

*The Chicago Pragmatists  
and American Progressivism*

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## *The Educational Situation*

Although consistent supporters of trade unionism throughout their tenures at Chicago, Dewey and his colleagues at first limited their labor activism to participating as experts on psychology and pedagogy in the movement for educational reform. That movement, a comfortable alternative to the harder world of industrial conflict, nonetheless addressed distinctly class issues, often from the perspective of the laboring poor.

It was in large part the opportunity to participate in the educational reform movement that attracted Dewey to Chicago in the first place: president William Rainey Harper offered him (in addition to a substantial salary increase and the ability to hire his own department) the direction of the pedagogy department, under which Dewey hoped to create an experimental school for applying and testing his educational and psychological theories. By 1894 the University of Chicago already promised to become one of America's preeminent research and teaching institutions. Begun by Baptist elders with money supplied by John D. Rockefeller, the university in truth was controlled, and its future decisively formed, by Harper, its first president. University policy, partly to offset a reputation as the university of Standard Oil, stressed the importance of social service by faculty, an obligation encouraged by the broader context of Chicago politics and social activism. The social activist experience would be crucial in the development of Chicago pragmatism. But, although the university pro-

vided one institutional framework within which Chicago pragmatism would flourish, it was in many ways restrictive. Harper ruled his faculty and students autocratically, placing limits on political outspokenness and on at least one occasion dismissing a teacher for antimonopolistic speeches. Dewey and his colleagues enjoyed relative freedom to form their department's curriculum, but relations with Harper were frequently strained. Harper's arbitrary imperiousness, especially on matters concerning the department's efforts to build a progressive pedagogy program around the University Laboratory School, forced Dewey's departure in 1904. A residue of hostility remained, especially with Mead, until Harper died in 1906.<sup>1</sup>

### The School and Society

In 1894, Dewey had little doubt about the socially reconstructive potential of education and the role psychology could play in guiding educational (and thereby industrial) reform. Over the previous two years he had developed the general outlines of a primary school curriculum that soon would earn him the reputation as America's preeminent progressive educator.

The main features of Deweyan pedagogy are well known, but they have suffered some misunderstanding at the hands of later critics and supporters alike. As perhaps the most innovative feature of his curriculum, Dewey introduced actual social relations as the foundation of learning at his University Laboratory School. Set up in a series of Hyde Park locations, the school opened in 1896 with less than three dozen students, three teachers, and a few tables and chairs. By the time it reached its final setting in an old house on Ellis Avenue, one hundred forty children were enrolled, taught by twenty-three teachers and ten assistants from the university graduate school. And, although

<sup>1</sup> Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, 1965), 366-80; Steven J. Diner, *A City and Its Universities: Public Policy in Chicago, 1892-1919* (Chapel Hill, 1980), 17-20. On academic freedom at Chicago, see documents in Clarence J. Karier, ed., *Shaping the American Educational State, 1900 to the Present* (New York, 1975), 31-47. The University Laboratory School as Dewey envisioned it ended operations in 1904, when it was absorbed into a larger conglomeration of university educational programs. On the Dewey school and Dewey's resignation, see George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale, 1973), 74-81, 108-15; also Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards, *The Dewey School* (New York, 1936), 17-19.

still barren of traditional furnishings, it was soon full of the artifacts and tools, constructions and experiments, of a cooperative learning environment. Six-year-olds built models of community life on a sand table, seven-year-olds practiced culinary chemistry in the kitchen, and fourteen-year-olds built an admirable clubhouse in the yard, complete with a darkroom under its mansard roof. The participants and their activities brought together an extended community of reformers, academics, and parents who shared Dewey's commitment to "democratic" education. They shared as well a chronic need for funding to keep the school alive, for despite Harper's initial commitment the school never received much financial support from the university.<sup>2</sup>

The Lab School teachers carefully cultivated a schoolroom community life around "occupations" and practices familiar to the child from everyday life. Beginning with home life, the instructors gradually expanded the children's social universe to include more diverse occupations, other cultures, and other historical periods, all the while encouraging them to investigate the subject matter collectively. With the tools and artifacts of industrial and agricultural production in their hands, children were trained to contribute to the common goals of learning and producing in cooperative ventures such as gardening, cooking, and simple building projects.

Lab School students acquired intellectual skills by applying them practically, learning mathematics through the measurements necessary for carpentry and building, learning botany by raising gardens, learning chemistry in the kitchen as well as in primitive laboratories. As in all things Deweyan, each part of the curriculum was integrated with other parts in an organic conceptual unity worthy of the name "Hegelian." Practical arts facilitated the learning of history, introducing children to the social and economic relations of various epochs and cultures via their industrial arts and agricultural practices. Children would learn about early textile production by first learning to weave. They would then also learn about the cultivation and processing of flax and cotton. This became an opportunity to learn many other things: the social division of labor, the relations between the city and the countryside, the botanical classification of fibrous plants,

<sup>2</sup>The Dewey school's history is well chronicled. See Dewey's own accounts in John Dewey, *The School and Society*, in *The Child and the Curriculum and the School and Society* (1902, 1915; rpt. Chicago, 1956); Mayhew and Edwards, *Dewey School*, chap. 1.

the chemistry needed for the processing of raw materials in the textile industry.

Critics of progressive education have consistently derided Deweyan pedagogy by misrepresenting its "child centered" focus as indulgent and undisciplined. Yet, the process of building a curriculum at the Lab School was neither ad hoc and nor chaotic. Deweyan teachers planned the course of studies around the core subject (or activity) of industrial arts and history, "coordinating" diverse lessons, loosely timing the study of historical epochs to coincide with analogous stages in child development. In proposing that the child be the center of early education (the main complaint of progressivism's critics), Dewey meant two things. First, he argued, as did many other psychologists and pedagogues of his time, that teachers must know children—their capacities and incapacities for learning at different stages in childhood, their individual strengths and weaknesses—to teach them effectively. As Dewey understood child development, it proceeded through stages of intelligence and ability linked to the biological development of the body and brain. Second, Dewey maintained, on strongly argued philosophical grounds (as we see below), that the best way to teach children was to capitalize on their own interests rather than force them to learn information and disciplines for extrinsic rewards. So, although Deweyan teaching did indulge the interests of the child, it did so only on the assumption that interest was a necessary prerequisite of well-disciplined and energetic education.<sup>3</sup>

Dewey can be credited with devising a unique, experimental program in elementary education. His ideas and techniques, however, were not entirely innovative. Child-centered education had long been promoted in the teachings of Friedrich Froebel and Johann Pestalozzi, central European proponents of the Rousseauian tradition. German immigrants brought Froebellian and Pestalozzian theories and methods to the United States in the 1850s, which they and their American followers put to work after the Civil War in the new kindergartens and day schools that became increasingly popular with the middle class. William Torrey Harris and Susan Blow promoted kindergartens

<sup>3</sup> For descriptions of the curriculum at the University Laboratory School, see Mayhew and Edwards, *Dewey School*, chap. 2; Dewey, "Plan of Organization of the University Primary School," *Early Work* 5:224-43, and *School and Society*. On the history of progressive education, see Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York, 1961), chaps. 2-4, 9.

as part of the American Hegelian movement in the 1880s. Harris, who guided a younger Dewey toward graduate study at Johns Hopkins in the early 1880s, espoused a conservative Hegelianism that treated psychological development as an element in spirit's historical unfolding. Although they shared key terms and principles, Froebellianism bore only a faint resemblance to Deweyan pedagogy. Like Dewey, the Froebellians engaged children through play and "occupations" in the larger social world. But the Froebellians tried to achieve socialization in a more schematic formal manner, theorizing that individual children grew intellectually and morally by interacting with the objective manifestations of spirit in history. Using specially designed geometrical blocks, or "gifts," the Froebellians led children through the early stages of spiritual "self-realization," engaging them in carefully controlled versions of "play" and "occupations" that would help internalize spirit's presence in the object world. By playing with spherical blocks, children, according to Harris, would not only internalize the concept of a sphere, or sphericity, but also other forms of unity and wholeness such as social and moral order.<sup>4</sup>

Froebellian romanticism fit nicely with new images of childhood in liberal Protestant and reform communities, changed as Christian nurture edged out orthodox Calvinist notions of original sin. By the 1890s younger psychologists and pedagogues, who accepted many of the teachings of the Froebellian movement about the role of play and self-activity in learning, believed they were carrying the romantic tradition a step farther when they challenged Harris's leadership of the educational reform movement and abandoned the heavily spiritual organicism of the orthodox Hegelians. Dewey, who at the time was reexamining his relation to institutional (and idealist) Protestantism, joined the American followers of Johann Friedrich Herbart in the schismatic Hegelian avant-garde of educational reform. Dewey sat on the first board of the National Herbart Society and contributed several articles to the Herbart *Yearbook*, although they indicated little about the degree to which he subscribed to Herbartian doctrine.<sup>5</sup> The Amer-

<sup>4</sup>Dom Cavallo, "From Perfection to Habit: Moral Training in the American Kindergarten, 1860-1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 16 (1976): 147-61; on Harris, see Merle Curti, *The Social Ideas of American Educators* (New York, 1935), chap. 9.

<sup>5</sup>*The First Yearbook of the Herbart Society* (1895; rpt. New York, 1969), 204. The Chicago Froebel Society was long connected with Hull House; see Evelyn Weber, *The Kindergarten: Its Encounter with Educational Thought in America* (New York, 1969), 47.

ican movement allowed broad latitude in interpreting the German philosopher's writing. The Herbartian employment of a core curriculum, suited to the role of apperceptive mass in Herbartian psychology, caught on among kindergarten and other educational reformers. Dewey borrowed the Herbartian principle of correlation directly, though he preferred the word "coordination" and a core of historical studies instead of the Herbartian use of literature. This terminological preference partly reflected Dewey's deeper criticism of Herbartian theory, for example, the advocacy of a rigid "culture epoch theory," a theory of pedagogical and cognitive stages, and the orthodox Herbartian inclination, as Dewey put it, to treat the child "as *pupil*, rather than as human being."<sup>6</sup>

It was largely, however, in the Herbartian spirit that Dewey wrote "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will" for the *Herbart Yearbook* in the winter of 1895/96, which he revised and reprinted for the next several decades. This essay provides a far more sophisticated and revealing statement of Dewey's educational philosophy than his brief enunciation of principles in "My Pedagogical Creed" (1895) or his 1899 address to University Laboratory School parents and supporters, *The School and Society*. "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will" addressed philosophical issues with which Dewey had struggled since Ann Arbor: the problem in neo-Kantian ethics of explaining how the will mediates between desire and obligation, the related contradiction between utilitarian hedonism and the social and political moralism of its major proponents, and the elusive meaning (and often transcendental implications) of post-Kantian idealist notions such as self-realization and self-activity. But the essay went far beyond the philosophical roots of the new pedagogy to engage the issues of citizenship and industry in a troubled republic.

Dewey presented the educational controversies of his time as a "lawsuit" between two psychologies, a traditional "psychology of effort" and Dewey's own "psychology of interest." Traditionalists argued that children are motivated to learn only when disciplined to study and will absorb even the most uninteresting bodies of knowledge with the proper effort and enough extrinsic moral and punitive in-

<sup>6</sup> Harold B. Dunkel, *Herbart and Herbartianism: An Educational Ghost Story* (Chicago, 1970), chap. 14; Weber, *Kindergarten*, 10, 18-20, 36-38, 46-47, 56; Dewey, "Educational Ethics: Syllabus of a Course of Six Lecture-Studies" (1895), *Early Works* 5:297.

centive. In the end, not only will the child benefit by acquiring knowledge but society also will gain by instilling greater discipline and better intellectual habits in its future citizens. As was often his custom, Dewey did not name these advocates of effort even if he labeled them. He certainly meant the Gadgrinds, established practioners of a rationalist pedagogy centered around learning literary classics, classical languages, logic, history and civics, and abstract mathematics by recitation, lecture, and reading. His contemporaneous writings indicate that he also meant Harris, then U.S. Commissioner of Education, who for all his Hegelian and Froebellian romanticism placed great stock in discipline, effort, and the moral imperatives of the work ethic.<sup>7</sup>

### A Crusade against "False Hegelianism"

Dewey traced the effort psychology to a neo-Kantian dualism between desire and reason, a philosophy that held that one can achieve reason only by overcoming or ignoring desire through a willful effort. Children's immediate interests, based in the emotions and the desire for pleasure, can never lead them to superior knowledge. Education based on interests will only indulge childish inclinations, never cultivate adult rationality. Since the most outspoken critic of the interest psychology was Harris, supported by other conservative Hegelians and idealists who dominated the National Education Association (NEA), Dewey used a device similar to one in his earlier arguments against T. H. Green: Harris was in reality a "neo-Fichtean." Harris, although a confirmed believer in self-realization theory, simply perverted, according to Dewey, the Hegelian way of thinking. Harris turned self-realization into a moral ideal, detached from the true process of realization, which Dewey claimed could be understood only in terms of the interest psychology.<sup>8</sup>

For Dewey the traditional emphasis on effort brought unwarranted separation of means and ends on a psychological as well as an edu-

<sup>7</sup> Curti, *Social Ideas*, 318, 325, 330, 346; Cremin, *Transformation of the School*, 19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Dewey, review of William Torrey Harris's *Psychologic Foundations of Education* (June 1898), *Early Works* 5:372-85, "The Psychological Aspect of the School Curriculum" (April 1897), *ibid.*, 5:164-76, and "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal" (November 1893), *ibid.*, 4:42-53; W. T. Harris, *The Psychologic Foundations of Education* (New York, 1898), chap. 31.



cational level. On the educational level, teachers focused on inculcating a set of values and ideas—established knowledge—without addressing the means by which those ideas would be introduced to the student, that is, without adjusting to the child's psychological and emotional ability to absorb, attend to, or understand the subject matter. On the psychological level, since the child had no interest in the ideas in the recitation book, that is, had no sense of their intrinsic value, he or she learned those ideas for other reasons: for grades, for teachers' praise, to avoid punishment, and so on. The ideas which from the educators' point of view were the purpose of education became, from the child's perspective, mere means to artificial, extrinsic ends. When learned in this fashion, ideas were easily forgotten, once gratification was achieved or the disciplinary environment of the classroom removed.<sup>9</sup>

The psychology of interest, by contrast, integrated desire and reason, the main theme in Dewey's psychological writing since the mid-1880s. Dewey claimed for the interest psychology what he denied the advocates of effort: a true Hegelianism, which described an organic self unfolding through self-activity or self-realization, without falling prey to the "neo-Fichteian" inclination to view the individual self as merely an element of the idealized heavenly spirit. "Self-activity" and "self-realization" were the terms used by Harris and other conservative Hegelians, but Dewey meant them differently. Like Harris, the younger philosopher sought to cultivate a process of objectification in the child, involving a realization of the psychological self in the larger natural and social world. This process began with the child's own voluntary action in its primitive self-activity. Individual self-activity, they both believed, constituted the heart of human agency, the self-caused action of a free and morally responsible being, that part of character and experience undetermined by external forces.<sup>10</sup>

Here the similarity ended—or, rather, Dewey consciously ended it, for in the 1890s he struggled to distance himself from Harris's brand of Hegelianism, a philosophical and pedagogical system that Dewey found formalistic (as he would later describe it) and antidemocratic (as we see below). Although established Froebellians such as Harris placed the child at the center of the curriculum, they did so with

<sup>9</sup>Dewey, "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will" (1899), *Early Work* 5:111–50.

<sup>10</sup>Harris, *Psychologic Foundations*, chap. 3.

authority and control. The child was a savage, according to Harris and many of his contemporaries, driven by irrational passions and impulses, in need of social constraints in order to achieve true self-activity. Social institutions, created by man as he "ascends out of nature," structured "the world of human passions and desires, of human arbitrariness and caprice," into an orderly community in which the childish will was subordinated to the adult common good.<sup>11</sup> Social order facilitated individual self-activity, but only through right education, "the process of adoption of this social order in place of one's mere animal caprice." To attain true freedom (which "has the form of eternity"), the individual must make "the passage from impulse to obedience to social order." On this psychological foundation Harris reserved a prominent spot for play, but he also denigrated the self-active impulses play expressed, opposing play to cooperation as a private pursuit of "immediate gratification" which had to be controlled. The child always stood in need of socialization, which began with the imitation of adult practices, customs, and language, forming the basis for social relations.<sup>12</sup>

Dewey also viewed the child as primitive. But, if the child was a savage, there was something to be learned from and in this savagery. Childish impulses did not differ in kind from rational self-control, only in sophistication and the extent of cooperation. Dewey abhorred the opposition of social order to individual self-activity and felt that conservative Hegelians, following Green in Great Britain and Harris in the United States, had allowed a neo-Kantian dualism to intervene between the passions and reason. The child, Dewey argued, just like the "savage" begins with cooperative, social impulses that need only the proper conditions to develop. The school therefore should assume that the child's play is already social in nature, already inclined to recognize primitive responsibilities to others, and should allow the child to learn in self-active cooperative "occupations"—not formalized manipulative regimens—engaging his or her interest on its own terms.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Here Harris referred to the growth of the state in history, but the same applied to the growth of responsibility in the child, whose life history recapitulated the history of humanity; *ibid.*, 260–61.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 282–83, 300.

<sup>13</sup> Dewey, "Froebel's Educational Principles" (February 1900), *Middle Works* 1:222–24. Dewey expressed, with remarkable diplomacy, some of his differences with Harris over

Like Harris, Dewey expected the individual's self-activity to follow a path toward greater cooperation and social responsibility. Yet Dewey conceived of self-activity as "always a concrete *specific* activity" in which no idealized self (such as a "moral motive," Harris's ultimate ethical good, or a spiritual object, God) is pursued as a goal. True educational self-realization involves, according to Dewey, an inherently productive and self-cultivating set of schoolroom occupations, which are pursued both for their own sakes and as means to a further end. The integration of means and ends in the act of self-realization constitutes the active interest a child will sustain in the learning process. As Dewey was fond of pointing out, interest means standing between, that is, between self and object as activity, or between self and goal as means to an end. For example, when playing, the simplest and most direct form of truly human activity, children identify self, activity, and object in a way that sets no larger goals and does not differentiate means from end. In most other activity, however, means and ends are separate in time and space. To learn and develop properly, according to Dewey, the self has to identify with both the end of action and with the means, such that the latter is "organically bound up with the end as to share in its value."<sup>14</sup>

The interest psychology called for tailoring the curriculum to the current intrinsic interests and inclinations of the child, discerned in part by scientific psychology and in part by commonsense observation of children's habits. When the purpose of childish activity is to learn something as well as to play, then interest must be sustained by other means than simply the child's natural playfulness. The self must be involved in the process of attaining the ultimate object of knowledge. This did not mean enticing children by appealing to their basest pleasures (as some advocates of effort claimed). Rather, Dewey called for using interest to guide education, coordinating the curriculum in such a way as to help the child identify her self with the goals of learning. Originally the child's family engages her interest, Dewey argued,

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the question of interest in "The Psychological Aspect of the School Curriculum" (April 1897), *Early Works* 5:164-76.

<sup>14</sup>Dewey, "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will," *Herbert Yearbook* for 1895, 2nd supp. (Chicago, 1896), 223. This original edition contained considerable material excised by Dewey from his 1899 edition. When appropriate, my page citations are to the 1896 edition rather than to the copy-text emendations in the *Early Works*. See also Dewey, "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal," 43, 46, 52.

through the network of emotional relationships that are also productive and educational. Children learn language, skills, customs, and cooperation (as well as obedience to just authority) out of a natural desire to help achieve commonly held family goals that are tangible and often immediate. The imagined picture of the rural family sustained by Dewey and his colleagues did not include incest, alcoholism, the exploitation of children by their parents, or religious extremism. It was instead a well-knit, cooperative productive unit, independent of political authority, governed by a set of implicit rules and values, and directed toward the readily accepted goals of survival, cohesion, mutual support, and, if possible, prosperity.

### Educational Democracy

The conflict between the dualistic idealism of such traditionalists as Harris and the interest psychology reflected a deeper institutional and political conflict in the schools, one between a conservative authoritarianism and the democratic potential of a common school education. The key to educational authoritarianism, and the key to its removal, was the child's relation, at once psychological and ethical, to the objects of knowledge or, as Dewey preferred, the activity of learning. Would the child, Dewey asked, identify with the goals of education, make them a part of himself or herself, and see the purpose in the schoolwork? Or would the child be isolated from the goals of learning, unable to understand the significance or purpose of recitation, and perceive schooling as alien and therefore uninteresting except as a token to exchange for approval and power? The former, according to Dewey and other Chicago educational reformers such as Colonel Francis Parker, constituted truly democratic self-activity in which the child participates in establishing the goals and creating the tools of learning. The latter imposed educational ends and means on the child, in disregard for his or her natural desires and impulses.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Parker was emphatically Pestalozzian in calling for a democratic classroom that allowed children to participate in constructing the curriculum. The Herbartians, in tying curricular development to the psychological and historical growth of the apperceptive mass, also tended to leave the direction of education up to the child and thus viewed themselves as inheritors of the Pestalozzian tradition. See Francis W. Parker, *Talks on Pedagogics* (1894; rpt. New York, 1969), v, 411; Charles De Garmo, *Herbart and the Herbartians* (New York, 1912), 3-11; Dunkel, *Herbartianism*, 30-35, 40.

Schoolwork that does not engage the child's interest is merely drudgery, Dewey argued, in which immediate tasks are unrelated (as means) to educational and personal goals with which the child identifies (or, which the child identifies as part of his or her self-activity). School lessons are "necessary evils, accidentally and externally attached to something we want, so that we can't get one without the other. They are not regarded as in the same process of self-expression as is the end." Traditional schoolwork fails, Dewey believed, because it separates the means and ends of education, contriving goals of learning extrinsic to the learning process itself. By doing so, traditional education and the philosophy that justifies it on ethical (and to a lesser extent psychological) grounds divides the child's character between a commitment to the educational system and his or her own intrinsic interest and motivation.<sup>16</sup>

Much more was at stake here than the organization of classroom activities. The authoritarian separation of means and ends in education reflected, Dewey thought, the absence throughout society of productive activity done for its own or self-expression's sake. Thus, Dewey's model for schoolroom drudgery was factory wage labor in which the worker does not identify self with industrial goals and works simply for remuneration. Factory work thwarts self-realization, Dewey argued, by separating means and ends, relegating one to the worker and the other to the manager or owner. From the worker's point of view, "the day's task is to him only incidentally, accidentally, not intrinsically, a means to the end." He works only for a "physical" end, the wage, not a "psychical" end organically related to his task and his personal aspirations.<sup>17</sup> Factory work and classroom recitations were, for Dewey, instances of the same psychological and ethical failure: in each someone works for a goal not of her own choosing, with which she cannot identify, in which she has no stake. For Dewey this was no better than slavery, if only on a psychological level: "Plato somewhere speaks of the slave as one who his actions does not express his own ideas [*sic*], but those of some other man. It is our social problem now, even more urgent than in the time of Plato, that method, purpose, understanding, shall exist in the consciousness of the one who does the work, that his activity shall have meaning to himself."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Dewey, "Interest in Relation to the Training of the Will" (1896), 223.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Dewey, *School and Society*, 23.

Mead made this connection much more strongly in "The Relation of Play to Education," presented at Graham Taylor's Chicago Commons in May 1896 as part of the settlement's open lecture series. In his speech, probably delivered to a socially and ethnically mixed audience of settlement and community residents, Mead attacked the work ethic enforced in the factory and promoted through a dreary and regimented common school curriculum. Like Dewey, he identified a common psychology in factory work and rote learning. Traditional schooling had been based erroneously on the extrinsically goal-directed and controlled "work phase" of human activity, to the exclusion of its two other phases, "play" and "art." This kind of education merely reflected modern work values, reinforcing the alienation, frustration, and self-denial engendered by wage labor and factory work. Mead defined work in general as "an endeavor, in which a definite end is set up, and the means are chosen solely with reference to that end." Although work is a natural part of human life, it allows a separation of immediate occupation from the goals of that activity, such that especially in industrial work "intelligent interest in the product to be attained is not the immediate motive power in holding the laborer to his work." The product attracts the employer's interest but the worker is occupied only with the wage.<sup>19</sup>

To restore the right relation to work, Mead argued, means and ends must be reintegrated such that work becomes its own reward: "It is . . . impossible to get beyond this incomplete and unnatural character of work until the whole man responds immediately to the product upon which he is working, and is not required to seek for impetus in his labor from an interest that lies completely outside his shop or factory and its activities." By reintegrating means and ends in this manner, one turns work into something akin to art, activity the purpose of which is intrinsically connected to the form and means of execution. "It is an unfortunate workman who is in no sense an artist," Mead wrote, "and a sorry artist who never works."<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Dewey held up sculpting as the paradigmatic opposite of drudgery in classroom and factory:

The sculptor has his end, his ideal, in view. To realize that end he must go through a series of intervening steps which are not, on the face of it,

<sup>19</sup> George Herbert Mead, "The Relation of Play to Education," *University of Chicago Record* 1 (1896): 141-42.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

equivalent to the end. He must model and mould and chisel in a series of particular acts, no one of which is the beautiful form he has in mind, and every one of which represents the putting forth of personal energy on his own part. But because these are to him necessary means for the end, the ideal, the finished form is completely transferred over into these special acts. Each moulding of the clay, each stroke of the chisel, is for him at the time the whole end in process of realization. Whatever interest or value attaches to the end attaches to each of these steps. . . . A genuine interest in the ideal indicates of necessity an equal interest in all the conditions of its expression.<sup>21</sup>

Mead's and Dewey's idealization of art and artisanship echoed the pre-Raphaelite aestheticism so influential among middle-class settlement activists in the 1890s. With the genteel expectation that an exposure to "high" western European art and collegiate American culture would humanize and civilize members of their working-class, immigrant community, Hull House activists spent much of the settlement's first years creating galleries, sponsoring talks on the classics, and trying to get their neighbors to participate. Jane Addams and her colleagues undertook these activities in the elitist spirit of John Ruskin and Toynbee Hall, the British equivalent of (and inspiration for) the settlement house. Their frustration, however, at engaging the interest of the community led to projects more in keeping with the guild socialist aesthetics of William Morris, such as the Hull House Labor Museum, a historical gallery opened in November 1900 to display the industrial arts and crafts of the many immigrant cultures found on the near west side. Approximating an adult version of Dewey's Lab School classes (Hull House residents initially considered calling the museum the Labor School), Addams and her colleagues brought local women in to demonstrate spinning and weaving methods from their respective lands of origin, including Italy, Syria, Russia, and Ireland. While Hull House made industrial history the primary object of its lessons, residents supplemented the industrial arts demonstrations with songs, European prints depicting weavers, and lectures on the history of the labor movement. After a successful first year in which previously disinterested older members of the community took part in Hull House activities for the first time, the settlement planned to expand the museum to include wood and metal work, pottery, and

<sup>21</sup> Dewey, "Interest in Relation to the Training of Will" (1899), 128.

bookbinding. By this time art, for the settlement residents, represented an expression of the community, of its customs, its habits, the characteristics acquired in its long history, and its dignity. If Addams and her colleagues initially hoped to assimilate the diverse immigrant sub-communities into a true American civilization, they soon recognized that they could not simply impose a genteel culture on their neighbors. They increasingly appreciated immigrant folkways on their own terms, even if they continued their attempts to ease immigrant assimilation.<sup>22</sup>

The Hull House Labor Museum displayed a Morrisite conviction that art and work, as Mead had argued, must be restored to the right relation enjoyed in artisan economies. Art, wrote Hull House's Ellen Gates Starr in 1895, could "set the leaven of the beautiful in the midst of the ugly. . . . It is only when a man is doing work which he wishes done, and delights in doing, and which he is free to do as he likes, that his work becomes a language to him. As soon as it does so become it is artistic."<sup>23</sup> Art was a reformer's tool, something more than a "fringe. . . on the end of the day," insisted Addams. It was the interjection of humanist, Christian values into the drudgery and conflict of industrial life. Likewise, Dewey believed it possible "to extend the idea of artistic production to all kinds of work." Settlements, argued Starr, by "holding art and all good fruit to be the right of all," would help overcome the "impious warfare of the children of God."<sup>24</sup>

## Manual Education

By restoring more organic relations among art, play, and work, the Chicago pragmatists hoped to reestablish rewarding occupations and

<sup>22</sup> "First Report of a Labor Museum at Hull House" (n.d.), pamphlet in Hull House Papers, University of Illinois at Chicago; Rivka Shpak Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890-1919* (Chicago, 1989), chaps. 2-3.

<sup>23</sup> Ellen Gates Starr, "Art and Labor," *Hull-House Maps and Papers* (New York, 1895), 165, 167, 179.

<sup>24</sup> Dewey, "Imagination and Expression" (September 1896), *Early Works* 5:202; Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Culture and the City: Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago from the 1880's to 1917* (Lexington, Ky., 1976), chap. 6 (Addams quoted p. 135); see also T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace* (New York, 1981), chap. 2; Starr, "Art and Labor," 179; "First Report of a Labor Museum"; Frank Lloyd Wright "The Art and Craft of the Machine," in *Eighty Years at Hull-House*, ed. Allen F. Davis and Mary Lynn McCree (Chicago, 1969), 85-88.



crafts in the new industrial order of factories and cities. Dewey and his colleagues envisioned and promoted a radical transformation of the educational system which eventually would eliminate the tendency in modern society to divide intellectuals from workers, and ethical consciousness (concerned with ends) from practical execution (the employment of means). "The most interesting and vital problems in educational practice today," declared Dewey to an art and manual training convention in 1906, "are such as concern the connexion of play and work, of the intellectual and informational and the dynamic and motor factor; of instruction from books and teachers and from self-guided productive activities; such as concern in short the development of a type of education which shall make at once a man or a woman and a worker." The ability of these new citizens to build an egalitarian society would depend on their ability to achieve a psychological wholeness akin in form to the union of the mental and manual in the experience and activity of the craft worker.<sup>25</sup>

Dewey and his colleagues built the foundation for this expected transformation in the coordinated curriculum, with one cornerstone the teaching of industrial and cultural history and another the instruction in practical arts and crafts. At the heart of this second cornerstone lay manual education, the training of children in the use of crafts and their tools, especially, though by no means exclusively, woodworking. Manual education was to produce the new "democratic" man and woman, who would no longer live divided by social barriers or within rigidly hierarchical classes.

Dewey made a career out of promoting manual education. Within a few years after his arrival in Chicago he achieved recognition as the country's leading proponent and theorist of nonacademic training in the public schools (especially after Parker's death in 1902). When Harper annexed the Chicago Manual Training School in 1902, he and Dewey made the University of Chicago's pedagogy department one of the few places in the United States for the training of manual education teachers. Mead acquired his reputation as an advocate of manual education after Dewey's departure from Chicago, and by 1910 he led the local movement for an equitable, single-track industrial education program.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Dewey, "Culture and Industry in Education" (1906), *Middle Works* 3:290-91.

<sup>26</sup> Dewey, "Plan of the Proposed Pedagogy Department," typed manuscript, University

Like child-centrism and the coordinated curriculum, Dewey's and Mead's industrial program also had ample precedent. American educators had advocated the inclusion of manual education in some part of the common school curriculum at least since 1879, when the tools and methods used in Victor Della Vos's "instruction shops" at the Moscow Imperial Technical School were exhibited at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. Americans initially borrowed the Russian technical training system as a solution to problems encountered in engineering education and as a means to train students in lower-level industrial skills. Within a short time, American businesspeople began to promote manual education, hoping that technical training would help circumvent established, union-controlled apprenticeship traditions as a means to train skilled labor. During the 1880s several manual training schools were established in major American cities with the support of national and local business organizations; Chicago's Commercial Club founded the Chicago Manual Training School in 1884. By the 1890s manual education advocates had overcome Harris's staunch resistance in the NEA.<sup>27</sup>

Manual education attracted conflicting groups of supporters, with different conceptions of its role in the broader curriculum and of its relevance to the social and political problems of the day. In the hands of its business proponents, manual training was almost entirely vocational, part of a strategy to introduce into American schools a two-track, European-style curriculum which would train the working class in technical skills in one set of schools and teach the middle and upper classes liberal arts in another. There were, however, those who considered manual education an instrument of moral and social adjustment that transcended narrow vocationalism. Between 1895 and 1904 reformers put a great deal of weight on the introduction of manual training into the common school curriculum as the means to revitalize moral education in America and tailor it to the needs of a factory-centered industrialism.

Much of this concern focused on order rather than justice and on the moral economy of skilled and civically responsible labor, which

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of Chicago President's Papers, Box 30, Folder 23, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago; Mead, *Report of the Committee on Industrial Education* (Chicago, 1911), Introduction.

<sup>27</sup> Editorial, *Manual Training Magazine* 2 (1900-1901): 59; Cremin, *Transformation of the School*, 23-34; Sol Cohen, "The Industrial Education Movement, 1906-17," *American Quarterly* 20 (1968): 95-110.

manual education promised to maintain. Addams, for example, traced social conflict to the proliferation of unskilled laborers, who, because they “[feel] constantly the restriction which comes from untrained power,” cannot “keep [their] sense of proportion” and rebel. “There is no more dangerous agency in modern civilization than the demagogue, with ignorant labor at his back,” declared Charles H. Keyes, the supervisor of the NEA’s Department of Manual Training. “He can do little or nothing with the intelligent mechanic or artisan, but no tyranny is so unreasonable as the tyranny of illiterate labor.” Mead also observed that “labor troubles are comparatively absent from these [skilled] callings.” Finding ways to restore skills or provide adequate substitutes for the artisan work ethic became something of a cottage industry among educators and social activists. Manual training advocates considered tool exercise the necessary tonic for an ailing work ethic, standing, as one writer put it, “for a large measure of that which is the general nature and idea of work.” Mead similarly contended that the “intelligence of the artisan who made the whole article made of him an admirable citizen of the older community.” This “intelligence,” Mead believed, “very largely . . . made the success of our early democratic institutions.”<sup>28</sup>

While few believed they could actually restore artisans to their former role in the American republic, many manual training advocates hoped to reconstitute some kind of similarly virtuous citizen out of the fragmentary elements of the modern character. Most advocates claimed the moralizing effects on psychological grounds. Irene Sargent, a professor of art history at Syracuse University and an outspoken leader of the Arts and Crafts movement, warned that without manual education or some similar palliative to mindless work a factory operative “will develop morbidly, and his mind will offer a resting-place for destructive and chaotic ideas.” He might become “an insurrectionist, perhaps even a pervert and criminal.”<sup>29</sup> Charles Ham, the first director of Chicago’s Manual Training School and author of

<sup>28</sup> Addams, “The Settlement as a Factor in the Labor Movement,” in *Hull-House Maps and Papers*, 195; Report on Charleston National Education Association convention, 1900, *Manual Training Magazine* 2 (1900): 46; Mead, “Relation of Play to Education,” 142; A. W. Richards, “The Thought Side of Manual Training,” *Manual Training Magazine* 3 (1902-3): 65-66; Charles R. Henderson, “The Manual Training School as a Factor in Social Progress,” *Manual Training Magazine* 2 (1900-1901): 5; Mead, “Industrial Education, the Working-Man, and the School,” *Elementary School Teacher* 9 (1908-9): 371.

<sup>29</sup> Sargent quoted in Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 71.

a widely read treatise on manual training, argued that manual education would right an "ill-balanced mental constitution," the product of urbanization, with "the essential element of rectitude [physical development or skill]." "May not the two systems of training [intellectual and manual] be so connected in the schools," he asked, "as to cause the manual to react upon the mental, with the effect of greatly strengthening the ethical side of the mind?" University of Chicago sociologist Charles R. Henderson considered manual training essential in "the unfolding of every human being." Others simply believed manual instruction would teach respect for work, revitalizing a dying work ethic and combating the evils of sloth and idleness. It "opens up" activity that facilitates moral growth, thereby helping remove "the disposition to riotousness, to self-abasement," argued one speaker before the NEA in 1901.<sup>30</sup>

As Ham's remarks suggest, some support for manual education evoked pastoral nostalgia for a mythological rural America. Manual education advocates believed that as families moved to cities children lost contact with facets of life necessary for proper moral upbringing and adequate social and political awareness. The traditional emphasis on formal literary and scientific learning was considered ultra-intellectual and one of the many aspects of city life corrupting American "manhood" by isolating it from its rural source of vitality. The city, reported president William DeWitt Hyde of Bowdoin College, "tends to breed a race of mental dwarfs and moral cripples" who "come to school with flabby minds as well as flabby muscles, with undeveloped wills as the counterpart of unused hands." The loss of "motor activities" provided by farm chores and the loss of practical engagement in productive work isolated the child from fundamental aspects of the learning process. Immigration exacerbated this problem with a new influx of what G. S. Hall called "the great army of incapables" into public schools. Nativist educational and social reformers considered immigrant students of lower caliber than their "native"

<sup>30</sup> Charles H. Ham, *Manual Training: The Solution of Social and Industrial Problems* (New York, 1886), 132, 137. Charles R. Henderson, "Manual Training School as a Factor"; "The Value of the Sloyd Idea as a Basis for Educational Manual Training"; report of address by William DeWitt Hyde, "The End of Education," at Connecticut State Teachers Association; and report on paper of R. Charles Bates at the NEA's Department of Superintendent (February 1901), *Manual Training Magazine* 2 (1900-1901): 5-6, 40, 109-10, 169-70.

schoolmates and in need of supplementary vocational and manual training. It became even more urgent to decrease the dropout rate as states began to consider child labor laws that would force young workers out of the factory and, many feared, into the street.<sup>31</sup>

Yet it would be a mistake to trace back the interest in manual education to nothing more than a fear of moral and civil disorder. At least a significant minority of manual education advocates, many associated with the same institutions and networks as the Chicago pragmatists, hoped that in addition to restoring the rabble to order manual education would cultivate the other features of civic virtue, which would benefit the poor and working class: cultural enrichment, greater control over work life, cooperation, and equality. In Chicago, for instance, the interest in educational alternatives grew with concern over the problem of child labor. Led by the most labor-oriented and socialist members of the Hull House community, Florence Kelley, Alzina Stevens, and Abraham Bisno, the Chicago reform community made child labor a central issue, thereby focusing attention as well on the inadequate schooling provided the city's working class. During the 1890s child labor became a hot issue among social reformers, who believed factory work morally debilitated adolescents and helped create, with cyclical and structural unemployment, juvenile delinquency and antisocial behavior. Reformers considered manual education the necessary complement to compulsory attendance laws as a way to keep in school working-class children, who, it was believed, took little interest in intellectual work.<sup>32</sup>

On the face of it, the concerns of reformers' were not those of the people they hoped to serve. But the pursuit of social order and less riotous dispositions did involve a genuine concern for the enrichment of working-class lives. Reformers hoped manual education would recreate the "whole man" by restoring the lost connection between

<sup>31</sup> Hyde, "End of Education," 109-10; David E. Gordon, "Manual Training for Negro Children," *Charities and the Commons* 15 (1905): 84; Hall quoted in Cohen, "Industrial Education Movement," 99; editorial, "Child Labor and the Schools," *Chicago Teachers' Federation Bulletin*, October 6, 1905, 4; Mead, *Report of the Committee on Industrial Education*, Introduction.

<sup>32</sup> On Kelly's work, see Florence Kelley and Alzina Stevens, "Wage-earning Children," in *Hull-House Maps and Papers*, 49-78; Dorothy Rose Blumberg, *Florence Kelley: The Making of a Social Pioneer* (New York, 1966), chaps. 9, 11. For a critical appraisal that sets "child saving" in the broader structure of changing social relations see David Hogan, *Class and Reform* (Philadelphia, 1985), chap. 3.

intellectual and manual aspects of human endeavor, a psychological balance of head and hand. It was believed that the social divisions of industrial society created analogous divisions in the human psyche. Resulting social problems could be attacked through schooling and psychological readjustment. This was seen in part as a matter of reducing the tensions of the marketplace by redirecting the child's focus from competitive academic achievements toward self-fulfillment and self-realization. Manual training motivated the child by noncompetitive means, by appealing to the child's nonintellectual interests and, through them, drawing the child into intellectual study gradually. More often manual training was seen as the basis for the child's introduction to the complex interdependencies of modern society. For Dewey this meant using the child's motor instincts to initiate him "into the laws of human production and achievement, and into the methods by which man gains control of nature, and makes good in life his ideals." Far more than instruction in industrial history, this education was designed to help children become aware of and assume their various roles or functions in society (as worker, family member, citizen). Manual training would provide the requisite "trained and sound body, skillful eye and hand, habits of industry, perseverance, and, above all, habits of serviceableness."<sup>33</sup>

At times even reformers' pastoral longings transcended simple nostalgia. Dewey promoted manual training with a sophisticated argument about the effects of changes in social production on individual psychology. As the family moved to the city, it became less an organic productive unit in which all members participated in social and industrial activity centered in the rural home. There the child had benefited morally and mentally, acquiring "self-reliance, independence of judgement and action," as well as "habits of regular and continuous work." The factory system's intensive division of labor and the consequent disintegration of the rural or semirural household changed all that. The home was changed "from a workshop into a simple dwelling-place" in which the child lost contact with useful occupations and "the practical and motor training necessary to balance his intel-

<sup>33</sup> Mead, "Relation of Play to Education," 143; C. Hanford Henderson, "The Manual Training Outlook," *Manual Training Magazine* 2 (1900): 65-75; Dewey, "The Place of Manual Training in the Elementary Course of Study" (1901), *Middle Works* 1:236, and "Ethical Principles Underlying Education," in *Third Yearbook of the National Herbart Society* (Chicago, 1897), *Early Works* 5:59, 65, 66.

lectual development." Urban children, though they absorbed more information during increased school hours, lost the "power of using it."<sup>34</sup>

Both Dewey and Mead feared the political consequences of over-intellectualized schooling. As the division of labor removed tasks from the home, children lost contact with those functional parts of human industry that became divided up between different occupations and socioeconomic groups. This narrowed the child psychologically, but also morally. Like many, Dewey and Mead considered psychological fragmentation a major contributing factor to class tensions of the late nineteenth century. Mead argued that industrial conflict boiled down to the inability of workers and capitalists to understand each other's functional position in society, divided along psychological lines between manual and mental occupations. The first step toward removing industrial disagreements from the vicious circles of ideological and political contests, Mead argued, "is the recognition that it is the incompleteness with which the different social interests are present that is responsible for the inadequacy of the moral judgements [relating to industrial negotiations]." Addams, in an article supporting the Chicago Teachers Federation entrance into the Chicago Federation of Labor, made a similar argument. Children with manual training will have a different attitude toward labor than those without. Not only will students acquire knowledge of and experience with manufacturing through classroom reenactment of industrial history, but they will also learn about the lives of workers, past and present. Students, Addams argued, thus will acquire an empathy for and understanding of the "habits, needs and hopes" of America's laboring classes. This sensitivity would provide the basis for a more democratic, experimental approach to contemporary social problems. Students so educated might in the future "be able to restore a genuine relation between the workman and the scholar without all the groaning of the spirit which now afflicts the classically educated individual, when he attempts to restore a balance between the cultivation of his hand and brain."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Dewey, "The Primary Education Fetish" (May 1898), *Early Works* 5:258-59.

<sup>35</sup> Mead, "Philosophical Basis of Ethics," 318; Addams, "On the Humanizing Tendency of Industrial Education," *Chicago Teachers' Federation Bulletin*, July 3, 1903, 4; Dewey, "Primary Education Fetish," 267; Richards, "Thought Side," 68.

Conservative and radical advocates alike believed that these social influences and the therapeutic effects of manual training penetrated to the neurological level. By 1900 a new orthodoxy had emerged in educational reform that linked manual training regimens, particularly the Swedish *sloyd* series of woodworking exercises, to stages in the child's neurological development. Manual training, it was believed, connected positively to the central nervous system, improving overall coordination, developing neurological complexity, exercising talents, and establishing habits that transferred automatically to other physiological and neurophysiological activities.<sup>36</sup>

In this way, manual training figured significantly in the Child Study movement of the 1890s. Proponents of Child Study argued that, once psychologists and physiologists could learn the patterns of childhood development, they could devise a science of teaching that would closely guide grade school instruction. Of course Child Study enthusiasts differed sharply on what *sort* of patterns the scientist would discover in the child. Most agreed, however, that children follow uniform or nearly uniform stages of growth. Many Child Study advocates proposed "recapitulation" theories according to which children develop through stages that parallel the stages of human evolution. Some drew pedagogical lessons from similarities they perceived between supposedly retarded children and "races" that most educated Americans considered physiologically and psychologically primitive. Retarded children, the physiologists insisted, exhibit the characteristics of lower species or "races," such as webbed hands, "mongoloid" eyes, or "negroid" facial features. "Normal" children display similar features but grow out of them. To help the child grow out of those stages and to avoid any possible educationally induced retardation or regression to a primitive stage, teachers, it was argued, must pay close attention to the level of the child's development. Older children can handle "fine work," for instance, such as writing in books at their desks. Young children's primitive physiology, however, with its limited coordination and neurological refinement, requires that they engage in projects that resemble the primitive art of South Sea

<sup>36</sup> Walter J. Kenyon, "Spirit and Purpose of Manual Training in the Elementary School," *Manual Training Magazine* 3 (1902): 82; reports of conference of Eastern Manual Training Association in Cleveland (June 1900), *Manual Training Magazine* 2(1900): 40, 42, 44.



Islanders or, for slightly older children, industrial crafts. Manual training specialists found their niche in the work provided at these early stages of childhood development.<sup>37</sup>

Followers of Child Study typically applied manual education's approach to neurological development and *sloyd's* conveniently stagist program to the treatment of the insane, pioneering the use of occupational therapy. University of Chicago psychologist James Angell, for example, lectured in 1908 for Taylor's Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy on "The Value of Occupations in Improving the Minds of the Insane." The course, for insane-asylum attendants, combined instruction in the use of manual training (paper construction, clay molding, basket weaving) with instruction in applying play techniques. As stated in the school's promotional leaflet, the purpose of the course was to find new methods to "restimulate" the "warped and dull" minds of the insane "by occupation, instruction and amusement following much the same lines which the best teachers of little children find most effective." In keeping with the developmental model championed by Child Study, which presented insanity and "feeble-mindedness" as arrested development, Angell and Taylor's school believed that treatment of the insane was essentially the same as early childhood education, particularly in the methods to train the nervous system and motor coordination.<sup>38</sup>

Even those who, like Dewey and Mead, felt uncomfortable with the strict stagist developmentalism of the *sloyd* series or recapitulation theory, accepted the correlation between neurological development and manual training. The new neurophysiology's antidualistic model of the relation of mind and body also fit comfortably with the Chicago philosophers' psychological and social organicism. During the 1890s, the Chicago pragmatists accepted a broadly construed Hegelian version of recapitulation theory in which the child's ontogenetic development roughly paralleled human phylogeny. Dewey welcomed manual training's recognition that "a motor factor is so closely bound up

<sup>37</sup> Frederick Burk, "From Fundamental to Accessory in the Development of the Nervous System and of Movements," *Pedagogical Seminary* 1 (October 1898): 34-36; Francis Parker, "Editorial," *Transactions of the Illinois Society for Child Study* 3 (January 1899): 205; G. Stanley Hall, "Child-Study: The Basis of Exact Education," *Forum* 16 (December 1893): 432; H. H. Donaldson, *The Growth of the Brain* (1895; rpt. New York, 1914).

<sup>38</sup> Course description in Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, Box 11, 1903-8 folder, Graham Taylor Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago; course description in *Survey* 20 (1908): 388-89.

with the entire mental development that the latter cannot be intelligently discussed apart from the former." In "attitude" the child is "primitive," being "decidedly motor" in its activity. Manual training, by directing children's "motor powers to recapitulate social industries," will lead them through social and industrial progress and the full history of human knowledge. Viewed in neurophysiological terms, the student is a "reservoir of motor energy, urgent for discharge upon his environment." Nervous energy expends itself most likely and most beneficially, Dewey felt, as a recapitulation of the history of "social occupations." The order of the recapitulation, while only approximate, must be respected, with special care taken not to force small children to engage in tasks too refined for their primitive motor and sensory skills.<sup>39</sup>

### Democracy in Education?

The championship of a revitalized work ethic and the crusade against neurological decay were by no means separate issues. They converged with a genuinely humanitarian desire to improve working conditions, emancipate factory operatives from enslavement to their machines, and return social and political power to the uprooted denizens of the industrial landscape. To be sure, the treatment of the child as a biological organism subject to scientific study and control, and Child Study's penetrating inspection of the child's behavior, had their repressive implications, especially in the writings of the many physiologists and educators who envisioned public education as an extensive system of social control and rehabilitation. The temptations of child anthropometry lured even Dewey, who at times characterized students as objects infinitely malleable for the benefit of social order. His and Mead's notions of self-realization through progressive training conformed to traditional ideals of an educated and essentially conservative citizenry who would define their self-activity primarily in terms of service to society rather than dissent or rebellion.<sup>40</sup>

There is, in fact, no simple way of categorizing Mead's and Dewey's

<sup>39</sup> Dewey, "Place of Manual Training," 232-34, 236; Kenyon, "Spirit and Purpose," 80-87; Dewey, "Criticisms Wise and Otherwise on Modern Child-Study" (1897), *Early Works* 5:210.

<sup>40</sup> Dewey, "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will" (1899), 118-19.

work on educational theory and practice. Both philosophers tried to build social and psychological order on a foundation of humanistic and, they believed, democratic values. Dewey spoke for the need to train children for self-direction, adaptability, leadership, and control over their circumstances so that they "may take charge of [themselves]; may not only adapt . . . to the changes which are going on, but have power to shape and direct those changes." This especially applied to children of the laboring class who had lost any "fixed station in life" and faced careers subject to the vicissitudes of technology. Dewey viewed manual training as a method of social unfolding in which institutional setting fostered the individual enrichment that in turn enriched society as a whole. Manual education, thus, would "give play, give expression to [the child's] motor instincts, and . . . do this in such a way that the child shall be brought to know the larger aims and processes of living."<sup>41</sup>

Mead was more definite than his older colleague, favoring a new apprenticeship system in which all children would learn adaptable industrial skills supported by theoretical knowledge of industrial, social, and economic organization. This, Mead believed, would allow the apprentice to adapt to a variety of tools and situations and would free future workers from enslavement to machines and automation. "The school and the shop must go hand in hand in modern artisanship. Their lack of connection in the old system spells the disappearance of the old-time system as the old-time artisan has disappeared. There can be no question that the modern artisan demands schooling if he is not to be a mere creature of the machine."<sup>42</sup> An integrated manual and academic curriculum, Mead argued, would also form the basis of truly democratic labor-management relations, which would be more efficient without falling prey to the enticements of technocracy. At some times Mead sounded almost like British guild socialist Morris in his advocacy of worker participation and shop floor democracy. By 1908 he tied a moderate form of codetermination to his proposed apprenticeship system, calling for direct consultation and empowerment of employees. But his argument was ambiguous, however committed he was to creating a humane workplace: "The expert even in

<sup>41</sup> Dewey, "Ethical Principles Underlying Education," 59-60, and "Place of Manual Training," 235.

<sup>42</sup> Mead, "Industrial Education, the Working-Man and the School," 372.

industry demands not blind obedience but intelligent co-operation, and the more intelligent the co-operation can be, the higher the efficiency of the expert. What is wanted in an ideal machine shop, where the tools are made to do certain work, is that the man who uses the tools should be able to criticize the tools."<sup>43</sup> Writing in terms acceptable to the moderately liberal businesspeople to whom he appealed, Mead put distinct limits on industrial democracy and stressed its efficiencies over its ethical and political virtues. Although attributable in part to the audience he addressed, Mead's ambivalence typified his and Dewey's writing before 1904. It became even more pronounced after 1904, as Mead entered the leadership of the progressive reform movement, and was especially evident in the philosophy and social reformism emanating from the Chicago philosophy department of that period.

Reformers had limited success transforming work into craft or injecting art into what must have seemed an enveloping factory culture. Settlement workers directed much of their energy into union support and factory legislation, neither of which did much to change the basic relations or attitudes of workers to their work. They were somewhat more successful outside the workplace, in forcing access to cultural institutions for lower-class Chicagoans. Mead, like many others, also advocated profit sharing, ostensibly as a means to encourage worker interest in company fortunes.<sup>44</sup>

As Mead realized, however, the direct liberation of work from tedium and alienation was an "improbability," due only at the "millennium." Only in education, which in its current form both reflected and reinforced the bifurcation of means and ends in society as a whole, could something be accomplished: "We are not able to reconstruct our whole industrial system so that the labor shall be always an expression of the whole man, but we are able to banish this slavish dwarfing method from our school rooms."<sup>45</sup> As we have seen, the Chicago pragmatists and their circle strongly supported unionization. Unionization, however, was only one answer to the social and psy-

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>44</sup> Horowitz, *Culture and the City*, chap. 6. For a particularly dismal failure at early factory welfare reform involving both Addams and Dewey, see Robert W. Ozanne, *A Century of Labor-Management Relations at McCormick and International Harvester* (Madison, 1967), 41-43; Mead, "Relation of Play to Education," 142.

<sup>45</sup> Mead, "Relation of Play to Education," 143.

chological problems of modern society. Many problems existed beyond the reach of the mediating power of trade unions. As Mead saw it, the effects of industrial change penetrated to people's fundamental attitudes, so that while legislation could meliorate social hardships, and while ostensibly neutral parties could arbitrate industrial conflict, neither could guarantee necessary moral and psychological development. In theory, with unions came greater responsibility on the part of workers, and with the challenge presented by unions corporate power would be checked. But Mead and Dewey noted that collective bargaining had limits and that strikes and union solidarity also encouraged conflict and rigid class boundaries. For institutions like unions to work, there must first be a concerted effort on the part of academics and the public to arbitrate differences. There must also be a change in attitudes, in social psychological roles, which only education could provide, either through cultural programs designed to enrich laborers' lives and inform the middle class about slum and factory conditions or through curriculum reform designed to break down social barriers of class and occupational status.

Dewey, in fact, though a strong union supporter, wrote little during his tenure at Chicago to justify his support on philosophical or sociological grounds (except in defending teacher autonomy vis-à-vis the Chicago superintendent of schools). For him social mediation was most effectively achieved through the broader ethical training that only school could provide, and that unions could in fact hinder by forcing individuals into class roles. Showing a distinct change of allegiance from the heady July days of 1894, Dewey exclaimed in 1899 that teachers would minister the new Kingdom, not trade unionists. Reformers such as Addams seemed to treat trade unionism as necessary only given the context—as a defense against factory production rather than as the organizational basis for democracy (as a socialist like Eugene Debs believed). Although Addams and other settlement workers strongly supported the trade union movement, their commitment occasionally wavered. This wavering became especially evident in later struggles between the teachers union and the superintendent of schools, in which Addams sided with the superintendent.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Dewey and James H. Tufts, *Ethics* (New York, 1908), chap. 12; Mead, "Industrial Education, the Working-Man, and the School," 370-77; Dewey, *School and Society*, 60-

Indeed, most of the labor reform with which Dewey or Mead had contact before 1910 was educationally oriented. Though education would not change the workplace directly, it could change, so it was believed, the mentality of employers about their social and moral responsibilities. Instruction could also transform the attitude of employees toward their work. In some cases this change involved the palest sort of industrial meliorism that tolerated the fundamental evils of factory work, letting psychological reform displace a genuine alleviation of working conditions. Some of Addams's statements justifying manual training disclose a relative lack of interest in the actual relations of production in the factory. Her main concern was with the psychological adjustment of workers to their plight as factory operatives: "A man who makes, year after year, but one small wheel in a modern watch factory, may, if his education has properly prepared him, have a fuller life than did the old watchmaker who made a watch from beginning to end."<sup>47</sup> Nor did Dewey challenge the basic hierarchy of authority in the workplace. "Some are managers and others are subordinates," he wrote. The proper education would socialize them to a common sense of purpose, enabling each "to see with his daily work all there is in it of large and human significance." "How many of the employed are today mere appendages to the machines which they operate!" Dewey exclaimed, suggesting that this was "due in large part to the fact that the worker has had no opportunity to develop his imagination and his sympathetic insight as to the social and scientific values found in his work." Dewey even suggested that marriage, by providing employees greater stake in their jobs, would thereby make them see "new meaning" in their tasks and encourage "steadiness and enthusiasm previously lacking."<sup>48</sup>

Slowly the Chicago philosophers reached a more sophisticated understanding of the labor problem than the one they applied under the tutelage of Franklin Ford at Ann Arbor. But theirs was an unhappy consciousness about work and industry. On the one hand, their educational psychology addressed even more basic questions of social reorganization than did political rhetoric grounded in structural social

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61. On Addams's disputes with Haley, see Julia Wrigley, *Class Politics and Public Schools, Chicago 1900-1915* (New Brunswick, 1982), 115-17.

<sup>47</sup> Addams quoted in Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 80.

<sup>48</sup> Dewey, *Child and Curriculum*, 24, and "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will" (1899), 127-28.

analysis (for instance, Marxist socialism). The Chicago pragmatists wanted to build industrial democracy on a reconstruction of social relations that penetrated to the roots of social injustice in the daily relations and attitudes of teachers and children, workers and managers. Their “radically” democratic stance extended to support for organized labor, directly and through educational reform, a risky position in the 1890s at a university that tolerated little criticism of industrial capitalism. On the other hand, in their emphasis on attitude and psychology, the Chicago philosophers missed just as deeply rooted structural causes of social inequality and injustice, an absence of thought that would undermine their ability to critically respond to the rapidly changing terrain of economic and political life. This divided consciousness did not result from an effort to hide political radicalism from the university administration, a “politics of protective coloration.”<sup>49</sup> Rather, it resided in the Deweyan model of human action, at the root of pragmatist psychology and social theory, the heart and divided soul of their “radical” democracy.

<sup>49</sup> Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca, 1991), 86–92.