

Perfecting Democracy through Holistic Education Dewey's Naturalistic Philosophy of Growth Reconsidered

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TENSION BETWEEN THE CHILD'S FREEDOM AND THE ADULT'S CONTROL IN MORAL EDUCATION

In the face of cynicism, selfish individualism and the moral decline of the young, educators in contemporary democratic societies including the United States and Japan, are in search of a vision of education that can give direction to the growth of the young. The need for objective criteria, goals, and a solid foundation for the moral education of youth is more intense than ever. The issue, however, has its dark side, since dogmatism, exclusiveness, and authoritarianism are among the most effective, albeit the worst, means toward social stability. Freedom of the young can easily be suppressed by a demand for conformity to social rules and traditional values. Being aware of this danger, educators must try to keep a balance between freedom and control — all while listening to the voice of the young. A recent reform movement in Japanese moral education highlights this dilemma.¹ The increase in alternative schools for the freedom of children in Japan is indicative of the struggle for freedom within the tightly controlled Japanese educational system.²

Elements of freedom and control do not blend easily, but more often than not fluctuate like a pendulum. The control of the young by means of objective moral criteria versus acquiescence to their relativistic freedom represents a dichotomous choice in an “either-or” form. Seen in these terms, a gap is created between adults and the young. The young tend to become skeptical of adult values, while adults are inclined to shut their ears to the unconventional voices of the young. The gap between them can result in a weakening of a culture's democratic institutions. Thus, a philosophical challenge for moral educators is the following: Is there a middle ground between freedom and control that maintains a directionality for moral growth, but that is still flexible enough to accommodate freedom and novelty?

As a promising third option that sets its course between the horns of the dilemma, I offer here Dewey's naturalistic philosophy of growth for democratic education. In response to the oft-repeated question directed at Dewey, “growth toward what?” I defend Dewey's thesis, “growth without fixed ends,” by reexamining his concept of habit reconstruction. In his naturalistic middle-ground holism, along with the Emersonian idea of growth in circles, Dewey presents the concept of directive criteria. I argue that Dewey's naturalistic philosophy of growth supports his holistic vision of education for perfecting democracy from within.

DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY OF GROWTH: GROWTH TOWARD WHAT?

As an anti-dualistic pragmatist, Dewey proposes a third way “beyond objectivism and relativism,” control and freedom.³ He declares that the task of progressive education is to overcome the “extreme either-or philosophy,” and by doing so overcome the dichotomy created by the social control imposed by the adult and

freedom sought by the young.⁴ This anti-dualism supports and is supported by Dewey's philosophy of growth: a continuous reorganization of a child's experience in his or her interaction with the adult world. Growth for more growth is the end in of education.⁵

Dewey's philosophy of growth has been attacked for its inadequate account of criteria. In Dewey's time, Ivan Lean Kandel criticized Dewey's philosophy of child-centered progressive education for its lack of clear values, and hence, its promoting of the development of individualistic children without any sense of direction, responsibility, or ideals, and in the end its fostering of nihilism and anti-intellectualism in America.⁶ Boyd H. Bode, not only criticized the lack of guiding principles in Dewey's idea of growth, but also pointed out the internal tension between Dewey's "democratic vista" as the social and external direction given by the adult, and the Rousseauian concept of "self-directing from within" the child. Claiming that the latter principle precluded the possibility of the former, Bode argued that Dewey was "riding two horses."⁷

Attacks on Dewey's idea of growth continue to this day. In his worries over nihilism and cultural relativism among contemporary American youth, Allan Bloom criticizes the lack of fundamental principles in Dewey's philosophy of education.⁸ Similarly, John Diggins raises the question of Dewey's refusal to define "any specific 'ends' to which education should aspire."⁹ This suspicion of Dewey's "child-centered" view of progressive education is deeply rooted. Even in Japan, conservatives impeach Dewey's idea of progressive education as a cause of moral decline among the young in contemporary democracies. Doubts are raised even among those sympathetic to Dewey, with Nel Noddings claiming that Dewey's moral theory based upon a method of intelligence cannot deal with *all* matters of moral judgment. She argues that, in our moral decisions involving should-claims, we need moral criteria as distinct from non-moral ones — criteria based upon "certain universals in the human condition" and "very nearly absolute." Her criticism implies that Dewey's idea of growth without fixed ends can be applied only to that limited realm of our life where absolute criteria of moral judgment are not involved.¹⁰ In face of this deep-rooted skepticism related to the question, "growth towards what?" a persuasive defense of Dewey's alternative idea of growth is urgently needed.

HABIT RECONSTRUCTION: DEWEY'S NATURALISTIC MIDDLE-GROUND HOLISM

Dewey criticizes the either-or version of progressive education that negates the idea of control "*in toto*" (*EE*, 21). Dewey does not negate the concepts of control, authority and criteria; rather, he reconstructs their meanings to show the middle path between the extremes. In order to present its most persuasive defense, let us first examine Dewey's concept of *habit reconstruction* as a naturalistic basis of growth.

Dewey writes, "Man is a creature of habit, not of reason nor yet of instinct;" habit is his fundamental tool for the analysis of human nature.¹¹ The concept represents his Darwinian, functional theory of interaction between an organism and its environment. It aims to overcome the dualism between mind and body, subject and object. Dewey calls habits "expressions of growth" (*DE*, 51). His idea of habit

is not a mere habituation or “accommodation,” but an “active adjustment” (*DE*, 51-52). On the personal and interpersonal level, habits are man’s behavioral modes of responding to the world. On an institutional level, habits are social custom, which he says are a “common mind, common ways of feeling and believing and purposing” (*HNC*, 45). It is this “form of life” (*HNC*, 51) into which babies are born and in which they grow, and to which they in turn make modifications. Interactive modification of habits on these two levels makes habit reconstruction possible. In Dewey’s view, changes in human nature and social custom are not a revolution or a deconstruction but rather a gradual reconstruction from within a culture. There are two more specific functions of habit reconstruction: impulse and intelligence. Impulse as an innate tendency is the seed of novelty that breaks the grasp of old custom. This is what Dewey calls the “beginning of individuality in mind.” Novel forces, however, need to be redirected by the controlling function of intelligence, which become “incarnated in objective habit” (*HNC*, 62). This cycle creates the mechanism of habit reconstruction.

Dewey’s functional idea of habit reconstruction is unique in the history of philosophy and psychology; it is antithetical to those motivational or teleological views that fix the beginning or end point. In a battle against the idea of the “privacies of an inner life” (*HNC*, 9) in the stream of Cartesian rationalism and British empiricism, as well as the instinct theories such as Freudian psychoanalysis, Dewey presents us with an alternative concept of impulse.¹² Though impulse is a trait of our individual mind and a source of our unique biases, preferences, and passions, suggesting some kind of an inner drive, it is anything but a static, inner center for sense data. Impulse and its intelligent redirection are observable tendencies for action in situations. In this sense, Dewey is a behaviorist in the tradition of George H. Mead and Frederick M. Alexander, but not of Skinner and Watson who totally negate the concept of the inner in their scientific behaviorism. Dewey speaks in a realm between the in and out in his situational, decentralized and developmental concept of human nature. Hence, Dewey says, “‘It thinks’ is a truer psychological statement than ‘I think’” (*HNC*, 216).

Alan Ryan says that Dewey “was trying to say something for which there was no obvious and readily available vocabulary.”¹³ Truly, Dewey’s idea of habit reconstruction is filled with apparently paradoxical themes that create the image of his merely keeping a balance between two opposite positions. In fact, however, Dewey presents us with an alternative worldview of holism: growth as growing in the “middle term” (*HNC*, 51). This is pragmatic wisdom.¹⁴ Related to this, in examining Peirce’s theory of inquiry as the process of establishing habit, Israel Scheffler highlights the latter’s idea that “we begin in the middle of things.”¹⁵ Dewey inherits this pragmatic view. On the one hand, habits constitute a stable basis for man’s efficient functioning in the world as a “mechanism” (*HNC*, 51); it fixes “boundaries” (*HNC*, 121). On the other, habits do not remain in “ruts” (*HNC*, 48) as sheer repetition (*HNC*, 66). Dewey’s worldview is composed of a strange mixture of stability and change, conservation and renovation, formation and deviation. This is the essence of “reconstructive growth” (*HNC*, 68). Dewey suggests that novelty and independence are not possible without the support of the familiar and the

dependable. There is no deviation without boundaries. It is his naturalistic holism of the middle represented by habit reconstruction that supports Dewey's educational and moral attempt to overcome the limitations of an either-or philosophy.

DIRECTIVE CRITERIA OF GROWTH IN CIRCLES

Still, the question returns: Does Dewey need to offer a persuasive response to the perennial question, "growth towards what?" A clue is found in his reconstructed concept of end. Despite the oft-repeated criticism that Dewey's Darwinian naturalism cannot offer an adequate account of an ideal end of growth, his position has an undeniable directionality to it. Dewey is neither a relativist nor a Hegelian idealist, but in the middle between the two. A contemporary debate between Richard Rorty's relativism and Hilary Putnam's realism as two possible directions for Dewey's pragmatism suggests this unique but ambiguous middle position. Dewey's alternative concept of end in his idea of *ends-means relationship* makes possible this apparent paradox.

Dewey is thoroughly opposed to a dichotomous relationship of fixed ends and means. He claims that the difference between ends and means is not metaphysical, but functional. In the course of human kind's interaction with its environment, ends and means are "two names for the same reality" (*HNC*, 28). An end functions as a means by serving as the perspective for the next act. In turn, a means is the name for an immediate action to be taken. Ends are being reconstructed in each moment of action. *Ends grow*. An end is not a point but a process with an "end-in-view." It is this novel view of the ends-means relationship that underlies Dewey's thesis, "growth without fixed ends."

Further, this view represents his reconstructed concept of a *telos*. Against Aristotelian teleology and its metaphysics of an end as the fixed and static point of completion and its accompanying image of a linear path of growth upward, Dewey presents us with a *circular* growth pattern in which an end is not something to be attained once and for all.¹⁶ This fits into his philosophy of the middle. We are always growing from the middle; there is no ultimate beginning or end point. "The end thus re-appears as a series of 'what nexts'" (*HNC*, 29). Ends are endless (*HNC*, 159). An end is not "a terminus, a de facto boundary," but *an ending, or a closure, what Dewey calls "fulfillments, conclusions, completions, perfections,"* in serial events (*EN*, 86). Dewey's concept of end in his naturalistic holism can perhaps be best captured by the idea of growth in evolving circles that Emerson suggests in the following statement: "The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end."¹⁷ As in Emerson, growth for Dewey is an expanding whole, a continuous expansion of the horizons of circles in which each end constitutes a new beginning.¹⁸

Dewey's reconstructed concept of end puts in clearer perspective his idea of growth as *growing*, in the present participial form (*HNC*, 194). Each stage of growth has its own unique value, which creates historical trajectories. A state of immaturity is not something to be overcome and forgotten for a so-called higher state of maturity, not something to be characterized as a linear path of development. Thus, when Dewey says that "a man is not an adult until after he has been a boy, but

childhood does not exist for the sake of maturity" (*EN*, 84), he means by the immature the ongoing process of maturing.

Dewey's concept of end suggests his reconstructed concept of the criteria of growth, which he calls "directive criteria."¹⁹ The criteria of growth are not determined *a priori* but are instead to be sought and reconstructed as better ends in the course of action. Dewey says that the good is the "discovered good" (*HNC*, 194). We *become better* by our continuous search for new directions. Although there is no absolute good to be relied on, Dewey suggests that we can always make use of directive criteria as a "hint," a "tentative sketch" of the course of action to be taken (*DE*, 111), a direction as a "tendency," or a "significance to be felt" (*HNC*, 180). We need constantly to articulate and concretize this general direction in our here-and-now efforts, to convert general ends into particular and varied ends (*DE*, 117).

Through his non-teleological idea of habit reconstruction in the middle, Dewey provides various *sources* (not final causes) for such directive criteria. Habits as boundaries and channels prepare us for a general directionality. With their conserving and stabilizing force, they give us the memory of security and hope for the attainment of the next state of stability. In the formation of an ideal vision, impulse as a "tentacle" (*HNC*, 68) plays an important role by absorbing nutrition from custom and the past, as well as giving impetus to a passionate "hope for something different" (*HNC*, 161). The function of intelligence is also a source for directive criteria through its redirecting and controlling impulses. These naturalistic sources of habit reconstruction show that both the new and old are indispensable forces in the search for directive criteria. Such criteria embody our moral endeavors, the struggles faced in our natural life experiences. Dewey's naturalistic idea of growth and its criteria are far richer than critics have assumed them to be. He offers the idea of nature as a guide for our moral life.

Critics who ask the question, "growth toward what?" however, may still wonder *what* those directive criteria *are*. To this Dewey responds by transforming a question itself to a *how*-question: *how to search* for the better criteria of growth in habit reconstruction that constantly expands the horizons of circles. Hilary Putnam, in defense of Dewey's pragmatist theory of inquiry, tells us that in our particular life situation, we cannot rely on a "universal set of 'criteria'" applicable to all situations.²⁰ In Putnam's words, "there can be no final answer to the question 'How should we live?'" and "we should, therefore, always leave it open to further discussion and experimentation."²¹ All we can do is *search* for an answer.

In order to make this concept of the directive criteria of growth persuasive, however, Dewey needs to enrich further *the process of how*.

THE SEARCH FOR DIRECTIVE CRITERIA IN FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION

In examining Dewey's idea of habit reconstruction, Scheffler and Robert Westbrook suggest that Dewey is not articulate enough in showing *how* a continuous process of habit reconstruction is made possible.²² Their questions make us wonder *how* the impulse of the young is constantly being released without being suppressed by rigid adult customs. As an educational and moral task of democracy, Dewey asks himself *how* the novelty and plasticity of the young and the customary habit of adults

should meet so that the former is cultivated as a constructively critical force of democracy (*HNC*, 44, 47); and *how* to keep directive criteria from being oppressively rigid standards of conformity (*DE*, 115). We are brought back to our original question, *how* to realize a new concept of controlled freedom in “intimate contacts between the mature and immature.”

Dewey has left us with a clue to the realization of such intimate human contacts: “face-to-face intercourse.”²³ A close examination of Dewey’s reconstructing habit shows us that the acquisition and use of language in interpersonal communication is a crucial component of human growth, and of the search for directive criteria in the creation of a democratic community.

In Dewey’s pragmatic theory, action and thought are highlighted as essential dimensions of intelligence. As a result, the role of language is rarely the focus of his attention. Dewey, however, hints at the necessity for language in the context of communication for habit reconstruction. He says that the initiation of a child into the prior custom of language is a “pre-condition of his entering into effective connection with [adults]” (*HNC*, 43). He adds that “transmission” or “communication” insures “participation in a common understanding” and the sharing of experience (*DE*, 6-9, 18-21). Not only does language conserve; it also *creates*, as he says: “language when it is produced meets old needs and opens new possibilities” (*HNC*, 57). Dewey maintains that language plays a crucial role in the continuous search for social standards in the encounter between the adult and the young. Against the “evils of [their] suppression” (*HNC*, 113), the impulses of the young need constantly to be expressed, to be released to the “public open out-of-doors” (*HNC*, 9). At the same time, however, impulsive expressions need constantly to be checked and tested through communicative encounters with adult custom. This is the meaning of social intelligence as a naturalistic source for directive criteria.

Dewey’s idea of language in the context of communication for habit reconstruction is a key to further enriching the issue of *how to* realize his middle-ground holism. Against the Cartesian “representational view of language” based upon the dualism of subject and object, Dewey, with Mead, proposes a functional, social, eventful and contextual view of language.²⁴ In contrast to C. L. Stevenson’s emotivist view of language with its dualism of reason and emotion, Dewey presents a holistic view of language embedded in life situations.²⁵ It embodies the unity of emotion and reason, the pre-cognitive and cognitive, inner drive and outer behavior, and the “soul and action” (*HNC*, 52). Such holistic language is an indispensable *source* and *measure* of the directive criteria that are to be sought and reconstructed for growth in circles. Through the acquisition and use of holistic language in face-to-face communication with adults, freedom of impulse in the young obtains a positive, not “negative constraint” (*DE*, 125). The self is released from the “possessive impulse” that narrows it (*HNC*, 163), while the young become the “captains of their own souls.”²⁶

It is through communication that the self overcomes the dualism of egoism and altruism (*HNC*, 96-97). In “Construction and Criticism,” an essay written in the spirit of Emerson’s “Self-Reliance,” Dewey claims that the “courage first to think and then to think out loud” is an essential condition of democracy, or again in *Art*

as *Experience*, “since [artists] can only say what they have to say, the trouble is...those who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not” (*AE*, 110).²⁷ Dewey can be interpreted as saying that communicating one’s “gleam of light” (*CC*, 138), Emerson’s phrase, is the spiritual and aesthetic aspect of the naturalistic impulse for growth. To say, “I think,” in one’s own voice, face-to-face with others, is the key for cultivating another kind of self-centeredness than child-centeredness. This *other-self-centeredness* is the vision of the new individual Dewey sought in his later years.²⁸ The image of a center embedded in the heart and acquired in interpersonal space is a vision of constrained freedom much needed by contemporary youth in their uncertainty and insecurity if we are to overcome the difficulties with which this discussion began.

PERFECTING DEMOCRACY THROUGH HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Dewey tells us: “Educative development of the young is not the only way in which the life of impulse may be employed to effect social ameliorations, though it is the least expensive and most orderly” (*HNC*, 90). Dewey’s alternative idea of growth in circles, based upon his holistic naturalism of habit reconstruction, shows us how the interpersonal space of education is, to borrow an image from Stanley Cavell, crucial for *perfecting democracy from within*.²⁹ With his remark that “democracy must begin at home” (*PP*, 368), Dewey suggests that an interpersonal encounter between the mature and immature is the crucial key for perfecting a democratic culture from within; that better ends, or criteria for directed growth, are constantly being developed in the dynamic intersection of the natural life of children and the social custom of adults. This is Dewey’s reconstruction of Rousseau’s theme (*DE*, 118-30).³⁰ Such criteria embody the process of perfecting democratic culture as the cultivation of the personality in society.

The perfection of such a culture is endless, and, as Dewey says, “perfection means perfecting” (*HNC*, 200). Its success or failure hinges on the cultivation of the constructive and critical voice of the young uttered from heart to heart, from “mouth to mouth” in face-to-face “dialogue” (*PP*, 371). The creation of a curriculum and a classroom atmosphere that encourages such passionate voices may help today’s cynical and selfishly individualistic youth regain the lost hope for connections and attain the constrained freedom at the center of their growing circles. Dewey also reminds adults of the courage to grow with the young, by detaching themselves from the insistence on their own perspectives, “to forget ourselves by finding ourselves” (*AE*, 110). Rigidity and stagnation in the adult heart and refusal to accept the challenges of the young will lead not only to the tragic arrest of growth in young individuals but also to the stagnation of a society’s growth towards a democratic culture. This requires the education of hearts towards an-other-self-centeredness, towards the cultivation of the intelligent art of growing in the middle.³¹ Overcoming the inhibiting dualism of freedom and control requires just such assiduous efforts in holistic education to realize the gradual perfecting of democracy from within.

1. The Japanese Ministry of Education has recently initiated the movement called, the “Education of the Heart.” Its aim is to reinforce moral rules and discipline as a deterrent to the asocial behaviors of the young. This is comparable to character education in the United States.

2. See "A Quiet Revolution: The Emergence of Alternative Education in Japan." (A 1997 documentary film produced by Lynn Piasecki), and "The Transformation of Japanese Classrooms Observed by Manabu Sato." (A 1997 documentary program produced by Japan Broadcasting Corporation).
3. The phrase is used by Richard J. Bernstein in his *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).
4. John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1938), 20. This book will be cited as *EE* in the text for all subsequent references.
5. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916), in *John Dewey: The Middle Works*, vol. 9, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), 54. This book will be cited as *DE* in the text for all subsequent references. Collected works of Dewey edited by Boydston will be abbreviated hereafter as *LW* for the *Later Works*, and *MW* for the *Middle Works*.
6. Ivan Leon Kandel, *The Cult of Uncertainty* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1943): 6-7; 30-31.
7. Boyd H. Bode, "Education as Growth," in *Progressive Education at the Crossroads* (New York: Newson and Company, 1938), 80-82.
8. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: A Touch Stone Book, 1987), 29-30; 56.
9. John Patrick Diggins, *The Promise of Pragmatism: Modernism and the Crisis of Knowledge and Authority* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 314.
10. Nel Noddings, "Thoughts on John Dewey's 'Ethical Principles Underlying Education,'" in *The Elementary School Journal* vol. 98, no. 5 (May 1998): 485-87; and my conversation with Noddings (October 26, 1999).
11. John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), in *MW* 14 (1983), 88. This book will be cited as *HNC* in the text for all subsequent references.
12. Israel Scheffler, *Four Pragmatists: A Critical Introduction to Peirce, James, Mead, and Dewey* (New York: Humanities Press, 1974), 117-18; and Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 287, 291.
13. Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 233.
14. A third way beyond Cartesian dualism and materialism is discussed by Varela et al., in their effort to live in a groundless world, the Buddhist's "middle way." Pragmatism they suggest is a good first step, but not as insightful as Buddhism. See Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), 234. Dewey discusses the wisdom of Asian thought as the "philosophy of life" in "As the Chinese Think" (1922), in *MW* 13 (1983).
15. Scheffler, *Four Pragmatists*, 44, 66.
16. In *Experience and Nature*, Dewey criticizes Aristotelian teleology. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (1925), in *LW* 1 (1981), 83-99. This book will be cited as *EN* for all subsequent references.
17. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Circles," in *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Stephen E. Whicher (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), 167.
18. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (1934), in *LW* 10 (1987), 171. This book will be cited as *AE* for all subsequent references. Dewey also suggests an image of growing circles with the expression of "enlarging the horizon" (*EN*, 274).
19. John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (1934), in *LW* 9 (1986), 56.
20. Hilary Putnam, "Pragmatism and Moral Objectivity," in *Words and Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 176.
21. Hilary Putnam and Ruth Anna Putnam, "Dewey's Logic," in *Words and Life*, 217.
22. Scheffler, *Four Pragmatists*, 225-26 and Westbrook, *John Dewey*, 290.
23. John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (1927), in *LW* 2 (1984), 367. This book will be cited as *PP* for all subsequent references.
24. Richard J. Bernstein discusses this issue in his lecture, "Resurgence of American Pragmatism," (Spring 1999 at New School University).

25. John Dewey, "Context and Thought" (1931), in *LW* 6 (1985) and Dewey, "Ethical Subject-Matter and Language" (1945), in *LW* 15 (1989).
26. John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (1930), in *LW* 5 (1984), 67.
27. John Dewey, "Construction and Criticism" (1930), in *LW* 5 (1988), 136. This book will be cited as *CC* for all subsequent references.
28. John Dewey, "I Believe"(1939), in *LW* 14 (1988).
29. Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1988).
30. This insight into the idea of intersecting horizons is from Cavell's interpretation of Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea of forms of life as being composed of an "ethnological" or "horizontal" dimension and a "biological" or "vertical" dimension. Stanley Cavell, *This New Yet and Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque, NM: Living Batch Press, 1989), 41-42.
31. Stanley Cavell discusses the meaning of education as a search for cultural criteria in the confrontational dialogues between adult and child, where adults are thrown back upon their own values. Dewey's idea of directive criteria is as alive and flexible as Cavell's criteria. Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 125-26.