprise

A spiritually creative enterprise can be understood as one in which creative imagination is brought to bear upon the deep and ultimate concerns dealing with existence such as our meaning and purposes for life, values and sense of personal identity. Rather than accept such ultimate concerns as *fixed* in the sense that they are formulated somewhat like dogma established through traditional religious or customary authorities, they can be re-evaluated and imagined to be other than they currently are. This is argued here to be important in order to have the aims and purposes as ends-in-view which determine our conduct to be given value to the specific existences we live. This is all the more necessary as we find ourselves in a world of rapid change. Rather than have our actions and conduct ruled and determined by authoritative traditions of the past we can imagine other possibilities for our way-of-being that must be necessarily different if humankind is to surmount the complex and global problems that we are currently experiencing. Being creative towards our spirituality requires what Derrida described as disruptive and dissenting forces rather than those of integration and consensus (Derrida & Ferraris, 2001, p. 25).

Such a creative enterprise regarding an imagined spirituality is not a subjective or even an individual affair. Importantly there needs to be conviction and commitment on the part of the individual to exercise one's inner freedom to be creative. But the spiritual meaning and purposes of life that individuals commit themselves should be public affairs not private and hence should be made available to a Deweyan 'intellectual thoroughness'. This is because our actions and the way we live our lives inevitably affect others. According to Dewey (1975b, p. 12) the spiritual welfare of humankind must extend beyond individual beliefs, thoughts and feelings. This is much like Charles Taylor's argument in his book *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Here he argues that authenticity, while clearly being self-referential, nevertheless should also involve a more public deliberation regarding "what ought to be our ends" (Taylor, 1991, pp. 8, 82). Spiritual values cannot be imposed by external authorities as this would lead to mechanical behaviours committing us to a sense of duty rather than intelligent understanding. Such an appeal to duty is uncomfortably similar to the 'ethics of obedience' which Bauman (2000) argues was predominant amongst the Nazis working in concentration camps. Learning how to be mechanically obedient as a way-of-being cannot be equated with becoming educated because this latter enterprise requires persons to understand more fully the rationale behind one's activities and be willing to have this critiqued publicly.

Dewey (1988c, p. 100) claimed that "if men understand what they are about, if they see the whole process of which their special work is a necessary part, and if they have concern, care, for the whole, then the mechanizing effect is counteracted." In addition to becoming educated, persons should not just be able to defend their spiritual ends-in-view as it is recognised that those who are indoctrinated can also appeal to some rational justifications for their beliefs (Kleinig, 1982). What is crucially important about a Deweyan education is that educated persons are also willing to publicly examine their end purposes because they are not assumed to be fixed but are rather 'suspended conclusions' which are always open to continual improvement. In one of his later writings Dewey (1990, p. 463) argued that "The one precious thing that can be acquired in school or anywhere else is just this constant desire and ability" to keep learning and improving, which he described earlier as *growth*. This is similar to how UNESCO understands the value of such an education for today's world (Delors, 1998, p. 101). This of course must also refer to learning about what ultimate and spiritual end purposes we *ought* to be living our lives by. Dewey (1997, p. 84) clearly argued that "Growth in judgement and understanding is essentially growth in ability to form purposes and to select and arrange means for their realization." Such an enterprise into the ultimate spiritual concerns of humanity must be creative if indeed it is to be educative, having the potential to enable humankind to live according to 'significant conscious desires'.



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