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## Editor's Forward

This issue of *Kinesis* is dedicated to publishing presentations from The John Dewey Society's annual conference. The conference primarily focuses on the philosophy of education. The papers published in this volume are all from the *Dewey Through the Generations* panel, a recurring fixture of the conference that features new scholars of Dewey's work, paired with a senior scholar respondent.

Jim Garrison was the respondent for the 2015 panel in Chicago that included Andreas Antić, Melissa Bradford, and Rebecca Adami. We were not able to contact Adami for her paper, although it is referenced in Garrison's response. Kurt Stemhagen was the respondent for the 2016 panel in Washington D.C., and the panelists were Stephanie Burdick-Shepherd, Elizabeth Liu, and Justo Serrano Zamora.

I would like to thank all of our featured authors for their wonderful contributions. I would also like to thank The John Dewey Society for providing a crucial format for the philosophy of education, as well as the Department of Philosophy at SIUC for supporting *Kinesis* since 1968. And last, I must especially thank my friend and colleague Eli Kramer, a member of our editorial board and the current John Dewey Society Emerging Scholar Liaison, for his indispensable role in bringing this special issue to fruition.

### Nature and Education: A Brief Incantation

Dewey never wrote a book titled "Nature and Education," although the designation would have fit comfortably within his long list of publications. Dewey was especially fond of the noble conjunction that stood between two key terms; in such instances, the "and" was never to indicate a partition or estrangement, nor did it indicate two terms that could simply be conjoined and divorced as canonical schemes of logic would have it. Rather, the "and" had a function quite related to the copula; it said something of *identity*, and identity is to be understood as most fundamentally an *exchange* or circuit between or among the traits comprising a singular and

continuous *res* or state of affairs.

Nature, for Dewey, is a term that describes all that there is: a complex and emerging set of continuous relations. Dewey's notion of nature could be described as both holistic and pluralistic, but such denominations have too often become empty terms that are perhaps best left for the ravens. Dewey himself was skeptical of vacant slogans, "education" ranking among them. Education should not denote a thing one obtains. Rather, it must relate to the open-ended process of intelligent adaptation, to an experimental disposition, to the ability to actively shape one's surroundings. Education is not merely knowledge, but rather, the full integration of intelligent experience into daily activity, into the non-cognitive affairs that constitute the bulk of human life.

Education is, in most general terms, a purposive and creative force of nature. The pragmatic import of the phrase "nature *and* education" might be to indicate that the patterns of learning must manifest the broadest and most basic patterns of nature, the "rhythms" that precede and pervade anything that we might specifically term "human enterprise." In education, there are fixtures and the undoing of those fixtures, affirmations and negations, fast changes and slow movements. Education is closely related to Dewey's concept of *wisdom*; it is ultimately an effective way of being a part of nature, of expanding and creating nature, a fruitful *exchange*. In this sense it is also related to artistic endeavor, to the act of *composing*. I believe that philosophical endeavor plays an important role in providing tools for education, for teaching us how to enrich existence in a way that is both fulfilling and beautiful.

I provide this brief metaphysical incantation in order to welcome the essays that follow. In a time where "education" is often viewed as a basic human right, and at times a commodity, it is perhaps more important than ever to turn a critical eye towards educational processes, towards how to be better learners, towards nature *and* education.

Paul Benjamin Cherlin  
Carbondale, May 2016

## Division I: 2015 Panel

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### **John Dewey's Philosophical Legacy for the Global *Access to Knowledge Movement* in the Digital Age**

Andreas Antić  
University of Potsdam

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#### **Introduction**

In *The Public and Its Problems*, Dewey stated that “the prime difficulty [...] is that of discovering the means by which a scattered, mobile and manifold public may so recognize itself as to define and express its interests” and that the only possible solution for this problem lies in “the perfecting of the means and ways of communication of meanings.”<sup>1</sup> Today, the Internet has massively changed our means of communication, particularly in the last decade. This change deeply affects economics, politics, science, media, and it has a high impact on our social behavior and everyday life. While the relevance of Dewey’s philosophy for the 21st century has been discussed in several recent volumes,<sup>2</sup> very

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1. John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (1925), in *The Later Works, 1925–1953*, vol. 2, edited by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 327, 332.

2. William J. Gavin, ed., *In Dewey's Wake: Unfinished Work of Pragmatic Reconstruction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003); Jim Garrison, ed., *Reconstruction Democracy, Recontextualizing Dewey. Pragmatism and Interactive Constructivism in the Twenty-first Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008); A.G. Rud, Jim Garrison, and Lynda Stone, eds., *John Dewey at 150: Reflections for a*

little has been written yet about the relationship between Dewey's ideas and the digital age.<sup>3</sup>

To explore this relationship, I would like to shift the attention from "the" Internet in general to the *Access to knowledge* (A2K) movement in particular. The A2K movement might not represent the so-called 'digital mainstream,' but it certainly has a significant importance, because it can be identified as one of the most promising and progressive movements in the new era of digital culture.

In contrast to the obvious contradiction between Dewey's vision of democracy and most of today's politics and economy, the examination of the A2K movement reveals a stunning similarity to Dewey's philosophical approach. In this regard, I will argue that the digital age might be a fertile ground for the revitalization of Dewey's philosophy. And, the other way around, Dewey's philosophy supports the today's critique of intellectual property rights and the movements for free software, open science, and open government.

The paper is divided into three parts. I will first give a short illustration of the A2K movement and its origins. Second, I will outline some of the guiding principles and values of the

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*New Century* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009); John R. Shook and Paul Kurtz, ed., *Dewey's Enduring Impact: Essays on America's Philosopher* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2011); Len J. Waks, *Education 2.0: The LearningWeb Revolution and the Transformation of the School* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2013); Jim Garrison, Larry Hickman, Daisaku Ikeda, *Living as Learning: John Dewey in the 21st Century* (Cambridge, MA: Dialogue Path Press, 2014).

3. Few exceptions are the five following articles: Mark Whipple, "The Dewey-Lippmann Debate Today: Communication Distortions, Reflective Agency, and Participatory Democracy," *Sociological Theory* 23/2 (2005): 156–178; Nathan Crick, "The Search for a Purveyor of News. The Dewey/Lippmann Debate in an Internet Age," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 26/5 (2009): 480–497; Craig A. Cunningham, "Transforming Schooling through Technology: Twenty-First-Century Approaches to Participatory Learning," in *John Dewey at 150: Reflections for a New Century*, edited by A.G. Rud, Jim Garrison, and Lynda Stone (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009), 40–48; Henry Farrell, "New Problems, New Publics? Dewey and New Media," *Policy & Internet* 6/2 (2014): 176–191; Hans Lenk and Ulrich Arnsward, "Public Life, John Dewey, and Media Technology," *Philosophy Now* 103 (2014): 24–27.

A2K movement. In the third part, I will turn to Dewey's vision of creative democracy as an exemplification, in order to show how his philosophical framework is related to the principles of the A2K movement. Finally, I will present my conclusion and give a brief outlook.

## 1. What is the A2K movement?

The term "Access to Knowledge" (A2K) is used since 2004 as an umbrella for a coalition of a wide range of diverse movements and activities.<sup>4</sup> It is certainly not a social movement in a narrower sense, not an identity-based movement, and not a protest-movement. It rather contains of heterogeneous activities of individual activists, civil society groups, scientific communities, corporations, public institutions, and government agencies. What they have in common is a critical account on intellectual property rights, such as patents, copyrights, and trademarks. They emphasize the importance of information policy and its consequences to a wide range of human values and claim a "public access to the products of human culture and learning."<sup>5</sup>

Following Yochai Benkler, the emergence of the A2K movement must be seen in the context of four long-term intellectual and material-historical trends: 1. the rise of the global trading system, 2. the rise of the knowledge economy, 3. the subsequent development of a networked information society, and 4. the rise of individual human rights.<sup>6</sup> Although the movement is closely linked with digital culture, it is concerned with classical problems of social justice and inequalities in the distribution of resources in

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4. Frederick Noronha and Jeremy Malcolm, *Access to Knowledge: A Guide for Everyone (Kuala Lumpur: Consumers International, 2010)*, 2–4; Gaëlle Krikorian, "Access to Knowledge as a Field of Activism," in *Access to Knowledge in the Age of Intellectual Property*, edited by Amy Kapczynski and Gaëlle Krikorian (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 69–74.

5. Noronha and Malcolm, *Access to Knowledge*, 2.

6. Yochai Benkler, "The Idea of Access to Knowledge and the Information Commons: Long-Term Trends and Basic Elements," in *Access to Knowledge in the Age of Intellectual Property*, edited by Amy Kapczynski and Gaëlle Krikorian (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 223.



the knowledge economy.<sup>7</sup>

The claim for ‘access’ is originally taken from the international campaign for access to essential medicines in developing countries, which was started in 1999 by Doctors Without Borders. This campaign is one of the main roots of the A2K movement. Before, in 1998, the South African government was sued by the 39 largest pharmaceutical manufacturers for buying drugs against the outbreak of HIV/AIDS not from official suppliers, but generic versions from third party vendors in India and Brazil.<sup>8</sup> U.S. and EU governments supported the lawsuit against South Africa, which provoked public outrage followed by the international campaign for access to essential medicines. Fortunately, the lawsuit was withdrawn in 2001.

In addition to the protests against restrictive patent laws for pharmaceutical products, the critical examination of intellectual property rights has been intensified by numerous movements, organizations, and consumer groups in various fields, especially with regard to Internet regulation policies.<sup>9</sup>

A second important root of the A2K movement is the *free-software movement*, founded by Richard Stallman in 1983. Its principles were defined in the Free Software Definition which became an essential influence for subsequent movements.

To promote free software beyond the hacker community, the *Open Source Initiative* was established in 1998 by means of which the term “open source” has become very popular within a short time. Since then, a whole number of movements and initiatives emerged, applying the principles of free and open-source software to other fields which even lead to an inflationary use of the term ‘open.’ Nevertheless, many of the countless ‘open movements’ became exceedingly significant, e. g. open access, open data, open government, or open science, just to mention a few.

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7. Cf. Krikorian, “Access to Knowledge”, 74.

8. Cf. Felix Stalder, “Digital commons,” in *The Human Economy. A Citizen’s Guide*, edited by Keith Hart, Jean-Louis Laville, and Antonio D. Cattani (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 320.

9. Remarkable international protests in 2011 were directed against the “Stop Online Privacy Act” (SOPA) and the “PROTECT IP Act” (PIPA) in the U.S.

A third important subgroup, that I would like to mention, is the commons movement which has its roots in the cooperative movement and in the ecological movement. It received extensive public attention in 2009, when Elinor Ostrom became the first woman who received the Nobel Prize in Economics for her research on the commons. The commons movement was originally focused on exhaustible natural resources that are collectively owned and used, but in the recent decade, the commons movement was extended to immaterial goods, called ‘knowledge commons,’ which have *information* or *data* as their resource and can therefore be replicated without a loss of quality or quantity.

The production and utilization of knowledge commons became widespread in the Internet, furthered by the countless tools to collaborate, share, remix, and distribute cultural works, as well as the increased use of free licenses to abolish copyright restrictions. The best known knowledge common is probably Wikipedia, others are free software, such as Linux and the Internet browser Firefox, or, in education, the growing amount of *Open Educational Resources*. These examples illustrate that the denomination as a common does not only refer to a product, but includes the entire process of collective production, usage and management.

## 2. Principles and values of the A2K movement

It has already become obvious how closely the various roots and movements are intertwined. They share a set of guiding principles, concepts, and values which I will outline in the following. In order to avoid the accusation of just interpreting the A2K movement through a Deweyan lens and thereby constructing a circular argument, I will primarily refer to self descriptions and central documents of the movement.

Some main principles of the A2K movement can be traced back to the *Free Software Definition*.<sup>10</sup> It includes four essential freedoms which the license agreement of a computer program must grant to be counted as free software: the freedom 0. to *run* the soft-

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10. The *Free Software Definition*: <https://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html>.

ware for any purpose, 1. to *study* its source code and to change it, 2. to *distribute* copies of the program, and 3. to *distribute modified versions* of the program.

Stallman explicitly refers with each of the four freedoms to a positive concept of liberty that enables individuals to act and to cooperate. The term ‘free’ in ‘free software’ does not only imply that the software is free of charge. As Stallman always puts it, “you should think of ‘free’ as in ‘free speech,’ not as in ‘free beer’.”<sup>11</sup>

According to Stallman, the four freedoms do not only represent an effective method of developing software in collaboration, moreover, they include an ethical claim, because they “promote social solidarity—that is, sharing and cooperation.”<sup>12</sup>

The principle of *sharing* is realized through the permission of the unrestricted distribution of copies both of the original and the modified version of a program. With regard to software, it is not only source code that is shared, but creative work, improvements, tools, skills, data, and knowledge.

The principle of *cooperation* is realized by the possibility of access to the source code, which is a precondition for studying how the program works, for its modification, and thereby for the joint development of software in a community of software engineers. In this way, individual software engineers can contribute by sharing their improvements, from which the whole user community benefits.

Even though openness is perceived as the central principle of the ‘open movements,’ Stallman claims that it is not a value by itself, but must be understood in relation to cooperation and freedom. He suspects that the popular use of the term ‘open’ overshadows the principles of freedom.<sup>13</sup> This concern led to a long-lasting debate about whether to use the term ‘open,’ ‘free’ or even the French/Spanish ‘libre’ which finally resulted in the now

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11. Richard Stallman, *Free Software, Free Society: Selected Essays of Richard M. Stallman*, introduced by Lawrence Lessig, edited by J. Gay (Boston, MA: GNU Press 2002), 43.

12. Richard Stallman, “Why ‘open source’ misses the point of free software,” *Communications of the ACM* 52/6 (2009): 31 (italics added, A.A.).

13. Cf. *ibid.*, 33.

common but circumstantial designation “free/libre open-source software” (FLOSS) as a compromise.

Nevertheless, most of the open movements have adopted the principles of *sharing* and *cooperation* from the free-software movement, even if they strongly refer to the concept of openness. Basically, the meaning of openness varies in the different movements. In the open data movement, for example, openness is understood as threefold: as legal openness (unrestricted use, modification, and redistribution), technical openness (availability and access), and social openness (universal participation).<sup>14</sup> Since the ideal of openness, in its legal, technical, and social dimension, aims to the higher goal of cooperation, openness can be considered, following Stallman’s line of argument, as a condition for cooperation.

Last but not least, I would like to mention that the A2K movement rejects ideological and dualistic thinking. What David Bollier and Burns H. Weston have pointed out for the commons movement,<sup>15</sup> applies to the greater A2K movement as well: Hence, it “is not a traditional movement defined by an ideology or policy agenda. It is united, rather, by its participants’ commitment to certain social practices and principles of self-governance.” For Benkler,<sup>16</sup> the A2K movement could even overcome the traditional right-left divide and therefore “become the basis of a new political alignment.”

According to Gaëlle Krikorian,<sup>17</sup> most activists in the A2K movement are neither radical nor interested in dialectal logic of opposition to *the public*, *the state* or *the industry* as a whole. They do not want to establish confrontational “counterpublics,” but instead try “to formulate a debate outside of the dialectic of opposition.” In

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14. According to the *Open Definition* (<http://opendefinition.org/od/>) and the *Open Data Handbook* (<http://opendatahandbook.org/>), which has been both published by the non-profit organization “Open Knowledge” (<https://okfn.org/>).

15. David Bollier and Burns H. Weston, “The Commons as a Growing Global Movement,” CSRwire.com, accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.csrwire.com/blog/posts/1203-the-commons-as-a-growing-global-movement>.

16. Benkler, “The Idea of Access to Knowledge,” 235.

17. Cf. Krikorian, “Access to Knowledge,” 72–73.

particular, the A2K movement is inherently pluralistic and “seeks to increase awareness of the various problems and various needs of specific groups.” It is based “on the effort to convince others that they are affected, should be concerned, and should act accordingly.” — That sounds like a realization of Dewey’s concept of the public.

### 3. Dewey’s relation to the principles of th A2K movement

For someone who is familiar with Dewey’s work, the wide range of similarities between the mentioned principles of the A2K movement and the key themes of Dewey’s philosophy have already become obvious. The presented principles offer a range of interesting points that could be reflected from a Deweyan perspective. Here, I will focus on the principle of cooperation which is essential for the A2K movement and for Dewey because they both rest upon the ideal of scientific inquiry. For this purpose, I will take a brief look at Dewey’s vision of creative democracy, which includes many central topics of Dewey’s thinking in a condensed form and reveals the importance of cooperation for his philosophy.

In his essay “Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us,”<sup>18</sup> Dewey states that democracy has to be continuously re-created in the light of contemporary conditions and that this task “can be accomplished only by inventive effort and creative activity.” He claims that we have “to get rid of the habit of thinking of democracy as something institutional and external,” since it is not a “perpetual motion machine” but “a personal, an individual, way of life.” (226)

Democracy as a way of life, the very central idea in Dewey’s entire works, is characterized by three democratic faiths: First, the “democratic faith in human equality,” or, in other words, “a working faith in the possibilities of human nature [...] as that nature is exhibited in every human being irrespective of race, color, sex, birth and family, of material or cultural wealth.” (226) The second refers to the ability of reflective thinking as a necessary condition for the functioning of a democratic society, namely the “faith in the capac-

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18. John Dewey, “Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us” (1939), in *The Later Works, 1925–1953*, vol. 14, edited by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), 224–230.

ity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action if proper conditions are furnished.” (227) And third, the faith in cooperation with others which overcomes differences without neglecting them. That means “that even when needs and ends or consequences are different for each individual, the habit of amicable cooperation—which may include, as in sport, rivalry and competition—is itself a priceless addition to life.” (228)

Dewey explicates that “to cooperate by giving differences a chance to show themselves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of the other persons but is a means of enriching one’s own life-experience, is inherent in the democratic personal way of life.” (228)

This demonstrates that Dewey’s understanding of democracy as a way of life is based on a sophisticated concept of social cooperation, which is closely linked to the ethical dimensions of tolerance, peace, and diversity. That goes far beyond the principle of cooperation according to the *Free Software Definition*. The philosophical justification of the connection of cooperation and democracy in its ethical dimension would be a great benefit for the A2K movement.

Furthermore, it must be noticed that Dewey rejected all kinds of dualistic oppositions that have shaped the history of philosophy. Furthermore, just as the A2K movement, he rejected any kind of foundational and dogmatic thinking. Instead, he argued for the use flexible categories and context-sensitive inquiry. He pointed out that inquiry related to social matters should always start with actual activities and problems, not with general concepts, such as ‘the’ state, ‘the’ society, or ‘the’ public, because those concepts draw us “imperceptibly into a consideration of the logical relationship of various ideas to one another, and away from facts of human activity.”<sup>19</sup>

Starting the process of social inquiry from human activity, Dewey’s pragmatist approach is able to overcome traditionally opposing ideologies. His own political philosophy already represents

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19. John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (1925), in *The Later Works, 1925–1953*, vol. 2, edited by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 241.

a seminal connection of liberalism and socialism, he even identified himself as a “democratic socialist”.<sup>20</sup> While Dewey’s undogmatic, open-minded approach has been a bar to a broad reception of his work during the Cold War, it provides a necessarily required way of thinking in the post-socialist and post-colonial world of the 21st century, in which many traditional dualisms need to be overcome.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to explore the relationship between Dewey’s philosophy and the digital age. Therefore, I have focused on the A2K movement as an important example. I have outlined some central principles and values of the A2K movement, which is characterized by a positive concept of freedom, a commitment to the principles of sharing, cooperation, and openness, as well as the rejection of ideological and dualistic thinking. The brief examination of Dewey’s concept of creative democracy has shown that he has much to offer to the A2K movement. Starting from the same point—the importance of social cooperation—Dewey uncovers and stresses aspects of cooperation, that are overlooked in the A2K movement, especially the democratic and ethical dimension. In this sense, Dewey’s philosophy provides a valuable legacy for the A2K movement and supports its aims.

I have only focused on the principle of cooperation, but there is much more left to discover. I am fully aware that this brief overview has slightly scratched on the surface of what Dewey’s approach has to offer for the A2K movement. One need only to think of Dewey’s theory of knowledge, his theory of social inquiry, or his theory of the public. Obviously, much more research is needed to apply Dewey’s philosophy to the actual conditions of the digital age.

On the other hand, the Deweyan approach can be improved by the A2K movement, too. Although Dewey, as Richard Bernstein has criticized, “always emphasized the need for fundamental economic changes in furthering the realization of radical

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20. Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca/ New York: Cornell University Press 1991), 429.

democracy, he never indicated in detail what these should be.”<sup>21</sup> This gap could be probably filled by the approach of “commons-based peer-production,”<sup>22</sup> which can be considered a part of the A2K movement. It is based on the dynamics of cooperation and on the rejection of the idea that all humans are fundamentally selfish beings.

Since the A2K movement is still in an initial phase, it cannot be told how it will develop in the future. At least, by showing the potential for a revitalization of Dewey’s philosophy in the digital age, I hope to stimulate further discussion and collaboration. Those who are inspired by Dewey’s vision of creative democracy, should engage with the aims of the A2K movement, because the issue of intellectual property is a crucial condition for the freedom of communication, the exchange of ideas, facts, and experiences, all of which is essential for Dewey’s approach.

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21. Richard J. Bernstein, “Dewey’s Vision of Radical Democracy,” in *The Pragmatic Turn* (Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press, 2010), 87.

22. Cf. Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 59–63.