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The other day I consulted a standard reference source to clarify a well-known quotation. I find pleasure in checking the 'exactness' of a quotation and it is often interesting to see who may have originally penned what has become a common saying. As I was browsing this reference, I decided to check and see what quotable quotes had been attributed to our mentor, John Dewey. I must admit to being very surprised by the results of this small linguistic investigation.

*The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (first published in 1999 with 1136 pages) does not have a single missive from John Dewey. Mind you, they do indeed offer a pithy comment from American naval officer George Dewey who is reputed to have uttered on May 1, 1898 in Manila Bay: "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley".

An equally intensive search of the seventh impression of the sixteenth edition of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* (1992 with 1405 pages), on the other hand, did bring to light three (well, maybe only two and a half) Deweyan quotations:

"We naturally associate democracy...with freedom of action, but freedom of action without freed capacity of thought behind it is only chaos.

*Democracy in Education, in The Elementary School Teacher [December 1903]"*

"Every great advance in science has issued from a new audacity of imagination.

*The Quest for Certainty [1929], ch. 11"*

"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself. *Attributed"*

Oh, for those of you are interested in such details, *Bartlett* also contains the singular comment from George Dewey uttered on that famous May day so long ago in Manila Bay.

I am shocked. Well, maybe not, but I am somewhat surprised nonetheless. While some have attributed reading Dewey to swimming in molasses and others have suggested that his writings put undergraduates to sleep, it seems somewhat incredulous that his incredible body of work spanning some seven decades should be so ignored via these populist compendiums.

Therefore, a challenge is shouted! The gauntlet has been thrown to the dusty ground. This is a call to arms (words, really) and one and all are hereby summoned to dive into their favourite Deweyan volumes and to search for those pithy and targeted comments that sum notions and ideas of great breadth and width. Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), offered the following sage advice that might help frame our searches:

"All words have a 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones ... are inevitable in the word" (page 293).

So, please send your notes, quotes, references, missives, observations and favourite passages to me so that we might compile our own list of pithy, cogent, insightful, penetrating, and maybe even perspicacity Deweyan quotations.

Jon G. Bradley  
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# The 2002 Annual Meeting of the John Dewey Society/AERA; The ASCD Dewey Lecture and Some Advice From John Dewey

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*Daniel Tanner*

As President-Elect of the John Dewey Society, one of my assignments over the past two years has been to arrange the program for the Society's Annual Meeting, which is conducted jointly with the American Educational Research Association.

The program for 2002 in New Orleans, April 1 – 4, will feature the John Dewey Lecture presented by Elliot W. Eisner, "What Can Education Learn From the Arts About the Practice of Education?" Also featured at AERA will be the Annual John Dewey Symposium "What Would John Dewey Say About Reform Today?" The Symposium panelists for 2002 are Phillip W. Jackson, Jeannie Oaks, and Marshall S. Smith.

Those of you who attended the Lecture and the Symposium last year in Seattle will undoubtedly agree that, judging from the size and responses of the audiences, these two sessions were indeed highlights of the 2001 AERA meetings. The 2002 Lecture and Symposium are tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of Monday, April 1 to be followed by the John Dewey Society Reception. The Society's program will also include two

thematic papers: "Critical Issues at Times of Educational, Social and Political Transformation" and "Perspectives on John Dewey: Implications in Educational Reform". In addition, there will be a paper-discussion session under the theme of "John Dewey and the Universality of Experience".

The full Dewey Society program schedule will be sent to our membership as soon as it is finalized by the scheduling office of AERA.

Since 1950 the John Dewey Society has sponsored an Annual Lecture Program at the Annual Meetings of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD]. Under the chairmanship of Paul Shaker, the Society's Lecture Commission has arranged for this very popular and successful session at ASCD over the past several years. The Society's 2002 ASCD Lecture will be delivered by Linda McNeil in San Antonio under the title: "Children, the Public Good, and the Myth of Accountability".

Over the past several months, I have been working with Peter Hlebowitsh and Laurel Tanner on the growth of the Society's membership. You can make a real and lasting contribution to the Society by using the form in the current issue of *Insights* for nominating your colleagues and graduate students for membership.

Finally, as President-Elect, my turn of office will bring us to the 70th anniversary of the John Dewey Society. The JDS has a unique history of combining scholarly inquiry with active advancement of the idea of progress for public education in a free society. Through its publications, projects and activities, the John Dewey Society has served as a forum for open inquiry and constructive action.

Looking back on the history of the Society, it seems fitting that John Dewey's last published words were addressed to the readers in the introduction to one of the Society's sponsored publications. In Dewey's words, "The danger of cutting through all relations and connections inherited from the past is purely chimerical. The

real danger lies in perpetuating the past under forms that claim to be new but are only disguises of the old."

Many of the current forces promoted under the banner of educational reform may convey to the public that a new movement is in the wind when, in reality, reformers are seeking retrenchment to the past and a fundamentalist curriculum in the name of "standards". At the same time, there is a movement to divert public funds away from the public schools and towards other kinds of schools serving special populations of children and adolescents.

The 'disguises' that Dewey wrote about are very much with us today. It seems that he was giving advice to the John Dewey Society when he wrote that, "For the creation of a democratic society, we need an educational system where the process of moral-intellectual development is in practice as well as in theory a cooperative transaction of inquiry engaged in by free, independent human beings who treat ideas and the heritage of the past as means and methods for the further enrichment of life, quantitatively and qualitatively, who use the good attained for the discovery and establishment of something better."

Looking back on the history of the John Dewey Society, I believe that the JDS has exemplified Dewey's message and, consequently, we are greatly indebted to those before us who laid the foundations for our work today.

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Daniel Tanner  
President-Elect  
The John Dewey Society

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# Spirituality, Aesthetic Experience and Curriculum

Hongyu Wang

The uniquely distinguishing feature of esthetic experience is exactly the fact that no such distinction of self and object exists in it, since it is esthetic in the degree in which organism and environment cooperate to institute an experience in which the two are so fully integrated that each disappears” (Dewey as quoted in Jackson, *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art*, page 36).

In Chinese landscape painting, human figures, if there are any, usually appear at the bottom in a tiny or vague form. Human beings are not the center of the painting, but rather part of landscape, providing a location to start the tour of the nature. This positioning indicates an invitation for the viewer to fuse with the landscape and become a part of it: to walk along a river, to cross a small bridge, to watch a waterfall, to wander among trees and shrubs, or to follow a narrow mountain path into the mist. Each time the viewer can select different routes to follow so that different experiences can be provided within the same painting.

On the part of the painter, as s/he is fully merged with nature, the entire landscape dwells within his/her heart, ready for realization, and as a result of blending inner feelings and outer scene, landscape flows out of the painter’s hands. Thus, the sense of the oneness between self and the universe lies at the heart of a successful aesthetic experience, whether for the painter or for the viewer.

Spiritual aspects of aesthetic experiences lie in the interconnectedness

between humanity and nature and the dynamic interplay of the cosmic process. Spirituality embedded in this organic, holistic and interactive view of nature and the relation between humanity and nature goes beyond traditional religion in the sense that there is no creator, no God external to the self-generating cosmos unfolded at every level of complexity.

Transcendence of self happens in aesthetic experience when self is fully immersed with artistic objects and thus expanded into a larger framework. In this process of creative act, self is simultaneously dissolved and enlarged as a result of participating in the transformation of the ever-expanding cosmos: self becomes a part of the creative cosmic processes. As Dewey points out, the distinction between self and object disappears: aesthetic expression or appreciation becomes an integration of the two instead of the imposition of the subject on the object, and through mutual interpenetrating brings creative transformation of both self and object.

To make the curriculum a spiritual journey in which the child is constantly amazed by the awe and the wonder of the world and continuously reaching out, we need to create an aesthetic way of teaching and learning. To teach and learn in an artful way calls upon the embodiment of dynamic relationships and a complex interconnectedness not only among teaching/learning contents but also between curriculum and child; in other words, to infuse the spirit of subject matter with the spirit of the child.

Every subject has its own internal resonance and wholeness in order to unfold as an organic part of the world. To release this spirit for the child, though, needs the child’s full engagement with it. Too often our transmission teaching model presents materials to the child in a disconnected way since teaching contents are usually imposed upon the child. Learning is often regarded as a step-by-step accumulative process in which information is added up atomistically.

Transformation in aesthetic experiences, on the other hand usually happens in a holistic and intuitive way so that a complex process of meaning-making occurs in a relational manner. Thus we need to give the child more time and more opportunities to play with various patterns in subject matter and to make connections by constantly switching back and forth between the past and the present and into the future so that the child can connect with texts in a meaningful manner. The web of connections and relations is continuously created and re-created through the child’s engagement with the world, which constantly merges the child into richer, larger and more complex interconnections for further growth.

Dewey emphasizes the importance of spending more time “looking at objects and events for their own sake, rather than seeing them as instruments for the accomplishment of our own ends” (Jackson, page 155). Such a view calls upon a different way of perceiving the world, a way of attending more to the spirit of the world, a habit of breaking with routine in order to be open to new experiences of life. When little kids open their curious eyes to see the world, they usually have a high appreciative sensitivity. They can be easily absorbed in something so minute or insignificant to adults and enjoy its amusement for its own sake. In this way, they are fully experiencing the world in a connected way and as a result they grow.

Regretfully, however, too often after they go to school, their life may become one of routine and standardization. Their perceptive way of understanding the world in its rich connectedness is discouraged and even suppressed. Therefore, to teach in an artful way, we need to explore how to continue nurturing the child’s perceptive sensitivity in the classroom and to infuse the spirit of life into curriculum so as to promote creativeness and imagination.

References:

Jackson, Philip W. (1998). *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

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# Educational Policy and Nationalism: Dewey on Balancing Cultural and Political Communities

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*John E. Petrovic*

I want all Americans to be the same. That is my mission.”  
Representative Toby Roth  
(cited in Crawford, 1996)

From the start of their schooling, children are exposed to a full array of nationalist, often miseducative, lessons. They salute the flag. They stand for the national anthem. They learn about “American” culture, myths (e.g., the melting pot), and philosophy (e.g., rugged individualism). They learn about the superiority of the United States in the world and the leadership (purportedly positive) that it provides. Rarely are students taught to question any of this. Rarely do they grasp the extent of the “lies [their teachers are] telling [them].”

Such lessons, from both the hidden and the overt curriculum, serve one of the chief political purposes of education: nation building. On the one hand, nation building serves the important purpose of promoting social stability. On the other hand, it can have dire consequences for cultural and linguistic minority groups within the given “national” borders. This is especially problematic in nation-states purportedly built upon some notion of the liberal democratic tradition. In this paper, I explore two philosophies of nationalism and point out their different implications for educational

policy: John Dewey’s progressive rendering of nationalism and the quintessentially conservative theory of Ernest Gellner.

## Cultural communities, political communities, and nationalism

In 1923, Dewey entered a discussion of the process of “uniting and bringing together the exceedingly heterogeneous elements of our population” (p. 514). In his observations of the great cultural heterogeneity within the United States, Dewey revealed that any discussion of nationalism must consider both the cultural community(ies) and the political community.

On the one hand, a state contains cultural communities defined by the shared history, religion, language, and customs of its members. It is within such communities that individuals “form and revise their aims and ambitions” (Kymlicka, 1989, p. 135). On the other hand, there is the political community within which individuals “exercise the rights and responsibilities entailed by the framework of liberal justice” (Kymlicka, 1989, p. 135).

These two communities are identified by a variety of names. Emerson (1960), for instance, refers to the “terminal community” instead of the political community. Gellner (1983) writes about the “political unit” instead of the political community and the “national unit” rather than the cultural community. Whatever the nomenclature, the fundamental difference between cultural communities and political communities remains consistent throughout the literature on nationalism.

Since political and cultural communities are rarely one and the same, tensions between the two arise, and nationalism is, ultimately, depicted in the way one community treats the other(s). In other words, in a given nation-state, there is a dominant cultural group that has defined and set into place the political community. For them, the two communities are coterminous. However, most nation-

states have within their borders more than one cultural community (e.g., African and Native Americans in the United States, the Ainu in Japan, and the Fries in Holland). Nationalism most commonly arises in the form of the dominant cultural group seeking to make the political community and cultural community coterminous for everyone.<sup>1</sup>

Many of these cultural communities have now achieved a certain number of group-differentiated rights to protect themselves. However, in liberal democracies they continue to face great skepticism regarding such group recognition, as opposed to individual rights. This skepticism has a long history and continues to this day. Will Kymlicka (1989, 1995) argues that post-war defenders of the liberal democratic tradition have been so eager to promote the overarching value of individual freedom that they have virtually disregarded the communities in which individuals flourish. Indeed, as early as 1927 John Dewey pointed out that the tendency to equate democracy with individualism and individual freedom makes the ideals of fraternity, liberty, and equality, “hopeless abstractions” by isolating them from communal life (p. 149).

The point is that our attachments to our cultural community help to define who we are as individuals. This is because it is through our cultural group membership that the choices that we make as individuals—and our estimations of their value—are made possible to us. Kymlicka (1989) is worth citing at some length here. He observes

“Different ways of life are not simply different patterns of physical movements. The physical movements only have meaning to us because they are identified as having significance by our culture, because they fit into some pattern of activities which is culturally recognized as a way of leading one’s life. We learn about these patterns of activity through their presence in stories we’ve heard about the lives, real or imaginary, of others.

They become potential models, and define potential roles, that we can adopt as our own. From childhood on, we become aware both that we are already participants in certain forms of life (familial, religious, sexual, educational, etc.), and that there are other ways of life which offer alternative models and roles that we may, in time come to endorse. We decide how to lead our lives by situating ourselves in these cultural narratives, by adopting roles that have struck us as worthwhile ones, as ones worth living (which may, of course, include the roles we were brought up to occupy)” (p. 165).

What Kymlicka focuses on here is the cultural community as a context of choice, not necessarily the character of the community or its traditional ways of life. These aspects members should be free to endorse or reject. Given the importance of cultural membership as a context of choice and, therefore, to the promotion of individual freedom, the protection of minority cultures and the recognition of the importance of groups should be a vital concern of liberalism. That is, by refusing to see the importance of communities to individuals, we create a bogus dichotomy between individuals, whose freedom is the *raison d’être* of liberalism, and the groups that help to forge their individual identities. In multicultural societies, it is the communal life of cultural and linguistic minorities—so important to individualism—that is threatened by nationalism.

### **Assimilationist nationalism**

Gellner (1983) makes the strict claim in his “nationalist principle” that “the political and the national unit [read: political and cultural community] should be congruent” (p. 1). For he argues, it is when political boundaries cut through cultural boundaries that unrest can occur. We can view this unrest as the enactment or process of nationalism, the purpose of which is “to endow a culture with its own political roof” (Gellner, 1983, p. 43). In acquiring such political self-

determination, national communities become political communities, i.e., nation-state. More importantly, for Gellner, they become culturally homogeneous nation-states. Gellner’s concept of nationalism, in sum, is the process of binding politically and making culturally homogeneous a group of people within a given geographical space.

Cultural homogeneity, he continues, is an inescapable imperative of industrial society and one of its by-products. He claims, “[i]ndustrialization engenders a mobile and culturally homogeneous society” (p. 73)...and that an industrial society’s economy “depends on mobility and communication between individuals, at a level which can only be achieved if those individuals have been socialized into a high culture” (p. 140).

### **The educational policies and practices of assimilationist nationalism**

The effect of Gellner’s principle of nationalism on educational policy and practices is fairly straightforward. In the United States, we have seen it at work in Americanization programs, Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, and the English-only movement, among other things. The principle of nationalism also drives criticisms of a number of progressive educational ideas including, multicultural and bilingual education. This is due in great part to the recognition that such programs give to group differences and not just individual differences.

In this vein, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. draws on Gellner to decry what he abusively terms a “cult of ethnicity” supported (or perhaps caused) by such policies as multicultural education and bilingual education. Schlesinger (1992) argues “they [cultural minorities] should be assimilated to our customs, measures, and laws...” (p. 25). This may be a defensible position and, excluding “customs,” may seem, at first blush, not far from a Deweyan one. As we shall see, Dewey also requires some assimilation, some commonalities in

his brand of nationalism. However, Schlesinger goes on to complain that “a cult of ethnicity has arisen both among non-Anglo whites and among nonwhite minorities to denounce the idea of a melting-pot, to challenge the concept of ‘one people,’ and to protect, promote, and perpetuate separate ethnic and racial communities” (Schlesinger, 1992, p. 15). With this, it seems clear that Schlesinger is demanding more than mere assimilation to our customs, measures, and laws. He expects much more and when minorities reject to being “melted” they become cult-like to Schlesinger.

Perhaps the most comprehensive application of Gellner-ian nationalism to education is provided by E. D. Hirsch. Indeed, Hirsch (1988) explicitly points out, “Gellner describes education in cultural literacy as the central requirement of industrial society” (p. 73). (In fact, Gellner writes of “universal literacy” not “cultural literacy.” Ultimately, however, Hirsch’s cultural literacy can consistently follow from Gellner’s nationalism. Thus, exploring the difference between their notions of literacy, while interesting, is unnecessary for my present purposes.)

Similar to Gellner, Hirsch (1988) argues that “at the heart of modern nationhood is the teaching of literacy and a common culture through a national system of education” (p. 73). It is important to point out that this common culture necessarily includes a common language for Hirsch, and creating this common culture implies far more than ignoring the experiences minority children bring to school. It requires viewing their background knowledge as “cultural deprivations” (Hirsch, 1988, p. 18). These “deprivations” provide Hirsch with his excuse to promote what he calls the acculturative responsibility of the schools. For teaching “the ways of one’s community has always been and still remains the essence of the education of our children” (Hirsch, 1988, p. 18). Notice here that by “one’s own community” Hirsch is referring to the nation-state which

happens to be organized, for the most part, according to his culture. Other cultural communities are simply ignored.

A primary aspect of Hirsch’s project is to provide some empirical support for Gellner’s emphasis on the need for “exo-socialization,” defined by Gellner (1983) as “the production and reproduction of men outside the local intimate unit” (p. 38). For Gellner and Hirsch, the primary guarantor of exo-socialization or cultural literacy, respectively, is a monolithic educational system. As Hirsch (1988) points out, “the first step [in education]...must be for all of us to become literate in our own national language and culture” (p. 93). Literacy in one’s own—read, Hirsch’s own—national language and culture constitutes cultural literacy.

He provides support for teaching cultural literacy in schema theory. Very basically, schemata is the term used to describe the background knowledge that people use to make sense of new information. Driven as it is by nationalism, Hirsch’s application of schema theory vis-a-vis cultural minority students is fundamentally flawed. As Howe (1997) cleverly observes, “Hirsch employs schema theory like a hired cab, which he discharges when he reaches his desired destination—the school house door” (p. 57). In other words, Hirsch picks up the cab and ignores the distance the cab traveled before getting to him. For contrary to Hirsch’s claim, cultural minority children are not culturally deprived when they enter schools. They are culturally different. Their cabs, to continue the analogy, have traveled great distances before being hailed by Hirsch, who fails to look at the odometer (if he hails their cabs at all!). They arrive in schools with schemata already in place, although not necessarily the ones Hirsch prizes.

Hirsch’s cultural literacy program provides a clear example of the kind of misguided educational policy that stems from assimilationist nationalism.<sup>2</sup> His policies are not only contrary to much of the literature on

effective schools, but they can also breed resentment among minority groups.

A primary justification for following this type of nationalist education is that by promoting assimilation we promote equality. We promote the freedom of individuals qua citizens, that is to say, as members of and participants in a political community. For only by sharing significant amounts of the same cultural capital can we have equal access to the things our society has to offer. But this ignores the important fact that we are not only citizens but also individuals within our cultural community, not just the political community. It is the former that tends to have far more power and relevance in helping us to become who we are.

### Multiculturalist nationalism

In his political writings, Dewey often dealt with the ideal of nationalism and the unity of the nation-state. He expressed his philosophy of nationalism not in terms of culture and certainly not in terms of cultural homogeneity but in such abstract notions as “unified social consciousness,” “national mindedness,” “community,” and “democratic culture” (Cf. Dewey 1923, 1916bc, 1902).

Following the general principles and characteristics of nationalism, Dewey believed that people in a nation-state should have certain things in common. He pointed out that people are always going to have different ideals and beliefs but that in “public and national life below all these differences we [must] have a common unity...enough common work, common responsibility and common interest and sympathy so that in spite of all these other distinctions we can go on working together” (Dewey, 1923, p. 516). Such commonalities, however, should not be narrowly defined by culture and the process by which they are realized should not be coercive or subtractive. That is to say, forming commonalities necessary to the perpetuation and stability of the nation-state need not

involve the abandonment or “melting” of peoples’ prior languages or cultures.

Dewey’s ideal of the “great community” provides one illuminating conception of what the nation-state should be. In discussing this great community, Dewey (1902) points out that all groups must be assimilated to a “socialism of the intelligence and of the spirit” (p. 383). This socialism involves acceptance of and engagement in the ideal of the great community in which citizens share a common understanding of the principles and procedures of a political system dedicated to the promotion of individual freedom and civic participation.

While assimilation to a common understanding and application of these and related ideas is required, Dewey leaves plenty of room for a myriad of local communities—be they religious, linguistic, ethnic, or cultural—to exist. He does so because the great community “can never possess all the qualities which mark a local community” (Dewey, 1927, p. 211). Recognizing these distinct local communities, it is clear that, for Dewey, assimilation to the ideal of the great community does not require sacrificing one’s own cultural heritage. In fact, maintenance of one’s culture within cultural communities is imminently consistent with the spirit of this notion of nationalism.

In his 1916 address to the National Education Association, Dewey explained that unity, national mindedness, or a unified social consciousness all involve developing “the good aspect of nationalism without its evil side” (Dewey, 1980, p. 203). Recognizing that the nation-state is interracial and international in its make-up, Dewey argued the evil side of nationalism grew from one cultural group assuming that it could provide a pattern to which others must conform. Such attempts to eliminate diversity represented an intellectual and moral problem in society for Dewey (Cf. Dewey, 1916), and he found assimilationist notions like Americanization and the melting pot

“rather repellent” (Dewey, 1917, p. 205).<sup>3</sup> Thus, to the extent that they refuse to accommodate diversity, Dewey would be opposed to policies promoting core knowledge schools or anti-bilingualism (e.g., propositions 227 and 203 banning bilingual education in California and Arizona, respectively).

### The educational policies and practices of multiculturalist nationalism

The implications for educational policy that stem from this view of nationalism surface in Dewey’s criticisms of “traditional” education. Here Dewey insists that the experiences and backgrounds of students be taken seriously and built on in the classroom. Dewey (1938) pointed out

“[in traditional education] there was no demand that the teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources. A system of education based upon the necessary connection of education with experience must, on the contrary, if faithful to its principle, take these things constantly into account” (p. 40).

This criticism continues to motivate the contemporary movements in multicultural education. Profiles of schools and programs that have dealt successfully with minority students by providing culturally appropriate and relevant instruction are evidence of Dewey’s wisdom (see, for example, Lucas, Henze, and Donato, 1990; Au, 1993; Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The success of using students’ first languages as media of instruction in bilingual education programs provides further evidence of the importance of respecting students backgrounds, in this case their linguistic backgrounds. Indeed, research indicates that students in the programs that make extensive use of their first languages do better academically and learn the target language just as quickly as students immersed in the second lan-

guage (Ramirez, 1991; Greene, 1999). Furthermore, there is a demonstrated positive correlation between bilingual education and staying in school (Curiel et al, 1986).

However, the larger question is whether or not schools, especially public schools, should go beyond the mere exploitation of children’s backgrounds to further academic goals. In other words, should we in schools endeavor to promote or maintain minority cultures? As long as children are also seeing other viewpoints, considering other ways of life, and empowered to flourish in and challenge the socio-cultural status quo, the multiculturalists’ answer to this question is yes. This, then, requires a move away from the assimilationist nationalism that has dominated our history and continues to prevail.

### Conclusion

As previously stated, Gellner-ian nationalism (what I have called assimilationist nationalism) is quintessentially conservative. It is not surprising then that conservatives like Hirsch and Schlesinger provide examples of how this nationalism and the liberal democratic tradition can be at odds. The national identity that Hirsch has in mind is, as national identities tend to be, “biased in favour of the dominant cultural group, the group that historically dominated the politics of the state” (Miller, p. 11). Our liberalism is betrayed when minorities must radically dilute their own identities in order to escape their “subsidiary” positions in the state. This is exactly where assimilationist nationalism leads since it requires cultural homogeneity within the political community. Furthermore, conservatives have come to believe that their vision, their identities, and their cultural community, should be the one that becomes synonymous with the political community.

Often the pursuit of this nationalism is smuggled in under the banner of equality. Nonetheless, this conservative application of nationalism as a

requirement of equality certainly tramples another fundamental value of individual liberty—especially as regards peoples from minority cultures—the liberty of pursuing one’s own vision of who s/he is and wants to be.

The problem is that most nation-states today are comprised of a variety of cultural communities. For some, the two communities are the same already. For most minorities, however, the communities are not the same and many cultural minorities wish to maintain some distinction between the two. For this they are accused of ethnic separatism or cultic behavior. This accusation stems from the fact that conservatives reject groups, especially minority cultural groups, as anti-liberal (i.e., anti-individualism). In discussion of the Language Empowerment Act of 1996, Representative Toby Roth, drawing from the thoughts of Woodrow Wilson, sums up this position arguing “as long as you consider yourself a part of a group, you are still not assimilated into American society, because America, like other nations, is made up of individuals and not made up of groups” (Crawford, undated). But this is a bogus dichotomy. As argued earlier, we become who we are as individuals through our mutual relation in groups. Our cultural community provides a context of choice (cf. Kymlicka, 1995; Schmidt, 1993), making choices possible to us. As individuals we can choose later to endorse, to reject, or to seek to alter our cultural communities as an increasing number of choices become available to us through our interactions with other communities. But the conservative educational policies we have seen severely restrict this individual liberty.

To some degree, conservative arguments are driven by a fear of balkanization, i.e., the U.S. nation-state could break apart. What we can take from the position of assimilationist nationalists is that liberal democratic societies are probably more stable when a nation-

state happens to be culturally (which includes, linguistically) homogeneous, i.e., when “political” and “cultural” community refer to the same people. But, while it may be true that democracy can far more easily and thoroughly obtain in such a society, the process of realizing such a homogeneous society violates the ideals of the very liberal democracy that it was meant to promote. (At any rate, it seems that the balkanization is not a realistic threat in the United States today (cf. Petrovic, 1999/1997)). This was what Dewey saw as the evil side of nationalism. What Dewey sought was a balance between the stability of the political community and the freedom of individuals to flourish within their own cultural groups.

In liberal democracies, the political community has a certain moral democratic obligation to minority groups. The conservative claim, as made by Linda Chavez on a 1996 segment of *20/20*, that the goal of education is not to maintain a non-English-language and not to maintain ethnic identification but to “become American” is a deeply un-American, undemocratic position. The Deweyan recognizes that ethnic identification is not an essential element of the national character. The balance Dewey sought included some commonalities at the level of the political community—a belief in the liberal democratic tradition, for example. But these commonalities need not require us to become one people or race delivered from a melting pot. Therefore, we should not demand, as Chavez, that cultural minorities cast off other essential elements to their identity that come from their cultural community. Cultural loyalties need not be exclusive to other loyalties.

But Gellner’s claim is that maintaining the distinction that cultural minorities want is impossible. For him, eventual homogeneity of culture is inevitable. Gellner, I believe, is wrong. Unless we halt all immigration, cultural minority groups will always exist. It is hard to foresee a

day when all the people in a given nation-state will share the same culture and language. Consider the backlashes against coercive nationalism omnipresent in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and Spain. Despite many claims to the contrary, the same rejection of homogeneity has always been apparent in the United States. It is not clear in his work whether or not Gellner envisions the actual existence of a culturally homogeneous nation-state. Perhaps he sees as inevitable only the gradual assimilation of cultural minorities into the culture of power. Even so, we must recognize that cultural minority groups will always be present, and we must act accordingly.

In sum, we have allowed an alarmist, conservative nationalism to influence educational policy toward cultural and linguistic minorities. These policies betray our commitment to the liberal democratic tradition. They make our classrooms undemocratic by failing to recognize and build upon the backgrounds and experiences of language minority children. People generally do exhibit national attachments and allegiances, *mutatis mutandis*, and “there can be no question of trying to give rationally compelling reasons for [this]” (Miller, 1993). I believe there are compelling reasons for nation-states committed to the liberal democratic tradition to support these attachments by embracing a multiculturalist nationalism. One reason, as Bhikhu Parekh (1995) astutely observes, is “immigrants are more likely to integrate if they feel morally and emotionally secure, and that is unlikely to be the case if the wider society demands their total assimilation.” In other words, assimilationist nationalism may in fact cause the political instability and divisiveness that its promoters seek to avoid. A second reason is because by no other means can we be truly democratic or achieve the kind of Great Society Dewey envisioned.

## Notes:

1. While this is the form of nationalism at issue in the United States, it is not the only way that nationalism arises. For example, in some cases it involves a minority group imposing its will on the majority (e.g., as in South Africa during apartheid).

2. In his more recent work, Hirsch (1996) continues in much the same vein. He also continues to misapply his own thinking. Petrovic (1998), for example, pointed out how Hirsch develops and subsequently violates a theory he dubs "Sticht's Law," claiming that "reading ability in nondeaf children cannot exceed their listening ability." If Hirsch's "first step" is for all children to become literate in English, it is clear that all language minority children in his schools will be immediately behind their monolingual English speaking peers in literacy, according to this "law." Furthermore, as far as Hirsch cares, they will remain behind until they acquire the necessary English oral/aural skills. It is unclear how and when Hirsch expects that they would catch up. So, if literacy is as important to Hirsch as he claims and if he desires to remain faithful to his own psychology, he must reapply Sticht's Law. He must admit that the first step should not be literacy in English but literacy, period. He admits that Sticht's Law applies to English Language Learners such that the 18,000 plus hours of experience in their first language matter, that these first language oral/aural skills are the foundation for literacy. For other criticisms of Hirsch see Howe (1997) and Feinberg (1997, 1998). Related to this, in a denunciation of bilingual education, Schlesinger's conservative nationalism (coupled with a tendentious and less than scholarly review of the literature) also led him to make the ludicrous statement that "bilingualism shuts doors" (p. 108).

3. See Dewey (1992, 1916c, and 1923) for criticisms of Americanization and Dewey (1917) for his criticism of the melting pot.

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- [\*Note that the Bilingual Research Journal was at the time two years in arrears. Therefore, while the article was published in 1999, it appears in a 1997 issue of the Journal due to the decision of the new editors to maintain an uninterrupted date sequence and numeration.]
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# Membership Nomination

The life-blood of an organization such as the John Dewey Society is a large and healthy membership base. As well as providing the financial resources necessary to maintain an active and extensive regime of publications, lectures, and symposia, the members also supply those critical and essential sparks of creativity, insight, and drive that allows all members to freely share notions and ideas. Quite frankly, without an adequate fee paying membership base, the JDS would be hamstrung in its ongoing attempts to provide quality academic and professional events throughout the year.

As so eloquently noted by President-Elect Tanner in this issue of *Insights*, new members are needed to replace those of us who are retiring and, at the same time, we need to increase our base so as to meet newly emerging academic concerns as well as increasing financial demands in the years ahead. So, encourage your colleagues and graduate students to become active members in the John Dewey Society.

The range of activities outlined by your Board for the 2002 year is quite exciting. Powerful sessions are slated for both AERA and ASCD and your two Society periodicals are offering colleagues and friends of the JDS professional space to discriminate their ideas. Please, approach friends, colleagues and those who you feel might benefit from belonging to an organization whose avowed goal is to promote the free exchange of ideas within a democratic setting.

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

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Forward all membership nominations to Peter S. Hlebowitsh, 256 Lindquist Center North, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242-1529. For those of you more electronically inclined, contact Peter directly with membership nominations at: peter-hlebowitsh@uiowa.edu.

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