

Взгляд Джона Дьюи на общество: некоторые выводы для  
работников в области образования  
John Dewey's View of Society: Some Implications for Educationalists

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# My Pedagogic Creed (1897)

- Unconscious education
- Conception of child as having “original narrowness of action and feeling”
- “society is an organic union of individuals”
- “school is a social institution. Education... a social process”

# My Pedagogic Creed (1897)

- School should simplify social life for students
- School should “deepen and extend his sense of the values bound up in his home life”
- Examinations as assessing “fitness for social life”
- Education as the “method of social progress and reform”, but this drives largely emerges from society itself



*Old photo of the Old Candia  
Schoolhouse now at Old Sturbridge  
Village, Retrieved from  
[http://nhpr.org/post/candia-250-  
years-making](http://nhpr.org/post/candia-250-years-making)*

# School and Society (1899)

- Dewey's evolving definition of society
  - "A society is a number of people held together because they are working along common lines, in a common spirit, and with reference to common aims." (pp. 27-28)
- School as "a miniature community, an embryonic society" (p.32)
- "What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely ; acted upon, it destroys our democracy." (p. 19)

# School and Society (1899)

- “All that society has accomplished for itself is put, through the agency of the school, at the disposal of its future members.” (p. 19)
- School increasingly taking responsibility for teaching what was previously taught in the home environment
- VUCA world...

# School and Society (1899)



Jackson Pollock, Pasiphae (1943) Source:  
<http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/ma/web-large/DP259920.jpg>

*“Through it the face of the earth is making over, even as to its physical forms; political boundaries are wiped out and moved about, as if they were indeed only lines on a paper map ; population is hurriedly gathered into cities from the ends of the earth ; habits of living are altered with startling abruptness and thoroughness; the search for the truths of nature is infinitely stimulated and facilitated and their application to life made not only practicable, but commercially necessary.*”

# A VUCA 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

Means of Death	Deaths	Percentage of Total
Non-Communicable Diseases	1.97 billion	c. 35%
Infectious Diseases	1.68 billion	c. 30%
Humanity	980 million	c. 18%
Cancer	530 million	c. 10%
Health Complications	278 million	c. 5%
The Natural World	136 million	c. 2%
Total	c. 5.57 billion	

sources: WHO Mortality Report & app, WHO Global Burden of Disease  
OECD mortality stats, British Medical Journal, our calcs.  
Some inevitable double-counting, broad estimation and ball-park figures.

all data: [bit.ly/20thDeath](https://bit.ly/20thDeath)

# School and Society (1899)

- Dewey however foresaw positive social transitions
  - Less toleration → Greater toleration
  - Narrowness of social judgement → Breadth of social judgement
  - Smaller acquaintance with human nature → Larger acquaintance with human nature
  - Lesser psychological and social savvy → Greater psychological and social savvy
  - Lesser adaptability to social situations → Greater adaptability in social situations
  - Small, rural businesses → “greater commercial activities”

# Interest and Effort in Education (1913)

- Children as intensely social
  - “Children's contact with other persons is continuous; and there are practically no activities of a child that are isolated. His own activities are so bound up with others, and what others do touches him so deeply and in so many ways, that it is only at rare moments, perhaps of a clash of wills, that a child draws a sharp line between other peoples' affairs as definitely theirs and his own as exclusively his. His father and mother, his brothers and sisters, his home, his friends are *his*; they belong to his idea of himself.” (p. 85)
- Interest and motivation
  - “If we can discover a child's urgent needs and powers, and if we can supply an environment of materials, appliances, and resources—physical, social, and intellectual—to direct their adequate operation, we shall not have to think about interest.” (p. 96)

# Democracy and Education (1916)

- Dewey's definition of society
  - Non-unitary concept.
    - No single thing corresponding to the single word (p. 15, 52)
  - Societies as people connected by common aims, beliefs, aspirations and knowledge (p. 5)
  - Denial of organic concepts of society
- Hegel's organic conception of society
  - Comparing members of society to organs of the body

# Democracy and Education (1916)

- Advocates for a democratic society
  - Fluid, changing, meritocratic, cosmopolitan (p. 59)
- Progressive education as aiming to correct unfair privilege and unfair deprivation

# Alternative Conceptions of Society

- John Zerzan, society as an imposed, artificial, contemporary innovation (anti-civilizational thought)
- Emile Durkheim, “society as a reality in its own right”
- DPM, “The totality of individuals in that aspect of their relations where the interrelationships exist as an end in itself”
  - Often used in contrast to (i) individuals considered apart from their social relationship, e.g. humans and society, (ii) individuals held together in more formal relations, e.g. the state and society, and (iii) situations where the interrelationships existing for other purposes, e.g. commercial, i.e. economy and society

# School and Society

- Dewey's thought transitioned over the course of his life
  - Move from unitary to non-unitary model of society
  - Denial of abstract 'society'
- Original concept of education's primary purpose was not affected significantly

# School and Society

- School is a social institution
  - Requires a radically different understanding of society (Dewey)
- Schools are mostly not - but should become - deeply social institutions
  - Peter Safronov of the Institute of Education of the Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation. Cf. 'Nothing but Friendship: The immanent economy of teaching'.
- School's purpose is not primarily social
  - School as a place for knowledge and cognitive skills acquisition
- Society should do more schooling
  - Dewey's original conception

# Organic conceptions of society

- Society as an organism
  - The analogy with nature
  - Society as having a fundamental and largely immutable nature
- Potential limitations of “progressive education” in its aims and methods
  - Ideology, idealism and counter-productive methods

# References

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