

THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE LECTURER: JOHN DEWEY, EVERETT DEAN MARTIN, AND REFLECTIVE THINKING

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ABSTRACT

Adult education scholars have not yet examined the connections between the philosopher, John Dewey, and the lecturer on adult education, Everett Dean Martin. These scholars generally portray Dewey as indifferent to their field. However, Dewey's correspondence with a New York newspaper editor in 1928, recommending Martin's *The Meaning of Liberal Education*, raises interesting questions about these two men and their interest both in the meaning of adult education and in reflective thinking. For Dewey and Martin the value of education engaged in by adults was not merely voluntary participation in an activity but meaningful growth aided by reflection. This study examines the connection between these two figures and explains why Martin's views may have resonated with Dewey and how they shared critical values pertaining to adult education.

In March 1928, John Dewey responded to a request from Marie Meloney, editor of the *New York Herald-Tribune Sunday Magazine*, and offered his recommendations on recently published texts on education. Dewey wrote, "I think the best educational books of recent publication are Bode, *Modern Educational Theories* . . . Kilpatrick, *Education for a Changing Civilization* . . . & Martin, *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*".¹ This was not the first time Dewey recommended Everett Dean Martin's book. In 1927, the editors of the *Journal of the National Education Association* approached Dewey and asked, "What book have you recently found especially worthwhile? Something that you have read easily, eagerly, and with profit—either in the field of education or out of it."² Dewey identified two books; one of them was Martin's *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*.

Our review of Dewey's collected works and his correspondence indicates that Dewey did not elaborate upon his recommendation, either to the editors of *NEA Journal*, Marie Meloney, or other parties. So, we asked, why did Dewey recommend Martin's book? We found nothing in the education or philosophy literatures to suggest the two authors shared specific interests or priorities. We found nothing to indicate they had engaged in any exchange of ideas. Yet, clearly, Dewey was

reading Martin. We also know that Martin used quotations from Dewey's work in *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*. So, obviously, Martin was reading Dewey as well. Accordingly, we wondered, did Dewey and Martin share important beliefs about the nature and purposes of adult education? And if they did share such beliefs, what were they?

This article reports on findings from a study that addressed these questions. We have organized our discussion in the following manner. First, we provide readers with brief biographical accounts of Martin and Dewey to situate them in the third and fourth decades of the 20th century. Second, we describe the Dewey and Martin texts we examined, along with selected secondary sources we consulted, and explain why we focused on these works to address our research questions. Third, we report on our reviews of two major Dewey works written (or rewritten) in the late 1920s and early 1930s to note their purpose and points of alignment with Martin. We also report on our review of Martin's *The Meaning of a Liberal Education* to note its purpose and then to identify points of alignment with Dewey. This discussion is followed by a brief review of Martin's discussion of Dewey in his book. Our study of these texts led us to two significant findings. First, Martin and Dewey shared important views regarding the nature of reflective thinking, the challenges to practicing reflective thinking, and the importance of this capacity for adults. Second, although Dewey is not regarded as an important figure in the field of *adult* education, he held definite views on the topic, some of which were compatible with those articulated by Martin, one of the great public lecturers of the early 20th century and a major figure in American adult education during the 1920s and 1930s. Though these findings may not have any direct significance for interpretations of Dewey's philosophy, they do help us understand (a) how Dewey's discussion of reflective thinking was aligned with the views of Martin, and (b) why Dewey should be regarded as a contributor to the field of adult education.

As we explain below, today the field of adult education tends to view Dewey as a disinterested bystander. It is difficult to explain precisely why Dewey has been assigned this role. However, at a very basic level, his interests in adult education diverged from those of his contemporary, Lyman Bryson, the figure usually identified as writing the first adult education textbook and promoting a new field of academic study. Dewey, on the other hand, was not promoting a new field of study; he was wrestling with what education meant for human beings, young and old, living in a democracy. So what did Dewey really think about the emerging field of adult education? "Not much" according to his friend Alvin Johnson, who was director of the New School for Social Research in New York City from 1923 to 1945 and a prominent member of the American Association for Adult Education.³ According to Johnson, "He [Dewey] had very little use for those early notions that we had to develop specific types of teaching for adults."⁴ Similarly, it is useful to remember that

Dewey cautioned readers in *Experience and Education* that the essence of education doesn't change no matter what adjective (or noun, such as adult) precedes it.⁵ He stated, "Education is a development within, by, and for experience."⁶ Notwithstanding this position, Dewey clearly registered his interest in Martin's book, an early contribution to the field of adult education. Ironically, therefore, in 1927 and 1928 Dewey was articulating an interest in an emerging field of study that would eventually go on to forget him.

EVERETT DEAN MARTIN AND JOHN DEWEY

Martin (1880–1941) was trained as a Congregational minister and graduated from the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago at the age of 27.⁷ From 1906 to 1915, he ministered in Illinois and Iowa. Then, in 1915, Martin left the ministry and relocated to New York City. Over the next 20 years, Martin developed into a successful writer and forged a national reputation as a charismatic public lecturer, often attracting a crowd of a thousand or more at the People's Institute—a major center for adult education in New York City.⁸ Martin served as director of the Institute for 12 years from 1922 to 1934. In 1936 he accepted a position as professor of social psychology at Claremont College in Southern California. Five years later Martin suffered a fatal heart attack at age 61.

Martin's youngest sister, Dorothy Wasson, described him as "serious, sensitive, possessing a keen sense of humor, . . . I've heard that some people refer to Everett as an ivory tower elitist. But that wasn't it."⁹ Wasson noted that her brother, "believed in the power of education. Everett was truly a humanist . . . He felt that everybody should have the opportunity to acquire an education."¹⁰ Everett White, Martin's teaching assistant at Claremont College and later a successful academic himself, remembered Martin as a great communicator and adult educator.¹¹ He recalled that Martin had an ability to make difficult ideas "understandable to people without any previous philosophical or historical background or knowledge, which is I suppose what an adult educator ought to be."¹²

Family members and students were not the only ones who described Martin as an inspiring educator. Lola Jean Simpson, reporting for *Harpers Magazine* in 1929, noted the impressions of some audience members attending one of Martin's Friday evening lectures at Cooper Union.¹³ One person stated that, "Martin has a way of setting you thinking in new and adventurous lines about things happening right now in this country. . . . Going to the lectures is the most interesting thing I can do."¹⁴ Morse Cartwright, executive director of the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE), offered a similar endorsement of Martin in 1941 shortly after his death. Cartwright acknowledged Martin's numerous contributions to the adult education movement in a memorial published in the *Journal of Adult Education*.¹⁵ Cartwright wrote, "Dr. Martin was the spiritual father of the American Association for Adult Education."¹⁶ He continued, noting that Martin "served successively as

member of [the AAAE] Council, of its Executive Board and Executive Committee, as its President, and as its Chairman.”¹⁷

However, not everyone thought highly of Martin. For example, Scudder Klyce, an author and long-time acquaintance of Dewey, wrote to him in 1927 after reading Dewey’s endorsement of Martin’s book. Klyce stated that he was “astonished” Dewey would recommend Martin’s book.¹⁸ Klyce claimed that Martin was “a cheap and sensational dogmatist on essentials.”¹⁹ Whether one regards Martin as a notable author and inspiring lecturer or as dogmatic and sensationalistic, the historical record confirms he was a provocative figure in education in the 1920s and 1930s. The same can be said, of course, about John Dewey.

As readers of *Education and Culture* know, Dewey’s long and prolific life (1859–1952) established him as the dominant American educational theorist of the first half of the 20th century.²⁰ After completing his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University in 1884, Dewey had faculty appointments at the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Chicago. Dewey accepted a position at Columbia University in 1904 as a professor of philosophy, and that institution was his primary academic home for the next 25 years. While at Columbia, Dewey published a number of his major works including *How We Think* (1910)²¹; *Democracy and Education* (1916)²²; *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922)²³; *The Public and Its Problems* (1927)²⁴; and later, a revised edition of *How We Think* (1933).²⁵

Shortly after Dewey’s death in 1952, *Progressive Education* published a memorial issue dedicated to Dewey. Herbert W. Schneider, a former student of Dewey’s and then a professor of philosophy at Columbia University, discussed Dewey and his position on adult education. Schneider (1952) wrote,

My general conclusion about Dewey as an influence in progressive education is that his greatest contribution lies in the field of what might be called adult education. I mean here not the courses which are given here and there to adults, but the faith in a process of reciprocal education among mature minds or at least among minds that aim at maturing.²⁶

Still, Dewey’s influence tapered off in the fields of education and philosophy during the last decades of the 20th century. Indeed, Cross-Durrant’s discussion in the early 1980s of Dewey’s interest in lifelong education stands out as an exception to this trend.²⁷

Dewey’s rehabilitation in philosophy departments began when Richard Rorty published *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and asserted that Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey were “the three most important philosophers of our century.”²⁸ This, in turn, led to reintroductions throughout the humanities.²⁹ Nevertheless, during the last 20 years, leading adult education historians and theorists have continued to assign a second tier or bystander role to Dewey when explaining his relevancy to their field.³⁰

THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Our inquiry began with electronic searches of Dewey's collected works and correspondence. We searched for evidence of an acknowledgment by Dewey (or his correspondents) of Martin or his book. We also conducted close textual studies of two relevant Dewey books published within just a few years of Martin's book to search for possible points of alignment between the two authors. The first, *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), was based on a series of lectures made at Kenyon College in Gambier Ohio in January 1926. The second, *How We Think* (1933), was a revised edition of a book first published in 1910. In the case of Martin, the primary text we examined was *The Meaning of Liberal Education* (1926). Because Martin's book included references to Dewey's chapter on theories of morality in *Democracy and Education* (1916), we went back and examined this work as well. We also studied other writings by Martin and transcriptions of interviews with individuals who knew Martin personally. In addition, we consulted scholarly critiques of Martin's work.

After examining these primary sources we also studied the following secondary sources: (a) major treatments of the general history of adult education in the United States, including Knowles³¹, Stubblefield³², and Stubblefield and Keane³³; (b) works regarding Martin including Day³⁴ and Day and Seckinger³⁵; and (c) interpretations of Dewey's life and his work, including those completed by Dykhuiszen³⁶, Hook³⁷, Ryan³⁸, and Westbrook.³⁹ Our review of these publications did not suggest other primary sources that might add to our understanding of the issues, so we bounded our research by these primary and secondary sources. In our discussion below, we begin with Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems* (1927) and *How We Think* (1933). We then focus on Martin's *The Meaning of a Liberal Education* (1926) and close with brief remarks on Martin's use of excerpts from Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1916).

THE DEWEY AND MARTIN TEXTS

The Public and Its Problems (1927)

Dewey's primary purpose in writing *The Public and Its Problems* was to identify the problems facing modern industrial societies and the conditions that brought them about. What were these problems? Dewey argued that some of them emerged simply due to the nature of the political state and the nature of human beings themselves. For Dewey, the political state was defined by the following traits: geographical boundaries, rules of law, respect for custom and tradition, and a tendency to treat certain members as dependents or wards of the state, such as children. Two of these traits in particular—rules of law, and respect for custom and tradition—can easily create conflict between individuals. This might happen, for instance, when laws favor the interests of some over others and when new

ideas and actions challenge custom and tradition. Dewey further observed that humans rather naturally develop habitual ways of thinking and acting as they deal or cope with the precariousness of life. Therefore, human beings are inevitably challenged by (a) changing social conditions (e.g., urbanization, immigration, increased mobility, increases in leisure time, etc.), (b) technological changes (e.g., telephone, automobile, airplane, etc.), (c) changes in work (e.g., growth of factories and the mass production of goods), (d) changes in amusements (e.g., movies and radio), and (e) an increased sophistication of opinion makers and their ability to manipulate public opinions.

For Dewey, each of these changes posed special challenges to custom and tradition, to prior ways of thinking and doing things. He observed that the public's response to these changes and challenges could be guided by "fumbling and groping" (blindness and accident) or by intelligence, "guided by knowledge of the conditions."⁴⁰ Of course, Dewey advocated the use of intelligence as the best means to manage these changes. He contended that a failure to apply intelligence to rapidly changing conditions could lead to the

enslavement of men, women, children in factories in which they are animated machines to tend to inanimate machines . . . [and also to] sordid slums, flurried and discontented careers, grinding poverty and luxurious wealth, brutal exploitation of nature and man in times of peace and high explosives and noxious gases in times of war.⁴¹

So what should people do when faced with great changes and challenges? Dewey contended that we should examine how energetic and forward looking communities are sustained by active debate, discussion, and persuasion. Dewey claimed that active debate, discussion, and persuasion could be achieved through (a) improved conditions in a community of equals in which inquiry (reflective thinking) can thrive and (b) development of better means for the dissemination of such inquiry. This, in turn, would help inform and guide the public's thinking.

Although Dewey did not explicitly discuss adult education in *The Public and Its Problems*, his observations about three elements of the human condition are especially relevant to our remarks below. These interrelated conditions are age, habits, and learning. Dewey had reservations about the effectiveness of education for adults and his lack of confidence was primarily due to the force of habits. Accordingly, he stated, "the period in which education is possible to an effective degree is that of childhood."⁴² Dewey cautioned readers that habits are formed early and affect the substance, depth, and openness of thought. He observed that "Habit is the mainspring of human action, and habits are formed for the most part under the influence of the customs of a group."⁴³ He continued,

The influence of habit is decisive because all distinctively human action has to be learned, and the very heart, blood and sinews of learning is creation of

habitudes. Habits bind us to orderly and established ways of action because they generate ease, skill and interest in things to which we have grown used and because they instigate fear to walk in different ways, and because they leave us incapacitated for the trial of them. Habit does not preclude the use of thought, but it determines the channels within which it operates. Thinking is secreted in the interstices of habits.⁴⁴

Despite Dewey's reservations about the impact education could have on adults, he knew human habits can be changed. What we see in *The Public and Its Problems*, therefore, is a description and explanation of the context in which learning takes place and the challenges that are encountered if humans are to change their habits of thinking. Moreover, this topic was a major focus of Dewey's work, *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*.

How We Think (1933)

Dewey's primary purpose in writing *How We Think* was to encourage teachers to reflect on their classroom practice and adopt instructional strategies that fostered reflective thinking. In the preface to the first edition, republished in the 1933 edition, Dewey argued for an approach to teaching built upon "the native, and unspoiled attitude of childhood, marked by ardent curiosity, fertile imagination, and love of experimental inquiry."⁴⁵ Dewey believed American schools prematurely stifled childhood curiosity and, therefore, students were not prepared properly for life's challenges. Accordingly, change was needed. Although Dewey wrote *How We Think* for elementary and secondary schoolteachers, his ideas are also relevant to the practice of university teachers and adult educators. Additionally, although the book's title is "How We Think," it could have been titled, "How We *Should* Think."⁴⁶ For rather than describing the intricacies of human psychology, Dewey presented his account of thinking as an essential aspect of how people should learn, live, and understand their experience.

This focus on experience was evident in his response to the question, "What is thinking?"⁴⁷ Dewey responded by observing that people think in a variety of ways: unconsciously, imaginatively, dogmatically, and reflectively. When people are awake (and sometimes when they are sleeping), thoughts occur randomly, much as a moving "stream of consciousness,"⁴⁸ a phrase popularized by William James. A second type of thinking is encompassed within the idea of imagination (a mental picture of a thing not actually present). Next, there are unquestioned and accepted beliefs that people act upon daily. Included in this way of thinking, Dewey wrote, are

all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet which we are sufficiently confident of to act upon and also the matters that we now accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future.⁴⁹

The fourth kind of thought is reflective thinking. Dewey characterized reflective thinking as, “*active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends.*”⁵⁰

In *How We Think*, Dewey identified two important phases of reflective thinking: “(1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity.”⁵¹ For Dewey, this is the approach young children commonly adopt when confronting novel situations. This is also the approach scientists use to explore unknowns.

Reflective thought, according to Dewey, generally followed a pattern: “(1) suggestions . . . , (2) intellectualization of the difficulty or perplexity . . . , (3) hypothesis . . . , (4) mental elaboration of the idea . . . , and (5) testing the hypothesis by overt or imaginative action.”⁵²

Throughout this text, Dewey provided illustrations of current school practices that ignored reflective thinking on the part of students and teachers. These nonreflective practices, he asserted, dull childhood curiosities and preclude understanding. And in the case of common classroom teaching and learning, Dewey cautioned, knowledge and understanding commonly do not go hand-in-hand. A student could therefore know something without truly understanding it. Against this backdrop, Dewey shared three examples of reflective activity in everyday life. The first was a practical deliberation about the best form of transportation to use in order to arrive at a meeting on time. Dewey described this experience as a decision involving “doing.” The second was a reflection upon an observation made, that is, a “why is that?” type moment and examination. Dewey’s third example involved an observation leading to experimentation.

These three examples were offered to show how reflective thinking occurs naturally, and Dewey encouraged teachers to build upon these natural inclinations in students. When interacting with teachers, Dewey would ask, “Why do what you’re doing?” If the answer was “to help students grow,” then Dewey provided a number of suggestions for improved practice. First, he told readers, know your subject matter well so you can concentrate on student learning. This would help ensure that teachers are not overly concerned about “what” they are teaching rather than “who” they are teaching. Second, he suggested that teachers demonstrate enthusiasm about their subject. If teachers were not enthusiastic about the subject, why should students take an interest in it? Third, Dewey claimed that teachers should possess professional knowledge about student growth and development as well as pedagogical knowledge. Fourth, Dewey said that class lessons should have direction, that is, teachers should know where lessons are going and develop ways to assist students in making connections between the subject matter and their experiences. Finally, Dewey recommended that teachers seek balance and prepare lessons that

integrated the practical and the theoretical, play and work, the mind and the heart (i.e., emotions), past and present, and process and product.

At its core, Dewey's discussion in *How We Think* was about natural curiosity, its importance in maintaining growth, and the ways in which teachers design learning activities that nurture, ignore, or stunt natural modes of inquiry. The promotion of growth was especially important to Dewey because, he observed, as people age, ways of knowing and doing become calcified, we become complacent, and routines set in. This diminishes the potential for either curiosity or reflective thinking. For Dewey, the only way to counter this calcification is to consciously and methodically guide learning, based on the learners' experience and the context that gives meaning to their lives. Children have the advantage of having a teacher. Adults, on the other hand, often lack this guidance and have to understand the process of reflective thinking independently and then follow the sequential practice that Dewey described and explained. For Dewey, learning was hard work. But when people make the effort to use "systematic care to safeguard the processes of thinking," it becomes "truly reflective" and this, in turn, signifies the achievement of "thinking as an *art*."⁵³

The Meaning of a Liberal Education (1926)

Everett Dean Martin had a similar interest in helping people become more reflective in their thinking. Martin was 46 years old when his book, *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*, was published. In 1926 he was also celebrating the tenth year of his affiliation with the People's Institute and Cooper Union in New York. At this point in time, when Martin was a member of the AAAE executive committee, he was involved in organizing small "Reader's Round Table" discussion groups in New York libraries, and he was among the first group of teachers preparing adult educators.

The Meaning of a Liberal Education was composed primarily of lectures Martin delivered in the Great Hall of Cooper Union. Martin's charismatic personality and inspiring style of speaking are reflected in the book, and it received several positive reviews. For instance, in comparing *The Meaning of a Liberal Education* with Eduard Lindeman's *The Meaning of Adult Education*, also published in 1926, Evans Clark, in a review for *The New York Times Book Review*, considered Martin's work the more compelling of the two.⁵⁴ According to Clark, Martin's work was very descriptive and, "painted one of the most attractive portraits of the educated man in the gallery of modern literature."⁵⁵

In the Preface to *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*, Martin explained that his purpose was to help readers examine the meaning of education.⁵⁶ He addressed three broad questions: (a) What is an educated person like? (b) How does he differ from the uneducated? (c) Does he think differently and, if so, why? Consideration of these questions helps illuminate the relationship between his text and Dewey's work and also their mutual interest in reflective thought.

What is an educated person like?

To answer this question, Martin began with a definition of adult education. He contended that there is an essence or deeper meaning to education when applied to adults. For Martin, adult education was significant because, at its core, it is a spiritual reevaluation of life, an awakening. This awakening is completed, at least in part, by helping people think reflectively. Accordingly, Martin stated that the task of adult education:

is to *reorient* the individual, to enable him to take a richer and more significant view of his experiences, to place him above and not within the system of his beliefs and ideals.

If education is not liberalizing, it is not education in the sense of the title of the book. I use the term “liberal” not in the political sense, as if it meant half measures, but in its original sense meaning by a liberal education the kind of education which sets the mind free from the servitude of the crowd and from vulgar self-interests. In this sense, education is simply philosophy at work. . . . Education is itself a way of living.⁵⁷

This description shows that, for Martin, adult education was more than the mere acquisition of knowledge or a skill. Fundamentally, like Dewey, Martin viewed education as growth. Martin contended that, “the educated mind is not a mere creature of its own time. Adult education is emancipation from herd opinion, self-mastery, capacity for self-criticism, suspended judgment, and urbanity.”⁵⁸ Accordingly, for Martin, adult education served as a catalyst for intense self-reflection and an opportunity to confront habitual ways of thinking. An educated person, therefore, was an individual who knows his own mind, is at home with uncertainty, and recognizes that he lives in an unfinished world.

As was the case with Dewey, context was an important aspect of learning. Yet Martin was quick to add—in Deweyan fashion—that adults are not inevitably shackled to culture or tradition. Educated adults are always works in progress and never finished products. Martin believed that adults discriminate between alternative views and behaviors, wrestle and struggle with ideas, and when necessary, expend the energy and effort that critical thought and reflection demand. In other words, the educated adult is “the cultivated amateur.”⁵⁹ By this, Martin was referring to an individual who is “competent and well-informed, but with all natural and human, wholly at ease with his knowledge and master of his technique; one whose thinking is play and whose mind does not squeak as it runs along.”⁶⁰ Martin believed that the potential for developing this capacity was the birthright of all adults.

How do educated people differ from the uneducated?

When considering the differences between educated and uneducated persons, Martin offered a series of qualifications. Uneducated adults were ignorant and pas-

sively accepted cultural beliefs and traditions. Ignorance in children was tolerable, but not in adults. Adults, Martin argued, must prevail against ignorance. Accordingly, he wrote,

We must overcome strong resistances before we may begin to learn some things. We keep ourselves in ignorance because there are facts and truths whose existence we prefer not to admit. The man who strives to educate himself—and no one else can educate him—must win a certain victory over his own nature. He must learn to smile at his dear idols, analyze his every prejudice, scrap if necessary his fondest and most consoling belief, question his presuppositions, and take his chances with the truth.⁶¹

Martin was convinced that passivity, docility, and the unquestioning acceptance of others' views was a cowardly way to live. Although questioning can be a painful process, Martin claimed it was a vital component of intellectual growth and a distinction identifying the educated adult. It specifically required that adults examine ideas and values that may have seemed comfortable and settled, thereby opening their mind to uncertainty.

Do educated people think differently and, if so, why?

Martin's response to this question again reveals that he believed, like Dewey, that human beings are predisposed to think and act routinely. Habitual ways of thinking and doing are natural to the species. To do otherwise requires a decision to change, an expenditure of energy and all of this takes effort. *The cultivated amateur* chooses to expend the energy, though the outcome of new learning adventures is always unknown and always entails some risk.

But these are not the only differences between adults who seek to be educated and those who do not. In the *Meaning of a Liberal Education*, Martin identified four traits that were hostile to adult education, in general, and to reflective thinking, in particular: "first, our genius for organization; second our well-known utilitarianism; and third, our cleverness in finding shortcuts to the ends we seek; fourth, our tendency to make propaganda."⁶²

Genius for organization. Martin contended that adults commonly lose sight of the spirit of a concept or activity when promoting it to others in organizational contexts. Soon, organizational culture overshadows the essence of what people were so committed to in the beginning. For Martin, this behavior was especially evident in organized religion and education systems. In short, he argued, the ends of *the cultivated amateur* should not be diverted or corrupted by organizational ends.

Well-known utilitarianism. Martin accepted on faith that an intellectual journey is worthwhile for its own sake. This journey also has value, however, because it aids judgment and discrimination. Adult education, he claimed, is "the art of making living itself an art. It is the achievement of human excellence; it transcends both the useful and the ornamental. It is a way of life, just as truly as the religious life is a way

of life, or the moral life, or the single life.”⁶³ But, Martin claimed, individuals are generally attracted to adult education because they believe it will help them achieve utilitarian objectives. This belief often led adult learners to overlook the spiritual quality of what education should also nurture—curiosity and reflective thought.

Cleverness in finding shortcuts. As noted above, Martin contended that education required time and commitment. It is not surprising, therefore, that he viewed impatience as another trait undermining the investment of time and energy required for self-examination. Martin observed, “we are an impatient people, always in a hurry.”⁶⁴ Consequently, adults generally want to get in and out of an educational experience as quickly as possible. Martin added, “what people want is education without effort, ready-made education.”⁶⁵ As evidence, he shared examples from newspapers suggesting individuals can achieve “an education” with minimal effort when they acquire outlines of history and condensed books or participate in easy reading courses.

Tendency to make propaganda. Finally, Martin observed that few people truly “know the difference between education and advertising.”⁶⁶ Continuing, and said, “Press agents are everywhere busy ‘educating the public’ for all sorts of objects; to respect the rights of vested capital, to give money to build cathedrals, to vote a straight party ticket.”⁶⁷ The tendency for adults to accept propaganda as truth, to take someone else’s views as gospel, does not pass for education. In fact, Martin argued, just the opposite was true. Furthermore, this tendency to make and believe propaganda “serves to make people more superficial and opinionated than they were before.”⁶⁸

Above, we suggested that Martin viewed adult education as an awakening, a growing commitment to think reflectively. However, Martin recognized, four traits caused adults to resist this growth. Therefore, he viewed commitment to reflective thinking as a significant accomplishment and a unique achievement of the human spirit. Consequently, Martin asserted that an adult education:

has to do with insight, with valuing, with understanding, with the development of the power of discrimination, the ability to make choice amongst the possibilities of experience and to think and act in ways that distinguish men from animals and higher men from lower. . . . It is the pursuit of that knowledge which gives self-mastery. It is an interest which is never exhausted, but grows always broader and richer. It consists not in learning tricks but in developing ourselves. . . . It is a spiritual awakening; and if this awakening does not come, a person is not being educated however much he knows.⁶⁹

Our discussion above indicates that, for Martin, adults who think reflectively think differently than those who drift along, passively accepting the ideas of others. For Martin, the main differences between adults who think reflectively and those who do not were that reflective thinkers make a commitment to, (a) doubt and suspend judgment, (b) view the intellect as a tool for understanding, (c) recognize how the social environment affects thinking, (d) form their own judgments, (e) struggle and wrestle with ideas; and (f) employ a method of discernment.

MARTIN'S USE OF *DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION* IN *THE MEANING OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION*

Both Dewey and Martin understood reflective thought as essential to education, whether obtained in formal or informal settings. We believe Martin agreed with Dewey's assertion in *How We Think* that "upon its intellectual side education consists in the formation of wide-awake, careful, thorough habits of thinking."⁷⁰ Similarly, Dewey would have endorsed Martin's claim that living is an art improved and enhanced by the use of a discerning method in understanding experience. Their alignment on the intellectual dimensions of reflective thought is evident from a reading of the texts discussed above.

However, further alignment between Martin and Dewey is reflected in Martin's use of *Democracy and Education* in discussing the relationship between morality and reflective thinking.⁷¹ Martin, like Dewey, believed that moral behavior was also intelligent behavior. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey rejected the simplistic view that morality could be judged by observing a person's obedience to rules and principles. Dewey also rejected the notion that moral behavior was reflected in a person's earnings, wealth, or gifts. Instead, Dewey claimed in *Democracy and Education* that a person's moral worth was best demonstrated by the ability to think intelligently, to grow, and to live in a democratic community while contributing to the improvement of the lives of others. Martin, specifically, endorsed this view and quoted at length from Dewey's chapter on theories of morals.

DISCUSSION

So, why did Dewey recommend Martin's book? The answer, we believe, is that Martin's view of reflective thinking, as a spiritual reawakening, truly resonated with Dewey. A review of the texts discussed above reveals that Dewey had an ally in Martin regarding (a) the importance of reflective thought, (b) the human tendency towards habitual ways of thinking, (c) the importance in stirring adult learners to overcome poor thinking habits, and (d) the importance of reflective thinking to living a moral life in a democratic community. Additionally, the reserved Dewey may have greatly appreciated Martin's charismatic style as well as his "sparing around" approach, one that stirred an audience to pay attention. Moreover, like Dewey, Martin addressed education as a broad and essential dimension of human life and not as experience that should be determined by the learner's age, sex, race, or vocation.

Having said this, we are not suggesting that Dewey and Martin agreed on a wide range of issues. But this we do know. Dewey repeatedly recommended Martin to readers. Martin was clearly interested in Dewey and quoted directly from *Democracy and Education* in *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*. What we have argued in this article is that Dewey and Martin shared an interest in reflective thinking and described it in similar terms.

Another question to be considered is, why does this alignment on reflective thinking matter? As we noted above, contemporary adult education theorists tend to assign Dewey bystander status when they describe the history of the field. To be sure, Dewey did not offer a systematic or comprehensive theory of adult education. Still, Dewey did write about education and what he wrote was relevant to adults, as has been acknowledged by Schneider and Martin.

The lack of a comprehensive or systematic position on adult education by Dewey should not be surprising. A formal definition of adult education was only emerging in the literature when Lyman Bryson wrote *Adult Education*.⁷² Bryson, a professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, is commonly viewed as the first professor of adult education in the United States and, as we noted above, his book is usually described as the field's first textbook. Bryson defined adult education as, "including all the *activities* with an educational purpose that are carried on by people engaged in the ordinary business of life."⁷³ Bryson did not elaborate upon what he meant by "educational purpose," but he did suggest that it was some form of personal development activity or program, voluntarily selected. The primary audience for Bryson's text was comprised of adult education program teachers, trainers, and administrators.

Generally speaking, little has changed in the overall focus of adult education textbooks. Popular adult education authors Merriam and Brockett, for example, define adult education as "*activities* intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults" (emphasis supplied).⁷⁴ This primary emphasis on "activities," sponsored by adult education programs, continues to dominate definitions of adult education.

When adult education theorists specifically discuss reflective thinking, they tend to view it in psychological terms, as a developmental process, and do not consider the concept as relevant to the development of human spirit and democratic communities.⁷⁵ A fair question to ask then is, *why* did the field of adult education set aside or subordinate the meanings and priorities used by Dewey and Martin to programmatic and psychological perspectives? In our view, that remains an open question requiring discussion beyond the scope of this article. However, we propose two lines of argument that we believe will provide meaningful responses. The first concerns the overall vocationalization of American education and the second focuses on coincidental and perhaps related developments largely internal to the field of adult education.

The first line of argument is grounded in the vocationalization of education. Grubb and Lazerson (2004) explained that, over the 20th century, American education gradually identified preparation for occupational roles as the central purpose of its secondary and postsecondary education systems.⁷⁶ The development of human spirit and democratic communities became secondary purposes in a hierarchy that repeatedly emphasized the need for schools, community colleges, and universities

to produce programs to train people who can work efficiently and thereby secure the nation's economic strength. The emphasis on vocationalism accompanied what Grubb and Lazerson referred to as "the Education Gospel," a collection of beliefs that simultaneously praises the importance of occupational education while also demonizing educational initiatives that varied from this path.⁷⁷ Grubb and Lazerson stated that there are aspects of the Gospel grounded in fact and worthy of our endorsement (e.g., the need for all adults to have access to a good education). Yet there are also claims based on illusion (e.g., that the pace of technological change is ever increasing and that educational systems must constantly revise vocational curricula to stay current). What Grubb and Lazerson do show, in convincing detail, is how economic considerations have become dominant in determining the direction of American education, and, we contend, most educational programs designed to serve adult learners. The community college, and its overarching vocational focus, is perhaps the most important example of this evolution.

As a second line of argument, we note that over the last 50 years a major development in the field of adult education has been the rise of program planning and evaluation as a central area of study. We believe this development is related to vocationalization and a greater interest in offering short-term adult education programs designed to improve worker productivity. The growth of program planning and evaluation has also been spurred by efforts to systematize this process so it can be easily replicated by community colleges and technical schools responding to requests for workforce development. The systematization of these activities is reflected in Boone, Safrit, and Jones' work, which attempted to provide a mechanistic foundation for the planning and evaluation of adult education programs.⁷⁸

Future research will provide us with a more comprehensive account of why and how attention to reflective thinking and the development of democratic communities has been subordinated to more vocational and programmatic concerns in adult education. What is evident to us now is that the rise of a more vocational and activity focus in adult education has made the field more relevant to the training and development component of the economy. These remain issues for further study and debate.

What our research indicates, however, is that Dewey had a great deal to say about adult education—as understood in terms of growth and reflective thinking engaged in by adults. Moreover, this was a central theme of Martin's book. To be sure, Dewey declined to offer a systematic account of how specific adult education programs might be used as vehicles to teach reflective thinking. He declined to define the concept with reference to human psychology or vocational education. Instead, both Dewey and Martin focused on reflective thinking in a non-programmatic way, as a spiritual awakening and a process for individuals to develop a richer more significant understanding of their experience, which, of course, included experience in occupations. Perhaps most importantly, Dewey and Martin believed that reflec-

tive thinking was a way of understanding human experience that would enable individuals to set aside habits, avoid dogma, and learn from their past mistakes so they could develop richer and more meaningful lives in democratic communities.

CONCLUSION

Besides Martin's *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*, Dewey also recommended another book to NEA *Journal* readers. This was Jack Black's 1926 autobiography *You Can't Win*.⁷⁹ Black's book described his life for 30 years as a petty criminal—half of these years spent in jails or prison. This may have served as a one-two punch by Dewey for readers of the NEA *Journal*. Jack Black's struggles contextualized Martin's central thesis in the *Meaning of a Liberal Education*. That is, Jack Black's story is that of a young, articulate, sensitive youth who turns to a life of petty crime because of changing social conditions as well as a very human primal instinct for survival and satisfaction of needs. For thirty years Black lived in an underworld and prison culture few adults could comprehend. By the time Black published his autobiography, he had accepted his past and learned how to manage his temptations and break ingrained habits. Black had learned how to redirect his life. Dewey's simultaneous interest in the Martin and Black books, therefore, is understandable as they serve as social (Martin) and individual (Black) extensions of his philosophical writing in *The Public and Its Problems* and *How We Think*. Martin's *The Meaning of a Liberal Education* underscored the social challenges in becoming a reflective thinker and then articulated the passion needed to develop this ability. Black's *You Can't Win* demonstrated that individuals can meet and overcome these challenges. But, as all three men knew, it's not easy.

NOTES

1. Dewey to Meloney, in *Correspondence*.
2. John Dewey, "Books to Share with Friends," 60.
3. Lamont, *Dialogue on John Dewey*, 114.
4. *Ibid.*, 114–15.
5. Dewey, "Experience and Education." (Original work published 1938).
6. *Ibid.*, 13.
7. Day, "Everett Dean Martin's Agenda," 32–48.
8. Simpson, "People Who Want to be Educated," 770–78.
9. Wasson, personal communication to author, September 20, 1989.
10. *Ibid.*
11. White, personal communication to author, September 20, 1989.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Simpson, "People Who Want to be Educated," 770–78
14. *Ibid.*, 777–78.
15. Cartwright, "Everett Dean Martin," 324.
16. *Ibid.*, 324.

17. Ibid., 324.
18. Klyce to Dewey, in *Correspondence*.
19. Ibid.
20. Ryan, *High Tide of American Liberalism*.
21. Dewey, "How We Think."
22. Dewey, "Democracy and Education."
23. Dewey, "Human Nature and Conduct."
24. Dewey, "The Public and Its Problems."
25. Dewey, "How We Think: A Restatement."
26. Schneider, "Dewey as My Teacher," 12.
27. Cross-Durrant, "Lifelong Education," 115–25.
28. Rorty, *Mirror of Nature*, 5.
29. See Westbrook, *Dewey and American Democracy*.
30. Stubblefield and Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience* and Merriam and Brockett, *The Profession and Practice of Adult Education*.
31. Knowles, *History of the Adult Education Movement*.
32. Stubblefield, *History of Adult Education*.
33. Stubblefield and Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience*.
34. Day, "Everett Dean Martin's Agenda," 32–48.
35. Day and Seckinger, *Everett Dean Martin*, 55–60.
36. Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*.
37. Hook, *Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait*.
38. Ryan, *High Tide of American Liberalism*.
39. Westbrook, *Dewey and American Democracy*.
40. Dewey, "The Public and Its Problems," 256.
41. Ibid., 344.
42. Ibid., 274.
43. Ibid., 334.
44. Ibid., 335.
45. Dewey, "How We Think: A Restatement," 109.
46. Ibid., 342.
47. Ibid., 113.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 116.
50. Ibid., 118.
51. Ibid., 121.
52. Ibid., 200.
53. Ibid., 182.
54. Clark, "What Makes an Educated Man?"
55. Ibid., 1.
56. Martin, *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*.
57. Ibid., viii.
58. Ibid., vii.
59. Ibid., 309.
60. Ibid., 66.
61. Ibid., 21.
62. Ibid., 6.

63. Ibid., 12.
64. Ibid., 16.
65. Ibid., 17.
66. Ibid., 19.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., 42–3.
70. Dewey, “How We Think: A Restatement,” 177.
71. Martin, *The Meaning of a Liberal Education*, 183, 188.
72. Bryson, *Adult Education*.
73. Ibid., 3–4.
74. Merriam and Brockett, *The Profession and Practice of Adult Education*, 8.
75. Merriam, Cafarella, and Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood*, 332–33.
76. Grubb and Lazerson, *The Education Gospel: The Economic Power of Schooling*.
77. Ibid., 1.
78. Boone, Safrit, and Jones, *Developing Programs in Adult Education*.
79. Black, *You Can't Win*.

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