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## The Troubled History of Philosophy and Deliberative Democracy

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# The Troubled History of Philosophy and Deliberative Democracy

## **Abstract**

Philosophy has not enjoyed a prominent place in current education movements aimed at strengthening civic engagement and promoting deliberative democracy. This paper provides a brief overview of the history of democracy and philosophy that demonstrates their long but troubled relationship. We argue that the history of Western philosophy provides a much overlooked foundational role in deliberative democracy that must be understood if we are to educate citizens. Furthermore, we argue that philosophy's central contribution to the contemporary understanding and practice of deliberative democracy is its fostering of the critique of assumptions. We conclude the article with specific pedagogic recommendations that can bring philosophy and deliberative democracy to life for our students both in and beyond the classroom.

## **Keywords**

philosophy, higher education, dialogue, deliberation, deliberative democracy

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## The Troubled History of Philosophy and Deliberative Democracy

“I think that in no country in the civilized world is less attention paid to philosophy than in the United States,” writes Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic work, *Democracy in America* ([1835] 2000, 511). Such claims are still made today, particularly in complaints about the scant public recognition of philosophers in comparison to the role intellectuals play in contemporary European societies. But Tocqueville’s observation has more significance than simply explaining the absence of philosophers from public intellectual life in the United States. The refusal to attend to philosophy by the American public has had both political and moral consequences. Arguably most philosophers have not taken the lead in current education movements aimed at strengthening civic engagement and deliberative democracy. Yet an examination of the history of both democracy and philosophy demonstrate their long interconnection and history.

The central premises of deliberative democracy are: first, that the *legitimacy* of democracy ultimately depends on reasoned dialogue and persuasion rather than force and coercion (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, 3-4). While some post-structuralist philosophers such as Foucault have challenged such a claim, arguing that dialogue and persuasion are themselves a form of coercion, Habermasians such as Simone Chambers counter that there is good reason for us to agree that there is a difference between the two (1996, 5-9). Decisions must be justified by appeal to reasons that are publicly accessible, both in the sense that they are made in a transparent and open forum and in that they are comprehensible to others. Deliberation shapes both the way in which a particular society defines its ideals and values and how it implements those ideals in various policies and laws. “The legitimacy of laws rests on the persuasiveness of the reasons that can be garnered for those laws. Domination is transformed into self-rule when citizens are convinced in a free and equal conversation that the limits placed upon them are not chains but self-imposed limits for good reasons” (Chambers 1996, 8). While not all proponents of deliberative democracy adopt a Habermasian stance that argues that the ideal of free and equal conversation is embedded in the rules of communicative discourse, most philosophers who defend deliberative democracy at least defend the view that, as a practical matter, democracy finds its legitimacy in reasoned discourse. Just how and on what grounds reason can be defended over force as that which legitimates democracy is an on-going philosophical debate.

The second central premise of deliberative democracy is that all members of a democracy should be both prepared and invited to participate in such discussion (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, 4-5). There is considerable disagreement between those who defend a republican form of democracy, arguing

that the goal of such discussion should be a definition of a common good, and those who defend some type of proceduralist form of democracy that aims to coordinate (and sometime adjudicate) divergent interests (see Habermas 1996, 21-30; Benhabib 1996, 5-6). Further, there is much debate about how “thick” our understandings of persons and their interests should be when we come together to do politics. Is the ideal of political discourse one whereby we sit behind Rawls’ “veil of ignorance” (Rawls 1999, 12, 19, 137), or one whereby we engage in discussions of concrete identity and community, or something in between?

The third premise of deliberative democracy holds that while the process of deliberative democracy is dynamic in the sense that citizens can challenge decisions and continue to make improvements, participants must also honor those decisions that have been rationally justified until such time as an alternative is proposed, debated, and accepted through agreed upon channels and procedures (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, 5-7).

At least since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, political scientists have claimed the last point as their domain. But philosophers always have been occupied with the central questions of social and political values and ideals. Moreover, our understanding of what constitutes legitimate forms of rational dialogue and persuasion has been modeled and developed by philosophers. Philosophy therefore plays an important role in our understanding of the values and goals of deliberative democracy. But as our brief outline of some of the key debates above suggests, philosophy can never simply be a handmaiden of deliberation or democracy; philosophy’s task is to question even our most fundamental assumptions, including whether we are correct in our understanding of politics, and whether our political ideal should be that of deliberative democracy.

Thus philosophy has a central, even foundational, role to play in any educational program that aims to promote deliberative democracy. A study of the history of philosophy and its relationship to democracy can help us understand some key concepts that animate our contemporary understanding of deliberative democracy. Reckoning with that history also helps us understand both the contributions that philosophy and democracy have made, and can make, to one another, while at the same time exposing the failings of each and the conflict that has marked their entwined development.

The troubled relationship between philosophy and democracy partially is due to the fact that philosophy’s main task is to cause trouble; philosophy calls on us to question the grounds on which we stand. Philosophy makes us uneasy, and that disturbance sometimes has been mistaken as a threat to the moral fabric of society, especially during times of democracy. But part of the trouble is caused by “democracy,” in that the concept is not stable and has changed over time. In particular, the question of who constitutes democracy’s public has widened greatly since ancient Athens, and democracy’s demands in turn have raised

questions about philosophy's own tendencies towards exclusivity. Specifically, Western philosophy has defined reason in narrow ways that have limited a sense of who is qualified for citizenship. But because philosophers are called to question their own assumptions and to revisit what can seem like settled matters, contemporary philosophy has reignited quiescent debates concerning questions of citizenship and inclusion.

In what follows, we first present a brief--and admittedly incomplete--history of the significant but troubled relationship between philosophy and democracy. We challenge philosophers to reflect on this history as a way of thinking about what a philosophical education for deliberative democracy should look like. Underlying this challenge is the deeper question of how philosophical practice can work to reconnect philosophy with public life, which we take to be a promising means of reinvigorating deliberative democracy. We write this paper as an invitation, a catalyst, that spurs others to tell alternative philosophical narratives and continue to rethink the relationship between philosophy, deliberative democracy, and our educational programs and goals.

### **A Brief History of the Troubled Relationship between Philosophy and Democracy**

#### *Democracy: The Birth of an Idea*

Ancient Athens is the birthplace of both philosophy and democracy, and that is not likely a coincidence. When we think of Western philosophy, we immediately associate it with Socrates, who credits himself in Plato's writings as philosophy's midwife. Of course, there were thinkers who predated Socrates, and we teach the pre-Socratics in the history of Western philosophy. But when we discuss the task of philosophy, we usually focus on the figure of Socrates, and his insistence on the pursuit of truth and on his role as a gadfly. Thus Socrates linked philosophy's purpose to the political. Philosophy was an activity of the soul that aimed to make good men, but good for what? According to Socrates, philosophy aimed to make good men for the good city. At the same time, the good city could not be presupposed, but itself became question for philosophical reflection. And here is where the troubles began. Critical reflection was viewed by many Athenians as a threat to democracy; Socrates certainly questioned majority rule if it was not guided by reflection on the good city and the good life. Socrates was condemned to death on charges that he corrupted the city's youth. But what Socrates really challenged were traditions that corrupted the city.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See I. F. Stone (1989) for a counterargument to these claims; Stone argues that Socrates' rejection of the polis as a free and sovereign political community constituted a clear threat to Athens.

Athenian democracy depended on its citizens, and recognized the importance of education in shaping its citizens. Socrates worried whether traditional Greek education was shaping its citizens in the right way. The curriculum of music and gymnastics reinforced the power dynamics of the status quo, and taught young men to honor gods who showed more frailty than humans. Understandings of “truth,” “justice,” and “the good” were unquestioningly passed down through tradition. The alternative education of the Sophists suffered, on Socrates’ view, from just the opposite problem. Sophists taught rhetoric, the art of speaking persuasively, with little concern for truth. Socrates offered a third educational alternative, and that was philosophy, one that would train citizens in the art of thinking well, and thus enable them to deliberate on issues of truth, justice, and goodness. For Socrates, democracy is only as good as its citizens. When citizens make decisions based on fear, money, and social status, they are failing to deliberate about what is just, good, and true. Socrates introduced philosophy as a way to develop a citizenry that could rule justly, and, for Socrates, justice demands deliberation, i.e. the critical questioning of one another to ferret out inconsistencies in logic and to find the true definitions upon which citizens can act rightly.

Much of what we know of Socrates’ philosophy we know through his student Plato’s portrait of him in his dialogues. Plato distrusted democracy, blaming the rule by ignorant citizens for killing his beloved teacher. Plato therefore imagined a just republic ruled by philosopher-kings, those who recognize Truth in Justice, informed by the Idea of the Good. He developed a metaphysics and epistemology that cast the ideas for which Socrates was fighting as Ideas, that is, as eternal, immutable truths. In Plato’s hands, Socratic dialectical knowledge, which was achieved through dialogue and deliberation with others, becomes something accessible through the disciplined education of the philosopher who focuses on the contemplation of the Forms or Ideas. Plato thus began a transformation of philosophy from something done in the streets, among citizens, to an ideal realm that was not easy to reconcile with political and social practices.

Plato’s student, Aristotle, on the other hand, refused Plato’s idealism but embraced his distrust of democracy (see, e.g., Aristotle *Politics*, Book 2, part 6; Book 4, part 2). Yet Aristotle recognized the importance of civic discussion and dialogue as necessary to the teaching and understanding of both moral and political values. For Aristotle, then, civic friendship was a key virtue necessary to the development and preservation of the good life and the good city (*Nicomachean Ethics* [384-322CE] 1985, 1161a 10-35). For good or ill, we learn both how to be virtuous and how to be vicious from others. Active citizenship demands that we actively seek out the best teachers and role models; Aristotle presented a model in his own teachings as to how to do this, namely, by seeking

out the best examples Athens had to offer and arguing that those are the practices and persons others should emulate.

Although Aristotle himself may have been nervous about democracy, his realist approach, grounded in the politics and people of the day, demanded dialogue and critical reflection that is necessary to democracy. His concept of civic virtue or active citizenship invoked the Periclean idea that demands much of citizens: citizens must give as much as they get. We only learn what is best through critical dialogue with others, not by turning our backs on the city towards the Ideal of the Good. Practical wisdom depended on developing the understanding of the right political virtues and pairing them with the right action. Such wisdom was only achieved through reasoned deliberation with the best persons in the community (*Politics*, Book III).

And, yet, Aristotle's view (and the later 20<sup>th</sup> century view of communitarianism that invokes the Aristotelian tradition<sup>2</sup>) suffers from the difficulty that Plato sought to avoid, namely, the problem that any given political community can be no better than its best citizens (see Dahl 1989, 15; Neal and Paris 1990, 437; Young 1990, 226-229). Aristotle's view of democracy remained as exclusive as the historic democracies that predated him in Athens; that is, they restricted citizenship only to Athenian male landowners. Even Aristotle, who was not a citizen himself, seemed to lack the political imagination to question the citizenship qualifications set out by historical tradition. At the same time, Aristotle fostered a concept of deliberation that tied practical wisdom to just action (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004, 8).

In thinking about the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, we see the trouble for both philosophy and democracy. If we choose some form of Platonic idealism, we avoid the possibility that philosophers will err, since philosophers will find the eternal truths through dialectical thinking. A Platonic view of immutable truths would seem to render dialogue between persons ultimately unnecessary, at least once the philosopher has seen the light of the Good. And such an arrogant view on the part of the philosopher is not likely to be taken seriously in real communities, even if the philosopher deigns to engage its citizens. An Aristotelian view embraces the importance of dialogue in community as essential both to the good community and to the good life. But it seems to provide no way out of the possible predicament that the community is not good and is unable to support good lives for its citizens, nor does it recognize the need for

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<sup>2</sup> As Neal and Paris (1990) and many others note, communitarianism is not easily defined, but rather refers to a loosely shared critique of modern liberalism that holds that the liberal view of the self is too thin and the separation of the right from particular conceptions of the good life is mistaken. Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1981) is usually read as a prime example of a communitarian critique that explicitly argues for a neo-Aristotelian approach to politics over a modern liberal one—although MacIntyre himself refuses the label.

reconsidering its criteria for citizenship. It is little wonder, then, that the move back and forth between a view of philosophy grounded in Ideals and a view of philosophy that engaged in critical reflection on actual practices continued up through the Renaissance (and, to a lesser extent, continues to this day). Ancient Roman and medieval figures tended to line up behind either Plato or Aristotle. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, this back-and-forth finally culminates in a choice between Sir Thomas More or Machiavelli. More's *Utopia* (1906) has been read alternately as an application or parody of Platonic philosophy; Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1992) has been read as both advocating a *realpolitik* emptied of any philosophical idealism and a concept of Republicanism based on a critique of political realism. For the purposes of our brief history, we need not resolve these issues of interpretation. The point is that, in both cases, we see a culmination of the idealism/realism debates.

#### *Democracy Goes Modern: The American Experiment*

To the extent that he was taken to be sincere, More's idealism was ultimately rejected. It is little wonder, given that his ideal community contained many mandates most would judge unacceptable, ranging from seemingly communist ideas that mandated that everyone had to wear the same clothes, to his morally disturbing claims that persons who defied the community would be made slaves (More 1906). Of course, it is quite likely that More was being satirical; perhaps he was simply highlighting faults he found with the England of his day; or maybe he was trying to underline the problems with Platonic idealism and rule by a philosopher-king. While many today read Machiavelli as being satirical, he was taken quite seriously by most of his readers. His advice to the Prince that might makes right, and that he should do whatever was necessary to secure his kingdom was taken to be a realistic assessment of politics. Machiavelli's *realpolitik* won the day, and philosophical idealism was deemed irrelevant to politics.

Machiavellianism served monarchical governments well, but ultimately failed to serve as a stable foundation to justify their continued existence. While Hobbes intended to provide justification for the commonwealth he called the "Leviathan" ([1651] 1982), he grounded the power of the sovereign in an agreement between the sovereign and the people, who had to consent to alienate their rights. Although they were looking to legitimize democracy rather than a monarchy, the founders of American democracy still needed to appeal to some set of ideals, and did so by drawing on the concept of natural rights developed in modern contract theory inaugurated by Hobbes.

The contemporary origins of democracy are generally traced to the "American Experiment," the living exemplar of the democratic state, founded on the philosophical principles of the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, and

Rousseau. If a notion of individual liberty provided the motivating force for the American Revolution and its repudiation of monarchical rule and the divine right of Kings, it was a notion of natural rights that would ground new conceptions of citizenship. “God-given,” or “inalienable” rights, as Thomas Jefferson famously characterized them, are those an individual possesses independent of conventional rights assigned by society.<sup>3</sup> To distinguish natural from conventional rights, Locke imagined a “state of nature,” or primitive society where no human law exists. Stripping away such law, Locke asked what rights remained. According to him, the remaining right is that of survival which entails the right to life, liberty, and property. Property merited special attention for Locke, because property constitutes the space in which an individual develops his life and practices his liberty. The institution of private property originates in nature, in the property an individual has in his own person. Mixing one’s labor with objects in nature serves to remove them from the common state and become an individual’s property. God meant for nature to be cultivated; the world was created for the purposes to which the industrious and rational would put it (Locke [1690] 1980, 20-22). Indeed, rationality functions for Locke and certainly for Rousseau after him, as the ground of freedom and also of equality. Rousseau articulates most clearly what came to be a fundamental premise of democratic thought, namely, that our freedom is defined by the fact that we obey a law of our own making (Rousseau [1762] 1968, 61). All men were equal in that all men have the ability to self-legislate.

*The Federalist Papers* (Madison, Hamilton, and Jay [1788] 1987) reveal the influence of modern social contract theory on the formation of the American Republic. Indeed, we may say that philosophy made American democracy possible. Modern conceptions of democracy, associated as they are with principles of freedom and equality, are founded in the work of the social contract theorists. But our “founding fathers” also feared the rule of the masses, and limited democratic participation. Social contract theory held limitations for democratic participation, and those limitations extended into the first modern application of democracy in the United States. Citizenship was granted only to free white men in the early Republic. We therefore know that the founders did not understand the phrase “all men are created equal,” to be read inclusively, as Mary Wollstonecraft argued, referring to both men and women (Wollstonecraft 1988). Further, it seemed that the political force of the declaration of equality founded both a sense of equal citizenship but also a justification of actual economic and social inequalities.

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<sup>3</sup> It is notable that Jefferson denied explicit philosophical grounding of his ideas: “...whether I had gathered my ideas from reading or reflection I do not know...” Jefferson reflected forty-seven years after the event “I know only that I turned to neither book nor pamphlet while writing it. I did not consider it my charge to invent new ideas altogether...” (Jefferson 1999, 146).

### *Nineteenth Century Challenges*

Philosophers such as John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill in England and American abolitionists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton persisted in following Wollstonecraft, arguing for the extension of political rights by appeal to social contract theory (Mill [1869] 1998; Taylor Mill 1852). In the *Declaration of Sentiments* ratified at Seneca Falls, signers drew on Locke's theory of natural rights, affirming that "all men *and women* are created..." (Stanton 1848). Although such a document did not initially work to achieve women's voting rights, black men gained suffrage in the United States in 1867. While some philosophers refused a political role in these debates and/or argued against democratic principles, two important philosophical movements arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that were explicitly public and committed to democratic movements grounded in philosophical reflection. These traditions are the foundation of what we understand by "deliberative democracy," but also more broadly the foundation of a public philosophy that calls definitions and assumptions of "the public" and "the political" into question.

In Europe, Marx and Engels presented a more radical picture of what was necessary to achieve true democracy, arguing for the overthrow of a society built on 18<sup>th</sup> century liberal principles that seemed to foster social and economic inequalities. In the *German Ideology*, for example, Marx argued against Hobbes and others, claiming that political "will" is a mere fiction and that power is determined by the material conditions of individuals (1977, 184).<sup>4</sup> Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* powerfully demonstrated how those inequalities mapped onto actual British industrial cities. More recent developments out of the Marxian tradition, particularly following the lines of the Frankfurt school to Habermas continue to shape the way that we think critically about democracy. Indeed, Gutmann and Thompson identify Habermas as most responsible "for reviving the idea of democratic deliberation in our time" (2004, 8). Habermas develops and defends a proceduralist view of democracy and democratic politics, borrowing insights from both liberalism and republicanism but focusing on the public use of reason that is not state-centered (1996, 26-30).

### *Democracy Enters the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

Habermasians have drawn particular attention to the continued importance of the need for public space as a necessary condition for democracy; their question is how to conceive of such spaces in the absence of the polis and in an increasingly globalized world (see e.g. Benhabib 1992, 89-120 and essays in Calhoun 1992). Feminists in the critical theory tradition also have raised

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<sup>4</sup> See Rawls and Kelly 2001, 176-179, for a rebuttal of Marx's critique.

important questions about how we should understand the distinction between persuasion and force (see, e.g., Chambers 1996, 1-11, 230-232; Mouffe 1996).

Some twenty-five years after the achievement of suffrage for black men, Jane Addams argued that it was time to move beyond the position of 18<sup>th</sup> century thinkers who thought of equality in purely political terms, noting that little had changed for black men who had achieved the vote (Addams 1893, 2; 1915). Addams, John Dewey, and other pragmatists developed a uniquely American philosophy that theorized democracy by analyzing what had actually been achieved in the American experiment, and what goals were still unrealized. For Addams and Dewey, democracy both promised and demanded equality in social interactions as well as in formal political ones. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century thinkers, Dewey saw “an impetus toward a wider and freer society,” but one that could not be realized in the 18<sup>th</sup> century turn to “nature” (Dewey 1916, 106). Yet 18<sup>th</sup> century thinkers could not found their principles in a corrupt society, one that would not allow for the free association of individuals. Dewey argues that their thinking gave rise to a society that could now make promise of such, and that we must educate our citizens to develop and fulfill that promise.

From Dewey to today, philosophers continue to grapple with the challenges central to democracy. How can we be sure that the majority’s view does not simply win the day, rather than the best view? How do we judge what is best, and who does the judging? Recognizing the dangers of self and group interest in co-opting or corrupting democratic discussion, Rawls and Habermas both attempted to specify the rules under which reasoned discussion should take place, and lively debates have arisen on a variety of fronts in response to these questions (Rawls 1971, 118-182; Rawls and Kelly 2001, 80-93; Habermas 1984, esp. 8-42).

Feminists and critical race theorists have argued that sometimes group identity can and should matter in the discussion (e.g. Gould 1996; Simpson 1986; Young 1986). Building on the Hegelian insight concerning the deeper and more encompassing knowledge of the “bondsman” revealed in the dialectic of lord and bondsman, some have argued that oppressed groups have “epistemological privilege.” Having experienced oppression, members of oppressed groups might have particular insights that are valuable to democracy (as Supreme Court Justice candidate Sotomayor suggested when she wrote about the “wise Latina”) (Sotomayor 2002). Although Sotomayor has been condemned by some conservatives as being “racist,” she was in fact arguing for the value of multicultural wisdom and discussion, something that Amy Gutmann and Charles Taylor also have strongly addressed (1994).

In the age of globalization, philosophers question whether the citizen need be restricted to a particular place—or even to a particular constitution. A renewed interest in Kant’s essay “Perpetual Peace” and his concept of cosmopolitanism

has arisen in the wake of the demise of the nation-state (Kant [1795] 1983). While the “citizen” was defined in Ancient Greece in terms of his location in the city or polis, citizenship was re-located to the nation-state in modernity. American and European philosophers have engaged in critical debates concerning definitions of citizenship beyond those sanctioned by the nation-state. Debates centered on cosmopolitanism, for example, discuss the possibility of some sort of global political order that would guarantee universal human rights (see, e.g., Habermas 1997; Pogge 1992). Giorgio Agamben (1998), on the other hand, working from Foucault’s concept of biopolitics, more radically questions modern liberal states’ claims to sovereignty and urges us to think of those cast out of the state (the refugee, the death camp prisoner) as the paradigm of citizen.

Iris Young, Michael Walzer, and others also question whether justice is only (or best) achieved during contemplation and discussion, arguing (in the case of Young) that sometimes the work of the activist is both desirable and necessary if real change is to be achieved (1986; 2003), or (in the case of Walzer) that conversation is sometimes insufficient and presupposes that agreement can and will be reached (1990). These arguments raise questions about whether we can deliberate too much, and raise important concerns about not only the role of reason, but the relationship between theory and practice.

Philosophers who work in the area of moral psychology have argued for the importance of tending seriously to our emotions when making ethical and political decisions (see, e.g., Benhabib 1992; Fouke 2009; Myers 1994) These arguments challenge both the possibility and the desirability of a democracy built on a supposedly neutral understanding of reasoned discussion.

These contemporary questions and debates are quite central, given the troubled history that we have outlined here. We suggest that neither deliberation nor participation alone will guarantee democracy. Democracy demands that we all deliberate well, and remain open to new understandings of politics and the political. Further, the “troubled” history between philosophy and democracy suggests that it is philosophy’s task to trouble and question our most cherished questions about democracy. But it is also democracy’s task to insure that philosophy itself remains open to multiple voices and traditions. The rich recent developments in philosophical thinking about democracy suggest that philosophy, when open to critical deliberation, provides us with the concepts, the skills to apply them, and the ability to reflect on the relationship between the theory and practice of democracy. As Iris Marion Young argues, philosophy’s primary role should be a critical one. It must focus on the task of exposing exclusions and constraints in the processes of deliberation that undermine its legitimacy (1990). That work is not merely technical, but entails raising questions even about the very nature of the concepts and terms used.

### **Call to Action: Teaching Deliberative Democracy**

According to Dewey, philosophy is a form of thinking that grapples with the “uncertainties” in “social conditions and aims, consisting in a conflict of organized interests and institutional claims” (Dewey 1916, 387). In the history of philosophical approaches to democracy, we see enacted philosophers’ engagement with these conflicts, and their efforts to reconcile competing interests by outlining “methods through which a better balance of interests may be effected” (Dewey 1916, 387). Approaches to the teaching of philosophy’s role in the development of deliberative democracy should, following Dewey, aim to cultivate a deep understanding of philosophers’ theories of democracy, one that is not simply focused on developing familiarity with these theories and the challenges they aim to resolve, but on an activation of those processes that bring them to life. Such education should aim, in other words, to integrate democratic principles into the practice taking place in the classroom and to encourage students to reflect upon and practice these principles beyond the academy’s walls.

Models of deliberation developed by philosophers are often adopted by others who lack an understanding of the conceptual basis for them. Courses in other disciplines might instruct students in the techniques for deliberation and facilitating public discourse, giving short shrift to the underlying questions of the grounding and importance of this kind of deliberation. The philosophy classroom has to be the place where we do not merely assume the value of deliberative democracy, but critically question its underlying concepts and values. Students must be encouraged to engage in conversation and deliberation about the very foundations of deliberative democracy. What constitutes democracy? How do we move from the narrow, exclusionary form of democracy in Athens or the founding of the United States to a fully inclusive democracy in the contemporary world, and why should we do so? In the age of globalization, what is the scale of justice (to use Nancy Fraser’s term), that is, where and how should we practice deliberative democracy—at the level of the classroom, the community, city, the nation-state, the transnational stage (see Fraser 2009)?

Moreover, more philosophy courses need to be developed that take a critical look at philosophy’s own troubled relationship to democracy. Recently political scientists and others interested in deliberation have taken a new look at Isocrates, for example, and it is worthwhile for philosophers—especially in their classrooms—to call attention to the Platonic definition of philosophy, how it was used to discredit other philosophers like Isocrates, and its delimitation of philosophy as a model of deliberation. At the same time, it is also important that philosophers make explicit connections between philosophy and democracy when teaching about cosmopolitanism, deliberative discourse theory, feminism, critical race theory and other related contemporary philosophical inquiries—many of

which we have outlined above. Students are more motivated to take philosophy courses when they understand how what they are learning might be useful in their lives as citizens.

While arguably all philosophy courses that teach the history of philosophy and the ability to engage in critical reasoning help shape students as citizens capable of public deliberation, specific philosophy classes can focus on these skills more sharply, both by teaching specific texts that provide the foundation of our understandings of deliberation and democracy and by conducting our classes in ways that empower students to be critical thinkers. Such courses could be, and indeed, have been, productively complemented by learning experiences that take place outside the classroom. Integration of what has been called “service learning” (e.g. in the form of semester or year-long internships) brings rich opportunities for students to see how democracy works. We must, however, recognize the risk of stretching the meager resources of more vulnerable non-profit organizations who sometimes offer far more in the way of training and “experiential learning” to our students than may be returned in service (to say nothing of the failure by institutions of higher learning to compensate such organizations). Acknowledgment by institutions of the contribution of participating organizations should be conveyed to the students engaged in learning projects such as these, and should furthermore be understood as critical in the context of education for democracy. However unintended, service or experiential courses poorly executed may violate or compromise of the principles we aim to understand and promote.

The classroom experience itself ought to function as a laboratory for the cultivation of the individual knowledge and self-knowledge necessary for the enactment of deliberative democracy, that is, the development of the moral sense necessary for individuals to “to share effectively in social life” (Dewey 1916, 418). Education consistent with Dewey’s thought would work to promote in students the philosophical understanding that comes with close reading of texts and the evaluation of arguments as well as the ability to engage one another in ways that allow and encourage students to question each other and themselves. Courses organized exclusively around lectures in which students passively receive information and reproduce the content of the theories taught in exams or papers are not conducive to these goals; nor however are courses which make the students “the experts” without sufficient grounding in democratic theory. Some recent texts make such course organization easier, as the texts themselves are question rather than lecture-focused (Mattern 2006; Schmitt 2009). Meagher has found it useful to introduce and discuss questions about democracy and citizenship by focusing on cities and city life, and has edited a volume for teaching on these topics (2008).

Courses that aim to provide the training that Dewey envisaged require that students take responsibility for their learning, and be positioned to help other

students in this learning. This suggests that is at least as important as the reading selections. Philosophy courses organized using feminist pedagogies (see hooks 1994) contribute importantly towards the encouragement of students to become active citizens and participants in democracy, since the latter utilizes student-centered learning that resonates with a Deweyan approach. Such necessitates not only an understanding of the history of philosophical thought and its influence and contribution to deliberative democracy, but also the development of critical thinking and communication skills.

The professor's role is integral to this process, but the focus of the classroom must shift from the professor to the students. To develop students' capacities to engage in meaningful analysis and interaction, the professor should structure regular assignments designed to provide students with the fundamental arguments of the theories in advance. Student presentations of material that are not "supplementary" but constitute the focus of the class are important means by which individual students can develop both their ability to engage in close reading of texts and an immediate understanding of their responsibility to their peers; so too, the group's engagement with this material also provides a kind of visceral instruction in the kind of responsibility deliberative democracy entails. While the professor no longer takes center stage, the preparatory work, as well as the work in evaluation, will certainly increase. But the investment necessary to facilitate students' learning in this way is returned with the transformation of the classroom space and the sense of collective responsibility for what occurs there.

Philosophy can and should play an essential role in the growing educational movement for a more deliberative democracy. While there exist both courses and programs that might contribute readily and immediately (for example, courses on discourse ethics or feminism and programs on philosophy and public policy), philosophy instructors must confront philosophy's troubled history with democracy if we are to move philosophy from margin to center in educational programs intended to enliven and enrich deliberative democracy.

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