

Dewey and His Vision of Democracy

Melvin L. Rogers

In this essay, I maintain that Dewey's 1888 article "The Ethics of Democracy" is the most immediate thematic and conceptual predecessor to *The Public and Its Problems*. Both texts revolve around a number of key themes at the heart of Dewey's thinking about democracy: the relationship between the individual and society, the legitimacy of majoritarianism, and the significance and meaning of political deliberation. When these themes are taken together we come to understand the anti-elitist core of Dewey's political thinking.

John Dewey wrote *The Public and Its Problems* in the spirit of debate and disagreement about the meaning and future of democracy, particularly with the journalist and political commentator Walter Lippmann (1889–1974) in mind. The Dewey-Lippmann debate is a staple of American political thought, but it has achieved wider currency as many scholars continue to discover the universal importance of their disagreements about democratic decision making and its relationship to public opinion. The challenge that both democracy and Dewey faced in the figure of Lippmann – a challenge that centered on the viability of popular sovereignty and any faith placed therein – was not new to Dewey. He had encountered similar doubts decades earlier after reading *Popular Government* published in 1885 by jurist and historian Sir Henry Maine (1822–1888).¹

It is worth turning to Maine's text and Dewey's response in his 1888 essay, "The Ethics of Democracy." Although Dewey published a number of important works between 1888 and 1927 in which democracy figures as a central theme,² I argue in this essay that "The Ethics of Democracy" is the most immediate thematic and conceptual predecessor to *The Public and Its Problems*. This is not simply because each work owes its existence to an intellectual provocateur. Independent of the similarities in motivation for writing each text, I maintain that both revolve around a number of key themes at the heart of Dewey's thinking about democracy: the relationship between the individual and society, the legitimacy of majoritarianism, and the significance and meaning of political deliberation. When these themes are taken together we come to understand the anti-elitist core of Dewey's political thinking. More strikingly, we encounter his belief that the moral appeal of democracy rests with a vision of

political life as never finally settled and therefore always open to revision and contestation. “The Ethics of Democracy” thus provides the wider context for understanding his later engagement with Lippmann, even as *The Public and Its Problems* marks a number of advancements in Dewey’s thinking. To place these two works in conversation is to confront Dewey’s vision of democracy and what in his political thinking remains of importance for us today.

1. Maine, Dewey, and the Confusion of Democratic Life

Maine’s challenge to democracy is part of a much larger set of criticisms during the Victorian period – attacks that either condemned democracy wholesale or reduced it merely to a form of government unable to realize the sovereignty of the people.³ Maine’s specific argument rejects the view, which he associates with the political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), that the people participate in the formation of every policy. In this view, Maine argues, all citizens feel themselves to be at one with decision-making because they do not see those decisions at odds with their deeply felt interests.⁴ This is at the core, says Maine, of what is meant by the sovereignty of the people and is simultaneously the source of democracy’s confusion.

Maine attacks this vision of “the people” acting politically as a fiction. In his view, rather than being derived from the true will of the people, political consensus is formed as a result of corruption and manipulation: “I cannot but agree ... it is absurd to suppose that, if the hard-toiled, and the needy, the artisan and the agricultural labourer, become the depositaries of power, and if they can find agents through whom it becomes possible for them to exercise it, they will not employ it for what they may be *led* to believe are their own interests.”⁵ Maine’s point is simple: It is impossible to form a common or general will out of a multitude of disparate interests, and what appears to be the common will is in fact the will of a few or one portion of society. “The modern enthusiasts for democracy,” he explains, “mix up the *theory*, that the Demos is capable of volition, with the *fact*, that it is capable of adopting the opinions of one man or a limited number of men.”⁶ In Maine’s view, it is only possible to generate widespread agreement on the most basic questions. “A very slight addition of difficulty,” he remarks, “at once sensibly diminishes the chance of agreement, and, if the difficulty be considerable, an identical opinion can only be reached by trained minds.”⁷ In this regard, argues Maine, it is invariably the case that the masses will be easily controlled.

Although Maine’s political preference clearly points toward aristocracy – indeed, he attributes to aristocracy “the progress of mankind”⁸ – he is not without acknowledging the source of democracy’s stability. For him, that stability rests not with the production of a common will, but is derived principally from the institutional structures that are grafted onto democracy and that increases political control, something he believes is sorely missing from the English system. But his point is clear: stability comes from without and implies

the frailty of democracy if left to its own devices. He pursues this issue directly in essay four of *Popular Government*, “The Constitution of the United States.” Much in line with the trajectory of the book, Maine contends that what holds the United States government together is a system of delegation and conservative checks and balances within a constitutional structure that appropriately constrains the excesses of the masses on the one hand and their tendency to be duped by those that might undermine the entire system on the other.⁹

In “The Ethics of Democracy” Dewey seeks to address this indictment and so prefigures a number of themes he will revisit in *The Public and Its Problems*. He addresses the criticism by identifying Maine’s account of democracy with a narrow and faulty premise regarding the relationship between humans and society.¹⁰ For Dewey, the initial problem with Maine’s view is that he begins with the assumption of humans as solitary units. Society correspondingly appears not as a unified whole with differentiated parts, but rather as a mass of unconnected elements. This is precisely why Maine rejects the idea that we can identify political decisions with something called “the people.” “Vox Populi [Voice of the People],” he says, “may be Vox Dei [Voice of God], but ... there never has been any agreement as to what Vox means or as to what Populus means.”¹¹

But Maine also rejects, in several places of his text, this explanation of human society as based on *a priori* speculation.¹² Despite this, Dewey contends, Maine nonetheless rests his own view of democracy on the sociological presuppositions of the social contract theory, and thus misrepresents the relationship between the individual and society. But as Dewey explains, a theory which takes humans as situated beings whose identities take shape in society “has wholly superseded the theory of men as an aggregate, as a heap of grains of sand needing some factitious mortar to put them into semblance or order.”¹³

Understanding the basis of democracy in this way allows Dewey to shift the discussion away from defending the very idea of democracy to elucidating how best to understand it. His reference to “factitious mortar” quoted in the last passage is significant in this regard. If political society is not held together by a false will imposed externally for the sake of order, it must, he concludes, imply unity that makes the idea of “the people” intelligible to the citizenry. For this reason, he goes on in the essay to adopt a view of society as “a social organism” in which the function of the various parts, like the human body, is conducive to overall harmony.¹⁴ The point of the metaphor is to provide a way to imagine the State as embodying purposes, the character of which are both shaped by and expressed in the actions of citizens.

Dewey concedes that society is not possessed of “one interest or will.” He argues, for example, that there are a diversity of interests, “struggle[s] and opposition[s] and hostilit[ies]”.¹⁵ There are, he says, “classes within society, circles within the classes and cliques within the circles.”¹⁶ Nonetheless, Dewey seems to attach a strong unity to social life that does not appear to take seriously the political differences that Maine believes calls into question that unity.

Given the weight he attaches to unity in understanding democracy, readers of Dewey's essay confront an important difficulty not simply in his political philosophy, but in democracy more generally. Dewey seriously downplays the persistence of conflict. Nor does he acknowledge that conflict among competing claims will often implicate a political community in decisions where loss is inevitable. In fact, according to him, conflict appears to lead necessarily to unity. After all, to liken the body politic to a human organism means that different parts function to the benefit of the whole. And when we think of parts of our bodies not functioning properly, we typically see those parts as sick or abnormal. But it is not at all clear that a citizen's attempt to cultivate their personality or realize some specific vision of this or that public policy will be amenable to the body politic. And yet, it is often inappropriate to label that citizen as sick or abnormal. It may simply be the case that the citizen's way of seeing things is just as legitimate, even if it cannot be reconciled with the drift of the community.¹⁷

The problem here is that while he acknowledges the fact of conflict, he does not properly emphasize the *mechanism* that can potentially dissolve it or make the persistence of conflict consonant with a political system in which the people can be said to rule. The social organism metaphor is flawed, even as Dewey uses it to show the kind of political integrity democracy's image of "the people" entails. The metaphor obscures precisely what it should illuminate. And by the turn of the twentieth century, Dewey abandons the metaphor altogether as a theoretical tool to describe society. In a 1939 biographical sketch, he explains that his earlier commitment to Hegelian unity required a transformation far more attentive to the ways conflict empirically defies the dialectical movement toward social harmony: "[T]he Hegelian emphasis upon continuity and the function of conflict persisted on empirical grounds after my earlier confidence in dialectic had given way to skepticism."¹⁸ Notice that he retains his Hegelian commitments, but they have a very different source. Dewey's use of "empirical grounds" is meant to register the persistence of uncertainty that figures prominently in both his social theory and reflection on knowledge formation once he embraced Darwinian evolution.¹⁹

This, however, is not the view in his 1888 essay, "The Ethics of Democracy." For if politics involves real winners and losers, important questions emerge for those who defend democracy: How do members of society lose in a way that makes them feel part of "the people" that have supposedly won? How can the sacrifice of the minority – namely, that individuals and groups often give up political goods they believe they deserve – legitimize democratic action without simultaneously breeding a high-level of resentment and distrust that will destabilize democracy? How do we retain the idea of "the people" that the social organism metaphor implies, while addressing the remainders of disappointment that come with political life?²⁰ Maine puts the question this way: If "the People" make a sound, "is it a sound in which the note struck by minorities is entirely silent?"²¹

2. Removing Confusion: Dewey, Majoritarianism, and the Openness of Democracy

In “The Ethics of Democracy” Dewey does not employ, as I did in the previous section, the language of sacrifice, but his reflections on majority rule show that he is very much attuned to these questions and concerns. In fact, he shows that his commitment to the necessity of unity does not completely overtake his more chastened moments of reflection regarding political life.

There still appears to be in majority rule an instrument for putting all on a dead level, and allowing numerical surplus to determine the outcome. But the heart of the matter is found not in voting nor in the counting the votes to see where the majority lies. *It is in the process by which the majority is formed.* The minority are represented in the policy which they *force* the majority to accept in order to be a majority; the majority have the right to “rule” because their majority is not the mere sign of a surplus in numbers, but is the manifestation of the purpose of the social organism. Were this not so, every election would be followed by a civil war.²²

In his view, a decision is not merely the result of a calculation in which one group – 51% of the community – has the votes to carry the title majority. We often reduce democratic decision making to this calculus and this is precisely the view at work in Maine’s account. This misses, Dewey argues, the prior process majority rule entails. For decision making is a “process by which the social organism weighs considerations and forms its consequent judgment: that the voting of the individual represents in reality, a deliberation, a tentative opinion on the part of the whole organism.”²³ Deliberation, then, to appropriate Dewey’s words, is “the instrument for putting all on a dead level.” The very position the majority comes to occupy is formed, for that position to be deemed legitimate, through an antagonistic exchange with the minority.

This means several things. First, it indicates that at the normative level political minorities occupy equal station with those that form the majority. “In shaping the policy,” Dewey explains, “which emerges from the conflict the minority acts a part scarcely less important than the majority.”²⁴ Second, this antagonistic exchange implies that while majority decisions do not wholly satisfy the minority, leaving some residue of resentment, such decisions, if they are to have legitimacy, cannot alienate the minority from the process of decision making.

These are not trivial observations; they go to the heart of understanding democracy. For if there is alienation, Dewey argues in the last line of the quoted passage, “every election would be followed by a civil war” – that is, a conflict so deep that it warrants dividing the nation between friends and enemies and so destroying the integrity of the community. The absence of civil war after every election, Dewey reasons, means that in a representative system “the governors

and the governed” do not form “two classes” (as Maine believes) but are rather “two aspects of the same fact” – namely, the ruling people.²⁵

The integrity of democracy hinges on the extent to which the minority never feels alienated from the process of decision making. But instead it can see its sacrifice as part and parcel of forming the will of “the people.” Because the status of the minority is not perpetual, and as a result the minority does not exist under the weight of a permanent majority, the idea of sacrifice becomes an institutionalized ritual of decision making in which members struggle to give voice to “the people.” But it is the deliberative process itself that generates hope that sacrifice will be redeemed through the constellation of new political acts. The normative significance of this process is that while the voice of the people is always unified, its tenor and content is never permanently settled – that is, in a democracy no embodiment of power, whether in the law, public agencies, or a majority opinion, is beyond reproach. This is not simply part of the political meaning of democracy for Dewey, but is the source of its moral appeal.

By conceiving of democracy in this manner, Dewey also articulates the anti-elitist element at the core of his account. This differs dramatically from Maine’s political preference. Consider the comparison Dewey draws between democracy and aristocracy:

What distinguishes the ethical basis and ideal of one from that of the other? It may appear a roundabout way to reach a simple end, to refer to Plato and to Greek life to get data for an answer; but I know of no way in which I can so easily bring out what seems to me the truth. The Platonic Republic is a splendid and imperishable formulation of the aristocratic ideal. ... But the Republic is more; it seizes upon the heart of the ethical problem, the relation of the individual to the universal, and states a solution. The question of the Republic is as to the ideal of men’s conduct; the answer is such a development of man’s nature as brings him into complete harmony with the universe of spiritual relations, or, in Platonic language, the state.²⁶

As the passage suggest, Dewey sees in aristocracy a longing that is much akin to democracy – namely, a desire for “unity of purpose, the fulfilling of function in devotion to the interests of the social organism.”²⁷

The key difference between the two, he argues, is that aristocracy expresses a deep skepticism about the abilities of individuals to recognize the importance of their relationship to the community. Moreover, aristocracy simply turns the responsibility of governance over to the elites. But such a view, he argues, fails “because the practical consequences of giving the few wise and good power [are] that they cease to remain wise and good.”²⁸ As Aristotle originally noted, and Dewey concurs, the wise cannot help but to regard themselves as the exclusive site for knowledge.²⁹ They fail to be attentive to those on whose behalf they serve. The result is not only that they diminish rather

than expand their perceptual and problem-solving abilities, but they risk becoming a force for domination rather than freedom. Because Dewey regards the good of society as legitimate to the extent that it is self-consciously recognized by the members of the community, his understanding of democracy locates itself in the freely willed actions (whether in support or contestation) of its members.

The themes struck in 1888 – the relationship between individual and society, the significance of deliberation, the relationship between minority and majority, and the anti-elitist core of Dewey's political thinking – reach a higher pitch in *The Public and Its Problems*. When taken together these themes throw into greater relief Dewey's mature thinking of democracy and its radical and enduring quality.

3. Lippmann and The Crisis of Democracy³⁰

By the 1920s democracy had fallen on hard times.³¹ Several factors were at work. First, Darwinian evolution in the last decade of the twentieth century undermined the religious backdrop of American culture. Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) version of evolution so thoroughly connected contingency to existence that many came to believe they were helpless in trying to create a just society. If God was dead, to whom should one turn for guidance? This question implied a crisis not simply in religious certainty, but a crisis in authority more broadly understood.

Secondly, while World War I elevated America's status as an international force, it did so alongside an already waning belief in progress that had otherwise defined the Progressive Era. American intellectuals did not abandon the belief in progress as such, but that belief was severely chastened by the devastation of the War. It made clear that retrogression was as likely as the progress that many thought was inevitable.

Third, new studies in human psychology and politics, extending from the 1920s to the 1930s, undermined the very premise upon which democracy rested – namely, that ordinary individuals were capable of collectively governing themselves if given the opportunity. What Maine had argued polemically in the 1880s, a new breed of scholar would maintain in the 1920s, but now with the support of empirical facts. By the beginning of the 1930s, Harold Laswell (1902–1978), a leading American political scientist could declare: "The findings of personality research show that the individual is a poor judge of his own interest."³² Amid the constant evidence that public opinion was irrational, that the people were easily duped, and that partisan politics exacerbated these problems, many believed that if democracy continued it would have to be grounded in something other than the shifting desires of ordinary people. The emergence of democratic realism constituted a fundamental shift away from the idea of deliberation that was central to the Progressive Era.

Searching for a new basis of authority, grappling with the possibility of retrogression, and the irrationality of the public, many turned to a vision of democracy based on scientific expertise and administrative efficiency. “The world over,” explained the Australian sociologist Elton Mayo (1880–1949) in 1933, “are greatly in need of an administrative elite.”³³ No thinker better prefigured the reflections of Lasswell and Mayo than Walter Lippmann; he elucidated the irrationality of the democratic public in his two works *Public Opinion* (1922) and *The Phantom Public* (1927), while simultaneously offering an attenuated vision of democracy. Understanding the meaning of Dewey’s argument as found in *The Public and Its Problems* requires that we first explicate Lippmann’s position.

There is no better place to begin for understanding how Lippmann conceives of the problem of democracy than with the epigraph that opens *Public Opinion*. It is worth citing this epigraph at length, coming as it does from another critic of democracy – namely, Plato:

Behold! Human beings living in a sort of underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all across the den; they have been here from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them; for the chains are arranged in such a manner as to prevent them from turning round their heads. At a distance above and behind them the light of a first is blazing, and between the first and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have before them, over which they show the puppets.

I see, he said.

And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying vessels, which appear over the wall; also figures of men and animals, made of wood and stone and various materials; and some of the prisoners, as you would expect, are talking, and some of them silent?

This is a strange image, he said, and they are strange prisoners.

Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the first throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would see only the shadows?

Yes, he said.

And if they were able to talk with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?³⁴

The problem at the heart of the allegory is fundamentally epistemological. It points to our inability to achieve knowledge because we mistake shadows for

what is real. Lippmann (not Plato) uses this as a way to preface and constrain any faith placed in the “omni-compentent” citizen – that is, the view of the “individual citizen fitted to deal with all public affairs” and who is “consistently public-spirited and endowed with unflagging interest.”³⁵ But what is striking about Lippmann’s use of this epigraph to open his book is its ending. It leaves the reader with a question that at once makes central one of democracy’s fundamental vehicles for ascertaining knowledge – namely, discussion and deliberation – and simultaneously frames Lippmann’s investigation. Indeed, the entire book becomes an extended answer to the question, even as the setup of the allegory – the fact that the cave dwellers are transfixed by shadows on the wall – undercuts any possibility of believing that knowledge about the world is ascertainable by the masses.

Lippmann’s criticism is in keeping with much of the psychological literature of the time; indeed, it seeks to extend the “truth” of the allegory. His argument on this point comes in two steps. The first relates to what he calls stereotypes and the second is about the manipulation to which the symbolic content of those stereotypes is potentially subject. Stereotypes are value-laden conjectures about the world that arrange our experiences. They are part of a wider social network in which individuals exist and find existential security against contrary worldviews; in fact, he argues, the functioning of stereotypes do not rely on perpetual cognitive awareness.³⁶ As he says: “The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. ... And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception.”³⁷ This is particularly so in industrial societies because people are asked to reflect on issues of which they can have no firsthand experience.

Given the importance he accords stereotypes, not merely for individual identity, but also for political behavior, Lippmann worries about the extent to which they can be manipulated in the context of public life. Not only do stereotypes work to “ *censor out much that needs to be taken into account*” about complex political phenomena, but they are uniquely susceptible to control given their already existentially charged content.³⁸ “The stereotypes,” Lippmann explains, “are loaded with preference, suffused with affection or dislike, attached to fears, lusts, strong wishes, pride, hope.”³⁹ Most individuals, he says earlier, employ stereotypes with a level of “gullibility” that prevents them from seeing the partiality of their position and this blunts their responsiveness to new, and, at times, contrary information. And individuals who seek to win political power use symbols that are indexed to the passions that infuse stereotypes; they play on our passions and on the fear of insecurity and uncertainty involved.⁴⁰ The political entrepreneur does not, in Lippmann’s analysis, take his or her point of department from the opinion of the public – in fact, they give to the public its opinion. It is in this sense that public opinion, not being formed by the public, is merely a phantom.

There is an important shift in Lippmann's argument. It is not simply the case that citizens do not have enough time or enough interest to engage the complexity of political phenomena, but more importantly, even if these were not the problems, citizens are inherently resistant to information that would call into question their deeply held beliefs. This is precisely why discursive exchange among the citizenry cannot lift citizens above their private or narrow interest: "There is nothing so obdurate to education or to criticism as the stereotype. It stamps itself upon the evidence in the very act of securing the evidence."⁴¹ Here the significance of being transfixed by the shadows reemerges in Lippmann's criticism. He doubts that citizens remain "curious and open-minded" such that we are ready to rethink our beliefs if good reasons emerge.⁴² The fact that citizens do not remain curious and open-minded is, for him, bound up with the process of socialization by which we come to acquire the stereotypes that we do: "No wonder, then, that any disturbance of the stereotypes seems like an attack upon the foundations of the universe. It is an attack upon the foundations of *our* universe, and, where big things are at stake, we do not readily admit that there is any distinction between our universe and the universe."⁴³ If this is so, Lippmann concludes in the more somber *Phantom Public*, "the public must be put in its place ... so that each of us may live free of the trampling and the roar of a bewildered herd."⁴⁴ These considerations ground Lippmann's alternative – elitist – vision of democracy.

But strikingly, he also argues that political decisions by elected representatives are in need of prior supplementation and clarification. It is worth turning to two passages from *Public Opinion*, one from chapter 16 relating to his views on Congress, and the second from chapter 1 relating to representative government proper:

The congress of representatives is essentially a group of blind men in a vast, unknown world. Since the real effects of most laws are subtle and hidden, they cannot be understood by filtering local experiences through local states. They can be known only by controlled reporting and objective analysis. And just as the head of a large factory cannot know how efficient it is by talking to the foreman, but must examine cost sheets and data that only an accountant can dig out for him, so the lawmaker does not arrive at a true picture of the state of the union by putting together a mosaic of local pictures.⁴⁵

[As such] representative government, either in what is ordinarily called politics, or in industry, cannot be worked successfully, no matter what the basis of election, unless there is an independent, expert organization for making the unseen facts intelligible to those who have to make the decisions. I attempt, therefore, to argue that the serious acceptance of the principle that personal representation must be supplemented by representation of the unseen facts would alone permit a satisfactory

decentralization, and allow us to escape from the intolerable and unworkable fiction that each of us must acquire a competent opinion about all public affairs.⁴⁶

For him, insofar as representatives seek to track various perspectives among their constituents to create a better picture of political reality they will be misguided. Given the way he understands stereotypes and their hold on us, partial perspectives will either cancel each other out if they diverge or reinforce each other. In either case, the net result is an incomplete picture that corrupts decision-making. The alternative that Lippmann recommends is one in which the unseen facts are “managed only by a specialized class” of social scientific experts who are distinct from the “men of action.”⁴⁷ Presumably, locating decision making outside the purview of experts obstructs the extent to which they may employ their knowledge for ends that reach beyond public oversight. Their role, he explains, is to examine and report on the unseen political phenomena that are blocked from view by our stereotypes. They direct their results to political officials, rather than the public, and take their point of direction from these same individuals.

Yet, Lippmann’s language in the first passage suggests much more than mere reporting, indicative of his example of the factory owner and his relationship to the foreman and the accountant. The accountant provides not only facts, but an interpretation of the current financial condition of the company, its short and long term problems given current operations. If we reason from this example to his understanding of the role of experts in politics, it is not an exaggeration to say that for Lippmann experts give shape to the problems that are only dimly perceived by both citizens and political officials. The cognitive authority he attaches to experts thus slides into a kind of political power that shapes the landscape in which political officials and the citizenry function from the outset. To be sure, he frees citizens from an oppressive fiction, but is it at the expense of much that we find morally appealing about democracy?

4. Dewey and the Return to the Problem of Elitism

Dewey does not deny the brilliance or force of Lippmann’s critique: “The figures of the scene are so-composed and so stand out, the manner of presentation is so objective and projective, that one finishes the book almost without realizing that it is perhaps the most effective indictment of democracy as currently conceived ever penned.”⁴⁸ He agrees with Lippmann’s discussion of stereotypes and the poverty of the public’s knowledge in decision making. And he, too, is unconvinced by a view of democracy that envisions citizens as omniscient. Yet he takes issue with both the emphasis Lippmann places on educating “official and directors” over and against the public, and his corollary belief that experts do not need to be informed by or receive input from the

public.⁴⁹ The problem here, for Dewey, is not simply the role envisioned by Lippmann for experts, but rather, and consistent with the view expressed forty years earlier, the problem of power implied by their role in democracy. As he says more forcefully in *The Public and Its Problems*: “No government by experts in which the masses do not have the chance to inform the experts as to their needs can be anything but an oligarchy managed in the interests of the few” (365). (Citations are to *The Public and Its Problems*, vol. 2 of *The Later Works of John Dewey*, 1982.) Lippmann’s criticism was so perfectly directed, that it seemingly left little room for reflection regarding a solution – a view which led to Lippmann’s elitism.

In *The Public and Its Problems*, Dewey is sensitive to the worry Lippmann advances, and, even the need for a division of epistemic labor between experts and the larger public that worry implies. Dewey’s position, however, is located in a larger framework regarding the relationship between experts and citizens that keep in view the problem of power, and which sees citizens not merely as authorizing power, but as genuinely authoritative in decision making. The desire to keep in view the issue of power partly helps explain his defense of democracy and his distinct and important descriptions of the role of the *public* and the *state*. For Dewey, it is democracy’s ability to better address the problem of power compared to other political ideals that might well prove to be its staying power.

For Dewey, the vast complexities of the modern age have radically transformed the meaning of democracy and the role of the ordinary citizen. The various innovations in communication and transportation, the global scale of warfare, and the ever changing dynamics of a market economy make reliance on experts simply unavoidable. “We have,” explains Dewey, “inherited, in short, local town-meeting practices and ideas. But we live and act and have our being in a continental national state” (306). As a result, the view of the omniscient citizen can only appear as an illusion. But what is important in the context of democratic decision making, he argues, is that we understand that how and why we rely on experts is itself a public judgment that makes social inquiry genuinely cooperative. Part of the aim of Dewey’s text, then, is to reimagine our relationship to expertise, both those of persons and systems, which acknowledge modern complexity and therefore the central role of experts. But he absorbs the role of experts within his vision of democracy, without conceding much of what we find morally appealing in democracy.

The above point emerges when he describes the relationship between experts and the citizenry, revisiting themes expressed in his review of Lippmann’s work. In fact, the passage to which we will now refer sends us back to some of his reflections in 1888:

The final obstacle in the way of any aristocratic rule is that in the absence of an articulate voice on the part of the masses, the best do not and cannot remain the best, the wise ceases to be wise. It is impossible for highbrows

to secure a monopoly of such knowledge as must be used for the regulation of common affairs. ...

The man who wears the shoe knows best that it pinches and where it pinches, even if the expert shoemaker is the best judge of how the trouble is to be remedied (364).

For Dewey, the hypotheses we form for responding to political problems are only as good as the methods we employ – that is, the extent to which the methods make us receptive to data from various parts of the environment. But problems themselves, as he argues, frame and guide our inquiry; they imply the existence of a complex horizon of value and meaning that is now fractured and in need of creative valuation to restore continuity. So Dewey's point is not simply that without the input of the wearer of shoes the shoemaker will respond in a way that would not address the existing pinch. Rather, without input from the individual experiencing the pinch, the expert shoemaker will not have the subject matter to initiate or guide his inquiry.

In contrast to Lippmann, Dewey views the role of experts as ancillary to that of citizens, in essence undercutting the turn to technocrats that we see in Lippmann and articulated by later democratic realists. As he says of experts: “[T]heir expertness is not shown in framing and executing policies, but in discovering and making known the facts upon which the [inquiry] depends” (365). Dewey is making two critical points. The first point is that expertise, properly understood, is always tethered to a more “technical” field of investigation. As he understands it, experts come to gain cognitive authority and so become bearers of knowledge because of the audience with which they engage and interact. Citizens are thus authorities just to the extent that it is their problems that create the framework in which expertise functions. The complexity and texture of those problems, he maintains, come into view through a deliberative exchange among citizens that draws out existing and emerging concerns and worries. All of this guides them as they determine what they, as a political community, will make of the information provided. But it also means that there will rarely be complete agreement on who the experts are and this will cut against any argument for blindly deferring to some perceived “expert” authority.

The second point of the quoted sentence is to indicate that if something like “expertise” of political affairs exists, it will have to emerge from deliberation within the public. Central to this process are questions not merely about how we understand the problem from the outset (e.g., Who are the subjects of this problem? What may be the long-term results if the problem is allowed to persist?), but about the implication of various proposals suggested to alleviate the problem (e.g., What are the value or economic trade-offs in choosing this or that proposal?). For Dewey, answering these questions – that is, arriving at knowledge – implies a kind of collective artisanship to social inquiry that draws on the specific experiences of individuals, expert knowledge, facts

about the problem in question, and potential risks of action. Since citizens are uniquely situated to offer knowledge of their own experiences, their role in the design and implementation of policies is unavoidable if we are to address the problem at hand.

The significance Dewey accords deliberation among citizens yields another point regarding the fact of conflict in modern societies that sends us back to “The Ethics of Democracy.” As he says in *The Public and Its Problems*: “Differences of opinion in the sense of differences of judgment as to the course which it is best to follow, the policy which it is best to try out, will still exist” (362). Writing now in his post-Hegelian period, Dewey can more easily concede this point. And he amplifies the claim years later in *Liberalism and Social Action*, arguing that deliberation works to bring “conflicts [among citizens] out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised” in understanding the depth and complexity of the political problems and policy proposals.⁵⁰ To say that deliberation brings conflict out into the open is not to deny that one result of this process may be a deepening of dissonance. Indeed, we will often have conflicts among groups that will need to be mitigated with the least amount of cost to democratic commitments. But, he explains in *The Public and Its Problems* how he understands the centrality of deliberation: “But opinion in the sense of beliefs formed and held in the absence of evidence will be reduced in quantity and importance. No longer will views generated in views of special situations be frozen into absolute standards and masquerade as eternal truths” (362). For him, the genuineness of deliberation holds out the transformative possibility of un-stiffening our commitments – our commitments matter, he argues, but they should never grip us so tightly that they are beyond revision and contestation.

Coextensive with democratic decision making are both the transformative role that underwrites how we come to understand political problems in their various dimensions and that contributes to the possibility of forging shared values for action, and informational purposes of communication in contextualizing expert knowledge. These two elements, Dewey argues, mean that lay and expert knowledge gains whatever vitality it has from being forged through deliberative process that makes each responsive to the other. Without the participation of citizens – understood by Dewey as substantive input – justification of one’s actions would come uncoupled from being accountable to the public.

There is a practical upshot to Dewey’s argument. For example, where decision making is based less on the continuous input from public hearings, town hall meetings, advisory councils, and other deliberative bodies, there is greater reason to be concerned about the ends to which those decisions aim and the background interests from which they proceed. Moreover, there is reason to be equally suspicious of bureaucratic processes that are resistant to expanding decision making power by taking a bottom-up approach.⁵¹ Of course there may be good reason not to take such an approach, as for example when we think

about the obstacles that limited resources and time pose for political decision making. Here Lippmann's point about the obstacles to broad-based inclusion is inescapable. But Dewey's argument implies that the burden of proof must rest with those who seek less rather than more inclusive arrangements.⁵² So to the extent that experts guide political power without taking direction from the public in the form of deliberation, the entire decision making process loses in legitimacy what it gains in suspicion.

5. Democracy as a Mechanism for Managing Power

The considerations above, which directly engage Lippmann, are part of how Dewey understands the historical emergence of democracy as a way of broadening the use of political power. Indeed, he defends this view in *The Public and Its Problems*. Throughout the work, Dewey consistently emphasizes the fortuitous emergence of political democracy (chap. 3). He resists the idea that democracy was fated to happen. By political democracy he means "a mode of government, a specified practice in selecting officials and regulating their conduct as officials" through universal suffrage, that emphasizes the publicity of decision making (286). Despite its contingent emergence, Dewey argues that democracy's development nonetheless represents an "effort in the first place to counteract the forces that have so largely determined the possession of rule by accidental and irrelevant factors, and in the second place an effort to counteract the tendency to employ political power to serve private instead of public ends" (287).

In keeping with his discussion in *The Public and Its Problems* and *Liberalism and Social Action*, he sees democratic liberalism emerging in an attempt to block political power from being exercised arbitrarily: "I would not minimize the advance scored in substitution of methods of discussion and conference for the method of arbitrary rule."⁵³ The use of power is arbitrary, for him, when it cannot be substantively informed by those over whom it will be exercised. In such instances, Dewey argues, freedom itself is threatened. So legitimate political power is not merely restrictive – that is, it does not merely constrain freedom – but more significantly, it makes freedom possible by giving citizens control over the forces that govern and enable their lives. Political power thus refers to both the role individuals play in "forming and directing the activities" of the community to which they belong, and also the possibility that is open to them for "participating according to need in the values" that their community sustains (328).

Dewey's defense of democracy is important for redefining the meaning of political participation, signaled by the last bit of quoted text. Democracy, as he describes it, defines members not simply by virtue of the actual participation with which citizens engage in determining social possibilities, but also by the potential participation that remains open to them if need so arises. For him, to the extent that power functions to determine social possibilities, those

possibilities cannot be of such a nature that they preclude the future contestability and development of how power functions. Hence the following remark: “The strongest point to be made in behalf of even such rudimentary political forms as democracy has already attained, popular voting, majority rule and so on, is that to some extent they involve a consultation and discussion which uncover social needs and troubles” (364). To be attentive to such needs and troubles means that “policies and proposals for social action [should] be treated as working hypotheses, not as programs to be rigidly adhered to and executed” (362). As he had argued decades earlier, to say that we hold in reserve the power to contest indicates that the legitimacy of decision making hinges on the extent to which citizens do not feel permanently bound by those decisions in the face of new and different political changes. Of course Lippmann would not deny this, but for Dewey he is unable to flesh out a meaningful view of contestation that relies on the necessary input of the public.

Given that *The Public and Its Problems* is, at least in part, concerned with diminishing the use of arbitrary power, Dewey not only seeks to position us to identify when political actors may potentially fail to subject their actions to democratic oversight, but he also positions us to highlight why they may refuse. This will often point more directly to material, social, and institutional incentives that discourage one from engaging in deliberation and genuine problem solving. Such conditions highlight the extent to which power has become concentrated in the hands of a few to the disadvantage of broad-base inclusion, and allow us to recognize, at the very least, when we have exhausted the quest to transform our institutions from within and when we must stand in an more oppositional relationship to them. The result is that citizens, Dewey argues, will have to create, through protest or violence, a new space where inquiry may once again thrive in the service of collective problem-solving. His argument on this point relates directly to his descriptions of the public and the state; indeed, his account of the relationship between the public and the state brings into view the normative work his concern with managing power does for democracy and how it potentially enables a more radical politics.

6. Returning to the Openness of Democracy

The view of democracy that Dewey defends and which informs *The Public and Its Problems* is fundamentally linked to how he understands the function of the public and its relationship to the state. In *The Public and Its Problems* he envisions the public as the permanent space of contingency in the sense that there can be no *a priori* delimitation, except as it emerges from individuals and groups that coalesce in the service of problem-solving, and that therefore require the administrative power of the state to address their concerns. He envisions publics as standing in a directive and supportive relationship to the state and its representative and administrative institutions. But insofar as the state is resistant to transformation because of reification, publics then function in a more

oppositional role that builds their power external to the state. As was the case in 1888, Dewey's view of democracy entails a kind of openness in which its substantive meaning – that is, what concerns the community addresses and what ends it pursues – is always in the process of being determined.

The place to begin our discussion is with Dewey's understanding of the public as described in chapter 1 of *The Public and Its Problems*. "The public," he says, "consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for" (245). The emergence of the public is prompted by a set of transactions within society whose impact on a group of individuals is of such a nature that it requires focused action that cannot otherwise be provided by them. This need not imply that the association of individuals that comes to comprise the public was in existence prior to the problem; it will often be the case that the indirect consequences of transactions now perceived as problematic determine the members that comprise the public.

We need to be clear at this point. For Dewey, society is an arrangement of individuals who simultaneously belong to distinct and overlapping associations, what we often refer to as civil society. In civil society, information and pressures get communicated across those associations. In such pluralistic conditions, problems and conflicts are bound to emerge, some of which may very well come from the functioning of governmental regulation or activities of the market economy. The result of such problems is that groups within civil society are politicized and so become a public. To say they become politicized only means that indirect consequences have affected individuals to such an extent that a distinct apparatus is needed to address their concerns. The associated group that emerges may already be in existence, albeit in a nonpolitical mode (e.g. religious organizations, professional associations, or cultural organizations), in civil society. Or it may be the case that the public is comprised of multiple associations that were already in existence, having no discernible relationship to each other until the problem emerged. The problem helps focus what is shared and provides the point of departure for collective problem-solving, even as its members debate and argue over how best to address the problem.

A concern should emerge at this point regarding Dewey's account of the public. On the one hand, he speaks of "the public." Yet he seems quite clear that multiple groups and associations of individuals advance claims requiring systematic care (280–281). In fact, he cautions those theorists that make use of the definite article, saying that "the concept of the state, like most concepts which are introduced by 'The,' is both too rigid and too tied up with controversies to be of ready use" (241). The use of "the" when used in conjunction with "public," suggests a homogenous domain in which the whole of society is directed through a deliberative mechanism, while the absence of the definite article points to a space that is internally plural in which deliberation is context-specific. How does Dewey address this ambiguity?

Dewey's answer seems to be that "the public" denotes a space of pluralism in which the indirect consequences of various and distinct groups require systematic care. In other words, it is a space not quite reducible to civil society, but not yet identifiable with governmental institutions, in which claims regarding the need for systematic care are acknowledged by citizens and around which they consolidate their identity. There is no privileged access to mutually recognized concerns or solutions – that is, they must be built up discursively – and so all members stand on equal footing. Citizens seek to translate their power of voice as a specific public into state power. State power becomes the administrative component that can effect change. So "the public" refers to a space internally differentiated among specific publics.

In explaining the meaning of systematic care, Dewey invokes the image of the state precisely to institutionalize claims built up from *the* public that consolidate into *a* public. He writes the following: "[T]he state is the organization of the public effected through officials for the protection of the interests shared by its members" (256). So the translation of claims and grievances into state power requires officers and administrators who are charged as trustees of a public, holding fiduciary power: "Officials are those who look out for and take care of the interests thus affected" (246). For Dewey, this means that publics, whether on the local or national level, do not only supervise how power functions, but in many respects determine and influence the ends to which it will be put: "A public articulated and operating through representative officers is the state; there is no state without a government, but also there is none without the public" (277). Hence, the state, although important for Dewey is nonetheless a "secondary form of association" (279). In other words, although the activity of political institutions – that is, the formation of laws, statutes, and binding regulations, or the establishment of administrative agencies, for example – will often be the result of those officials and representatives, this only comes about for Dewey because the direction and purpose of these institutions is determined elsewhere. Although functioning at the fringes of the state, the public is nonetheless configured as the site from which opinion- and will-formation originate and which is institutionalized via the state.⁵⁴

Dewey's account of the relationship between publics and the state specifically rejects the notion of a unified deliberative public that makes claims in the name of "the people" and that is beyond contestation. Here, once more, we return to themes of 1888. The public refers to a space of difference in unity that functions only if we see it as indeterminate. This much Dewey explains when he says that scholars have looked for the state in the wrong place:

They have sought for the key to the nature of the state in the field of agencies, in that of doers of deeds, or in some will of purpose back of deeds. They have sought to explain the state in terms of authorship. Ultimately all deliberate choices proceed from somebody in particular; acts are performed by somebody, and all arrangements and plans are

made by somebody in the most concrete sense of somebody. Some John Doe and Richard Roe figure in every transaction. ... The quality presented is not authorship but authority, the authority of recognized consequences to control the behavior which generates and averts extensive and enduring results of weal and woe (247).

His point is that connecting the state *as* state to particular authors who comprise *a* public undercuts the extent to which *the* public can function as a sensory network for emerging problems that can then be managed by state institutions. Focusing on authorship for understanding the state ironically fixes the latter and imputes to the public a substantive unified identity that, as Dewey argues, is out of step with a pluralistic society.

So for Dewey there can be no permanent closure of the public itself with a fixed identity from which the state can be inferred, even though there will be specific delimitations of particular publics. The latter – delimitations of particular publics – implies that state institutions and the substantive decisions that follow from those institutions (at both national and local levels of governance) will very well come into existence in response to the specific claims of *a* public, as for instance, those arguing for health-care reform, more equitable distribution of monies for public education, or better safeguards on businesses whose waste by-products are contaminating a local reservoir. The former point, that which relates to the public as such, means that insofar as the claims of a particular public are instantiated in the state, they cannot exclude the possibility of addressing developing needs that require systematic care. To be sure, all developing needs may not be legitimate in this regard, but the first step in assessing their legitimacy, Dewey believes, will have to rest with the extent to which addressing those needs might potentially implicate us in relationships of domination.⁵⁵ Still, Dewey's point is that the public is that space in which the democratic state attempts to see widely and feel deeply in order to make an informed judgment. All of this means that for him, a democratic public and by that fact a democratic state is radically inclusive in theory, even though such inclusiveness means the emergence of distinct and exclusive publics.

In many ways Dewey's discussion of the public has as its goal an inclusive state apparatus.

There is no sharp and clear line which draws itself, pointing out beyond peradventure, like the line left by a receding high tide, just where a public comes into existence which has interests so significant that they must be looked after and administered by special agencies, or governmental officers. Hence there is often room for dispute. The line of demarcation between actions left to private initiative and management and those regulated by the state has to be discovered experimentally (275).

Experimentally determining the nature and scope of the state means we are attempting to envision supplemental appendages that need to be added to address the concerns of a particular public. But we are also implicitly testing the extent to which preexisting institutions are amenable to transformation. Insofar as such institutions are not, Dewey envisions the public as standing in a more oppositional rather than supportive and guiding relationship to the state. In this instance, the claims of specific publics may ultimately point to the entrenched resistance and limitation of state institutions. As he explains of political development, “progress is not steady and continuous. Retrogression is as periodic as advance” (254). In this context, the public potentially stands in an uneasy relationship to the state, especially in its attempts to democratize the functioning of the state. Dewey captures this point where he worries about the extent to which state institutions ossify around a set of interests and so become unresponsive to new and emerging publics, the result of which generates a revolutionary impulse.

These changes [relating to associated relationships] are extrinsic to political forms which, once established, persist of their own momentum. The new public which is generated remains long inchoate, unorganized, because it cannot use inherited political agencies. The latter, if elaborate and well institutionalized, obstruct the organization of the new public. They prevent that development of new forms of the state which might grow up rapidly were social life more fluid, less precipitated into set political legal molds. To form itself, the public has to break existing political forms. This is hard to do because these forms are themselves the regular means of instituting change. The public which generated political forms is passing away, but the power and lust of possession remains in the hands of the officers and agencies which the dying public instituted. This is why the change of the form of states is *so often effected only by revolution*. (254)

We should not understate the importance of this passage in *The Public and Its Problems* precisely because it points to the radical character of Dewey’s outlook. His claim is not simply that emerging publics cannot use existing state institutions because they are insufficient to address developing needs. Rather, existing institutions may be inimical to those new needs. Here, we may think, for example, of the legally instantiated power of white males in the American context – power that formed in direct resistance to the demands of women and black Americans seeking equal and fair access. We can diversify our examples to include other rebellious groups: labor unions on behalf of workers, environmental organizations, and farmers, just to name a few. To be sure, these movements exist on a scale that slides from reform movements aimed at transformation of legal or institutional norms (e.g., trade unions and green organizations) to radical associations looking to redescribe the value system

upon which institutional structures are based (e.g., civil rights movement and women's rights movement). But in all situations, Dewey argues, the claims of the public cannot flow fluidly into the administrative power of the state. Instead, publics must seek to build power externally, the result of which functions as a counterweight to public(s) that are entrenched via the state and wield arbitrary power.

Given his larger account, Dewey's point is that the public is always already internally differentiated. That is, the term refers to both the substantively smooth incorporation of publics into the state, and the possibility of insurgent publics whose character is determined by virtue of state resistance and illegitimate acts of political authority. These publics emerge not simply to offer oppositional interpretations of their problematic situations and the needs involved, but to see a transformation in the state that substantively addresses those problems and needs. This is precisely why Dewey says in that last sentence that when the power of the state ossifies, transformation often comes about through revolution. The idea of revolution follows from the logic of democratic openness, the belief that democracy's legitimacy – indeed, its moral appeal – is fundamentally tied to the contestable use of political power. For Dewey, this is what makes democracy both a regime for achieving political goods, and an ideal never fully realized.

As we continue our commitment and defense of democracy, this may in fact be his lasting contribution – namely, a view that sees democracy as always a task before us, but as nonetheless containing the resources within itself to imagine beyond its specific limitations.

NOTES

1. Sir Henry Maine, *Popular Government* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1885/1976).

2. See, for instance, Dewey, "Christianity and Democracy" (1892), *EW* 4: 3–10; "Democracy in Education" (1903), *MW* 3: 229–240; *Democracy and Education* (1916), *MW* 9; "Democracy and Loyalty in the Schools" (1918), *MW* 15: 158–164; "Philosophy and Democracy" (1919), *MW* 11: 41–54.

3. For a good discussion of the specificity of these attacks see Benjamin Evans Lippincott, *Victorian Critics of Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1938).

4. Maine, *Popular Government*, see essays II–III.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 105 (emphasis added).

7. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 63, see also p. 190.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 197–249.

10. Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy," (1888), *EW* 1: 231.

11. Maine, *Popular Government*, pp. 187.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 160–61.

13. *EW* 1: 231.

14. *EW* 1: 232.

15. *EW* 1: 232.

16. *EW* 1: 233.

17. This worry has been advanced by Alfonso Damico, *Individuality and Community: The Social and Political Thought of John Dewey* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1978), pp. 40–42; Axel Honneth, “Democracy as Reflexive Cooperation: John Dewey and the Theory of Democracy Today,” *Political Theory* 26 (1998): 770–771.

18. Quoted in Jane Dewey, “Biography of John Dewey,” in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, 3rd edn, ed. Paul A Schilpp and Lewis E. Hahn (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1989), p. 18.

19. For the centrality of contingency to Dewey’s philosophy see Melvin L. Rogers, *Undiscovered Dewey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), chap. 2.

20. The most recent and compelling account of democratic sacrifice on which I rely is Danielle S. Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown V. Board of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), especially chap. 4.

21. Maine, *Popular Government*, p. 187.

22. *EW* 1: 234 [emphasis added].

23. *EW* 1: 235.

24. *EW* 1: 235.

25. *EW* 1: 239.

26. *EW* 1: 240–241.

27. *EW* 1: 243.

28. *EW* 1: 242.

29. See Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. Carnes Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), Bk. 3, chaps. 10–11.

30. The following section draws from and modifies work previously published in Rogers, *The Undiscovered Dewey*, chap. 5.

31. The following paragraphs draw from the following works: Edward A. Purcell Jr., *The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism and the Problem of Value* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1973); T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), chap. 1; James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), part 2; Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), parts 3–4; George Cotkin, *Reluctant Modernism: American Thought and Culture 1880–1900* (New York: Twayne Press, 1992), chaps. 1–3; James Farr, “The New Science of Politics,” in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Terence Ball and Richard Bellamy (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), chap. 20.

32. Harold Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics* (New York: Viking Press, 1960/1930), p. 194.

33. Elton Mayo, *The Human Problem of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), p. 177.

34. Cited in Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Free Press, 1922/1997), p. vii.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

37. Ibid., p. 59.

38. Ibid., p. 64.

39. Ibid., p. 74.

40. Ibid., p. 133.

41. Ibid., p. 65; see also Lippmann, *Phantom Public* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1927/2004), pp. 26–27.

42. Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, p. 66.

43. Ibid., p. 63.

44. Ibid., p. 145.

45. Ibid., 182.

46. Ibid., p. 19.

47. Ibid., pp. 195, 236.

48. Dewey, “Review of Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*” (1922), *MW* 13: 337.

49. *MW* 13: 344.

50. *LW* 11: 56.

51. As the reader will note, Dewey himself did not work out what this would look like from an institutional perspective, even as he tries to provide guidance for such an inquiry. For a Deweyan-inspired approach that focuses on institutional reforms see Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, “Introduction,” in *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Government* (New York: Verso, 2003); Fung, “Deliberative Democracy, Chicago Style: Grass-Roots Governance in Policing and Public Education,” in *Deepening Democracy*, pp. 111–143; Fung, *Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

52. See Eric MacGilvray, *Reconstructing Public Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), chap. 4.

53. *LW* 11: 50.

54. For a contemporary variant on this argument see Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

55. The logic of the argument seems to point necessarily in the direction of open or more porous borders. This view must be cautiously embraced, since all norms must be pragmatically assessed so as to keep in view other imperatives.

Melvin L. Rogers
Assistant Professor of Politics
Department of Politics
S185 Gibson Hall
University of Virginia
1540 Jefferson Park Avenue
Charlottesville, VA 22904
United States