

Toward Inclusion and Human Unity: Rethinking Dewey's Democratic Community

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I come from a community-based culture that emphasizes the achievements of the collective, family, class, school, district, department, city, or nation, for instance, over that of the individual. The collective embraces the ideas of mutual help, support, and supervision within the community and the value of solidarity. People are not encouraged to be anyone special or to make themselves stand out. Keeping a low profile is recommended for those who are extraordinary in work or in life. Understandably, I grew up in an environment where sometimes I was a little overwhelmed by people who surrounded me offering their opinions, although I knew most of them meant well. I felt I needed some room to myself and some privacy, a concept that was never brought up in our public language until the 1980s, when Chinese youth were increasingly exposed to Euro-western ideology and American popular culture in particular, which encourages a strong sense of individualism. The young generation started to look at the world from a different perspective.

I still remember that my parents teased me when I first mentioned the word *privacy* to them, for they thought it was a fun word and I just followed the fashion, using it without knowing what it was. Later, when I started my career in Chinese language education at a public middle school, I found the students, unlike the ones from my generation, came to form a sense of individual differences and preferred working alone instead of in a group, which was deemed a drag on their own progress. While I understood that we should value individual differences and be aware of different learning styles in our pedagogy, I could not help but wonder if we really had to abandon others or the group to achieve individual development.

As a Chinese living in the United States, my feelings about this country keep changing as I am more exposed to its culture. Upon my arrival, I felt freed from those judgmental eyes and caring words that were everywhere in my life before. I thought I was finally independent, doing my own thinking, choosing what I would like to do, and dressing in the way I like. The key is that people here do not really

pay attention to each other unless the other is close to them or relevant. Everyone takes care of their own business. The practice of “being yourself” is prevalent in popular culture and what I witness in my American friends and classmates. However, the enjoyment of this freedom did not last long. I found Americans cared so much about their privacy and the values of autonomy and competition that they kept themselves apart from one another. I started to miss my mother culture where I felt a sense of belonging and togetherness; I made phone calls often to my best friend from elementary school who also studied in a U.S. graduate school to renew the feeling of being close and supported.

What troubles me at a deeper level is the individualistic focus the students—future teachers—take in my class. Every year that I teach the foundations course, “Teachers, Schools, and Society,” I can see the strong influence individualism holds on the way my American students deal with their classmates. Some of them show complete indifference in group discussions, while some do not feel comfortable at all working with their fellow students on group projects. In their statements of teaching philosophy, they talk about the aim of education in terms of self-actualization and reaching their full potential and their methods of instruction in terms of individual differences and meeting individual needs. I could not help but wonder when my American students are so attracted to autonomy, whether they feel isolated from the larger group of shared meanings and values where they actually come from. Is the community or others really a hindrance that slows down individuals’ development? Can we think of community in terms of friendship, mutual support, and solidarity with our fellow human beings? After traveling a long distance from the eastern hemisphere to the western hemisphere, I find myself still looking for answers to the same question: do we need a community in seeking self-development?

In the following text, I dig into Dewey’s writings to explore his democratic community to better understand the meaning and the value of community. Through this effort, I expect to find answers to the questions proposed above. I begin by considering the connotation of the concept *community*, which is distinguished from the more popular term *society* we use in our ordinary language. Then I transition from the discussion of the term itself to the key principles that help sustain a democratic community followed by an examination of the issues of conflict, harmony, and power. The educational implications are explored at the end of the chapter. My discussion of community does not claim the sovereignty of community, which means communal goals take priority over individual goals. Rather, I believe individuals and community are of equal importance and reflect two sides of the same reality. Dewey elaborates this inseparable and codependent human relationship in his “ethical postulate.” It reads: “IN THE REALIZATION OF INDIVIDUALITY THERE IS FOUND ALSO THE NEEDED REALIZATION OF SOME COMMUNITY OF PERSONS OF WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL IS A MEMBER; AND, CONVERSELY, THE AGENT WHO DULY SATISFIES THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH HE SHARES, BY THAT SAME CONDUCT SATISFIES HIMSELF.”¹

In the pursuit of self-development, we need to discard the split of private/public or individual/social. I share Dewey's position that self-development always involves a social medium, development of the social environment, and vice versa.²

Human Community: A Garden with No Fence

More than a hundred years ago, when Dewey claimed democracy “a way of life, the truly moral and human way of life,” he expanded room for the development of democratic ideal in society that is complex, multiple, diverse, and continually in the process of changing.³ It reveals that only when individuals practice democracy in their everyday lives and in every person-to-person relationship they develop can democracy be possibly achieved and stresses that individuals and a social medium are indispensable in a democracy. Since individuals can be misunderstood as something ready-made or “a single person,” Dewey prefers the word “individuality” in describing individuals, which means something to be achieved and represents the uniqueness and the value of every individual. For Dewey, individuality is more concrete and signifies a breathing, thinking, and acting individual. He explains, “[S]elf, or individuality, is essentially social, being constituted not by isolated capacity, but by capacity in response to the needs of an environment—an environment which, when taken in its fullness, is a community of persons.”⁴ This time Dewey points out plainly for us the necessity of a community in seeking our self-construction.

Instead of using the term *society*, Dewey chooses *a community of persons* in his phrasing. So why does it have to be community, or is it just a random choice? Is there a difference between Dewey's *community* and *society*? When people ask these questions, they are approaching the heart of Dewey's democracy. Let me further explain. The word *society* is equivalent to *human community* in terms of association. Careful readers may also notice the phrase *associated life* that Dewey uses instead in some of the writings on individuality and community. It seems Dewey does use these two words interchangeably in the sense of association occasionally. However, when developing democracy to “a way of life,” Dewey adopts the word *community* that connotes more than a simple association the current society sustains. I now examine different texts that serve as a guide to Dewey's position on this concept.

In *The Public and Its Problems*, Dewey shares his concern about the “eclipse of the public” in the lives of Americans, which he believes inevitably affects the pursuit of democracies.⁵ What he proposes in his lecture is a search for the “great community.” He reminds us, “We are born organic beings associated with others, but we are not born members of a community,” emphasizing that “no amount of aggregated collective action of itself constitutes a community.”⁶ For Dewey, a human community is not a simple, physical aggregation of people or a group that is formed based on sameness. He warns that although Americans associate, very few live in community, for relatedness or associations themselves are not sufficient to shape a community. To fix this loss of a public, Dewey offers his solution: “Till the Great Society is converted into a Great Community, the Public will remain in eclipse.”⁷

In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey considers the democratic conception in education through examining the implications of human association.⁸ He shows us again that humans associate together in all kinds of ways and for all kinds of purposes, but what we have is “a congeries of loosely associated societies.”⁹ Even associated life, as Dewey sees it, can be different in terms of the extent to which people bond together. The times he lived in with the problem of “eclipse of the public” signifying itself as a baggy association is a disappointment to Dewey. In his mind, “an inclusive and permeating community of action and thought” represents an ideal mode of associated living that values every individual’s input and is indeed a democratic way of living.¹⁰ Dewey wants to emphasize that his community as a type of human association is not grounded upon homogeneity or physical aggregation, but free communication and shared interests by all. In brief, Deweyan community is communicative, porous, and inclusive. Following his lead, my imagination evokes a picture of a great union of humans, the union of individuals, states, and nations, and that of diverse associations, political, industrial, commercial, educational, scientific, and religious, for instance. This mode of association is compatible with the two criteria for the measurement of an ideal community proposed by Dewey: “How numerous and varied are the interests which are consciously shared?” and “How full and free is the interplay with other forms of association?”¹¹ Plainly, for Dewey, democracy or a democratic community is a human ideal that suggests improvement and is always in the making

If we apply these standards to the real world, we will find that not any association of common interest forms the community we want—consider a gang of thieves, for example. Illegality aside, this group of people is loosely tied by a single selfish interest of moneymaking and has very limited interaction and cooperation with other groups. Based on these two standards, we may infer that the more inclusions we have, the closer we will come to living in a world we may someday call a democracy.

In *Individualism Old and New*, Dewey presents a picture of American society in the early twentieth century that sadly took a wrong turn in its serving only the ends of profit-making.¹² Dewey is worried that when people are treated as the parts of a machine and society encourages the sole pursuit of economic success, we are losing communities where a fully realized human being with morality, intelligence, resourcefulness, and responsibility can be cultivated. For Dewey, there are ideals of the indefinite perfectibility of individuals and of a community having a scope as wide as humanity to achieve. Again, Dewey calls for the return of communities and wants to awaken people’s awareness of communities in a democracy. To achieve the best human possibilities, Dewey tells us, “Each of us needs to cultivate his own garden. But there is no fence about this garden: it is no sharply marked-off enclosure. Our garden is the world, in the angle at which it touches our own manner of being.”¹³ What Dewey proposes here is a nonexclusionary world in virtue of a unity of various nonexclusionary groups and social organizations. The elimination of a demarcation line—the “fence,” in the word of Dewey —includes one between

people, one between various associations, and even one between nations, for example. Since a nonexclusionary human community is a necessity for individuality to develop and human beings to thrive, what do human beings need to consider in connecting people, bringing individuals closer, and maintaining a community that embraces inclusion?

Fraternity as a Bond between Individuals

In Chinese, we translate the word *fraternity*, or “*fraternité*” from the motto of the French revolution, as *bó ài*. Literally, this translation means “universal love.” In most English dictionaries, the word is interpreted as “brotherhood.” I believe these translations, although different, reflect the spirit of the French revolution in the sense that it was a revolt against royal absolutism and noble privileges and a striving for freedom of religion. Dewey also emphasizes fraternity in his democracy, but he gives it a different interpretation. The statement below shows how Dewey looks at the term in a transformative way as times have moved on:

Cooperation—called fraternity in the classic French formula—is as much a part of the democratic ideal as is personal initiative. That cultural conditions were allowed to develop (markedly so in the economic phase) that subordinated cooperativeness to liberty and equality serves to explain the decline in the two latter.¹⁴

It is Dewey’s belief that fraternity, which he interprets as cooperation, holds the same significance as liberty and equality in a democracy. Any preference of liberty or equality over cooperativeness will fail to make democracy come true. Dewey notes, “[D]emocracy as a way of life is controlled by personal faith in personal day-by-day *working together with others*.”¹⁵ The motto of the French Revolution, fraternity, with its new connotation of cooperation, nicely reflects “the nature of the democratic idea in its generic social sense.”¹⁶ Dewey further points out, “What is learned and employed in an occupation having an aim and involving cooperation with others is moral knowledge, whether consciously so regarded or not. For it builds up a social interest and confers the intelligence needed to make that interest effective in practice.”¹⁷

Through incorporating cooperation into everyday world of living, Dewey directs us to the heart of democracy, which, taking social interests into account and entailing social intelligence, actually signifies a moral way to live.

To have a better understanding of Dewey’s cooperation, I now turn to two quotations below from his writings on the problems of the public and the nature of human experience: “Fraternity is another name for the *consciously appreciated goods which accrue from an association in which all share, and which give direction to the conduct of each*.”¹⁸ Shared experience “is the greatest of human goods.”¹⁹ Dewey equates fraternity with consciously appreciated goods, which come from shared efforts and have an instructive effect on every individual. And, through the direct connection Dewey points out between shared experience and human goods, we can easily infer that human cooperation as shared experience and social knowledge is the greatest of human goods.

Now, we may take a look at the underlying assumptions of shared human experience. To form shared experience, among humans, communication is indispensable. Through free and open communication, people from diverse cultural backgrounds come to form common bonds by having common knowledge, beliefs, aspirations and aims, for instance. As Dewey states, “To learn to be human is to develop through the give-and-take of communication an effective sense of being an individually distinctive member of a community; one who understands and appreciates its beliefs, desires, and methods, and who contributes to a further conversion of organic powers into human resources and values. But this translation is never finished.”²⁰

This elaboration well summarizes the following points for us. First, the concept of the individual is grounded in the unity of individuality and sociality. Second, any member of the community needs to participate in the experiences of others; those experiences in turn contribute to the shared values or social knowledge to realize our full humanity through the lively exchange of ideas. Lastly, the tool for us to do so is communication. In the lectures he gave to a Chinese audience during his 1919-1921 sojourn in China, Dewey said, “Free and open communication, unself-seeking and reciprocal relationships, and the sort of interaction that contributes mutual advantage, are the essential factors in associated living.”²¹ He even believes that communication can alone create a great community, arguing, “Our Babel is not one of tongues but of the signs and symbols without which shared experience is impossible.”²²

Dewey begins *Democracy and Education* with a discussion on education as a necessity of life where he points out a direct connection between education and communication. He first expands the denotation of the concept of education, which we usually take as equivalent to schooling, but which Dewey deems as “only one means, and compared with other agencies, a relatively superficial means” of education.²³ Then, he claims, “Society not only continues to exist *by* transmission, *by* communication, but it may fairly be said to exist *in* transmission, *in* communication. There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common.”²⁴

Clearly, to form and sustain a nonexclusionary community, we must form something in common, knowledge, beliefs, aspirations and aims, for instance. According to Dewey, only successful communication that is educative can insure participation in a common understanding and secure “similar emotional and intellectual dispositions.”²⁵ After every successful communication, both the communicator and the communicatee gain enlarged insights and changed experiences. Late in his career, Dewey rephrases this type of human interaction as a transactional relationship.²⁶

To achieve successful communication, the ability and willingness to formulate a communicable experience are required for both parties. This means, on the part of the communicator, that one needs to figure out how to connect one’s experience

to the communicatee's so that one can articulate one's experience in a way the other person will be able to understand; conversely, the communicatee needs to figure out the same thing as the communicator does in order to receive and understand the communicator's articulated experience. In order to do that, Dewey believes both of them must be able to step outside of their own experience and see it as the other would see it by putting themselves in the place of the other and using imagination in order to assimilate the other's experience. This is what I call other-regarding, sympathetic thinking, through which communication becomes educative. And more importantly, this communication does not assume universality, by which I mean a universal perspective, one absolute truth, but is located in the everyday experience of specific individuals and their beliefs and values. It is not an effort to homogenize people. Rather, it gives rise to inclusion by transforming passive toleration into the communicable experience, which finally leads to sympathy and active cooperation. It ultimately underscores the importance of cooperativeness in maintaining a nonexclusionary community.

Given the preceding discussion, the inference is that communal life, which is identical with communication, demands understanding, learning, other-regarding thinking and changing for its own continuity. Briefly, communal life with effective communication toward sharing of values and beliefs is intrinsically cooperative and educative. In this community, fraternity or cooperation is an emotional, intellectual, and moral tie to bond human beings firmly together as a whole and secure the flourishing of individuality. In the words of Dewey, "[A]ssociation itself is physical and organic, while communal life is moral, that is emotionally, intellectually, consciously sustained."²⁷ He contends, "The term 'moral community' can mean only a unity of action, made what it is by the cooperating activities of diverse individuals. . . . The unity is the one activity which their varied activities make. And so it is with the moral activity of society and the activities of individuals. The more individualized the functions, the more perfect the unity."²⁸

Again, for Dewey, cooperation/fraternity is necessary for transforming our individualized functions into one human action that is more functional as well as moral, and at the moment of a moral and more functional action takes shape, human unity ensues. Dewey shows us that individuality, community, and cooperativeness are human achievements. They are inseparable for humanity to thrive. In pursuing these goals, we learn to live with others as moral, functional and caring human beings.

Issues of Conflict, Disharmony, and Power

When hearing Dewey's call for inclusion and cooperation in a democracy, many feminist and postmodernist scholars may raise their question: does Dewey embrace the value of consensus over that of conflict and disharmony? My answer is no. As long as Dewey is aware of individualized functions in a cooperative community, he cannot avoid considering the possible confrontations aroused by diverse individualities.

In *Freedom and Culture*, Dewey shares his concern about transforming physical interdependence into moral—into human—interdependences. He tells us, “individuality demands association to develop and sustain it and association requires arrangement and coordination of its elements, or organization—since otherwise it is formless and void of power.”²⁹ Although Dewey does not propose the term *conflict* in the above description, as long as the term *arrangement* or *coordination* has been used, it indicates something not in order or in harmony. Rephrasing the quote above, we find that Dewey is actually asking us the question: how can we coordinate individuals of specific capacities and different cultural backgrounds into cooperativeness, into working powers, given that everybody is unique and the possible conflict or disharmony may exist? In order to find Dewey’s position on this question, let me turn to three of his other works.

In the essay “Creative Democracy—The Task before Us,” Dewey describes democracy as “the belief 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 competitions—is itself a priceless addition to life.”³⁰ He then points out, “A genuinely democratic faith in peace is faith in the possibility of conducting disputes, controversies and conflicts as cooperative undertakings in which both parties learn by giving the other a chance to express itself, instead of having one party conquer by forceful suppression of the other.”³¹

As discussed before, for Dewey, democracy as an ideal always in the process of making and improving is a life style, a communicative, cooperative, and educative mode of communal life. Free and open communication, a crucial tool applied to form a cooperative effort, does not demand consensus, but human empathy, mutual understanding, expanded views, and experience of mutual change. For Dewey, if we have a consensus that is beneficial for everyone, then we have a perfect situation, although this is not always the case. Therefore, cooperation itself is in essence informative and educative. It does not ignore or refuse conflict or disagreement, which actually is alright and not a surprise. The key, according to Dewey, is that conflict can also be coped with through a cooperative effort where human beings help one another address their weaknesses and learn from one another’s strengths. I can see Dewey’s cooperation reflects the value of harmony, which is not equal with consensus or agreement, but a humble attitude and a comfortable, welcoming and caring environment. It reminds me of the Confucian value from 2500 years ago: “maintaining discrepancy while being in accord,” which was encouraged in the cultivation of the *superior man*.³² So, understandably, what Dewey offers in his solution here is free communication—to have both parties express themselves without exclusion and oppression.

Another text I refer to is *Ethics*, where Dewey examines the struggle between the dominant group, which “always thinks of itself as representing the social interest,” and the group, “occupying an *inferior* position of power and economic wealth.”³³ In this book, Dewey touches not only the problem of conflict but also the issue of power. He is quite aware of the dominance and inequality prevalent in society and

the tension between the two different socioeconomic classes. What he offers this time in his solution is the method of democracy, which is “of a positive toleration which amounts to sympathetic regard for the intelligence and personality of others, even if they hold views opposed to ours, and of scientific inquiry into facts and testing of ideas.”³⁴ In offering “method of democracy,” Dewey argues for a politics of difference that recognizes that some differences should be tolerated and even embraced, “the intelligence and personality of others,” for instance, again through our sympathy, other-regarding thinking, while some can be tested for acceptability through science.

In *Lectures in China*, Dewey gives a speech on economics and social philosophy, where he shows us that he is aware of the differences in distribution and social justice issues. He says:

Nowadays, of course, there is a degree of cooperation among individuals in commercial and industrial enterprises, but this cooperation is overshadowed by competition, and in this competition, discrepancies in ability and resources give advantage to the stronger, and result in inequality and injustice . . . To put the matter bluntly, in theory, capitalists and workers can cooperate with each other, but in fact, under a system of free enterprise and in the absent of governmental controls, the capitalist nearly always take advantage of the workers.³⁵

With a single-minded pursuit of profit-making, cooperation by no means brings about equal opportunities in accordance with individuals’ needs and capacities. Dewey warns us “discrepancies in ability and resources” do make a difference in cooperation on both parties. We see this injustice in society where people who are wealthy and capable of speaking the dominant language and using their relational skills are always favored while the poor or powerless are silenced and marginalized by the dominant culture. It is clear that Dewey intends to distinguish cooperation involving unjust competition and marginalization from the one promoting equal development without leading to one-sided growth and the damage of humanity.

Responding to feminist and postmodernist criticisms, I believe that Dewey makes a significant contribution to current democratic theory by his two-way educative communication and cooperative community, which do not necessarily lead to consensus or prefer agreement over conflict. Quite the reverse, Dewey encourages us to differentiate the differences where some should be tolerated and even embraced while some need to be further tested. He wants us to face conflict and resolve it through a cooperative endeavor without harming or destroying people who are different from us. Harmony, for Dewey, is a beneficial condition that makes every member of the community feel safe to share and be willing to work together. With an emphasis on shared intelligence and experiences in cooperation, Dewey also shows his understanding of the issues of inequality and injustice due to unequal access to resources and the problem of material distributions. But I agree that what Dewey could have done better in his work is to discuss the impact

of power relations in greater detail and address diverse perspectives that have been homogenized and silenced in history like many feminist, postmodernist, and post-Marxist scholars have done in their works.³⁶ My only criticism of Dewey's theory is the scientific method he proposes to solve conflicts arising in cooperation. By proposing science as a cure for problems without acknowledging human beings' embeddedness and cultural limitations, Dewey runs the risk of taking science as neutral and universal. Therefore, his scientific method is vulnerable to the charge of the assumption of universalism. Certainly, no one writes to show flaws in his or her argument; however, we are fallible human beings who cannot avoid making mistakes. That is why we need one another to form a community that helps us move beyond our limitation, culturally and intelligently, or, as Dewey says, gain expanded views and changed experiences.

Conclusion: Educational Implications

In summation, by emphasizing cooperation, Dewey's theory does not embrace the idea of sacrificing individuality for the sake of communities. Relying on a both/and logic, Dewey's position is neither individualistic nor collective, but individuals and others (communities) are codependent and influence each other. For Dewey, only through a cooperative effort that encourages maximum inclusiveness can individualized functions be achieved; because of this effort, we have a thriving and more functional human society. This position nicely reflects an organic view of society Dewey adopts: a thoroughly reciprocal relationship between the individual and the whole, namely human society.³⁷ Toward human solidarity, Dewey's cooperation is grounded in his belief in free and open communication and education.

Following Dewey's lead, I think I have found answers to the questions that bother in my classroom practice. I started this study with these questions, wondering if we have to abandon others or the group to achieve individual development, if the community or others are hindrances that slow down individuals' development, if a community is indispensable in seeking self-development, and if we can think of community in terms of friendship, mutual support, and solidarity with our fellow human beings. It seems very clear that I have to abandon an either/or logic, not aligning myself with either collective focus or individualistic focus that are logically exclusive of each other. By choosing a middle ground, like Dewey, I have never been so certain that "I" and "others" are inseparable. And, yes, we definitely can think of community in terms of friendship, mutual support, and solidarity with our fellow human beings, because living in a communal life, we form a cooperative effort that encourages inclusion, acknowledges, tolerates and even embraces differences, values shared intelligence and experiences, and supports individual growth. It is alright if some differences cannot be tolerated, but we still need to cope with this problem cooperatively with care and humbleness as the process of cooperation is to inform people, not destroy people. However, I do believe that others could be a hindrance that slows down individuals' development if the community is not well organized and cannot form a cooperative effort, by which I mean everyone is willing to work

together, plays a role as a team member, and does his or her specific part. These are challenges facing our teachers. When they assign students to groups, they must make sure the team is not “formless and void of power.” Simply grouping students together does not lead to cooperation.

Dewey helps me clarify the connotation of community, understand the values upon which a community is grounded, and see the necessity of maintaining a community. However, this is not the only contribution Dewey makes to this living, breathing, and changing world, to our democratic ideal.

I believe that Dewey’s cooperative community has a lot to offer to American culture that is individual based, emphasizing autonomy, freedom, and competition. We live in times when many great changes happen. People from all over the world living together in this country have shown that despotism and freedom of worship are not our major concerns anymore. It is Dewey’s hope that his fellow Americans can move beyond individualism encouraged by classical liberals to join with others, form a community, and achieve their best possibilities in functioning in a community. For Dewey, associated life is reality, not by choice. We start our lives with the help of our caregivers. Our growth and thrive are always rooted in a social medium, which provides for us, acknowledges our success, affirms our values, and motivates us to keep going in our life-journey. Fear of others and focusing on individual selves, for Dewey, will lead to selfishness, arrogance, and bias that ultimately hinder Americans from gaining expanded perspectives and enlarged views for improvements and continual growth. As a Chinese, I have no doubt that without the “open door policy” adopted in the late 1970s, China would not be as strong as it is today, and I would be still struggling choosing either individuality or community in my teaching dilemma. I believe that by opening our door to the world, China becomes stronger not only economically, but also culturally. By introducing our culture to the world, we gain a better understanding of our own culture. With the help of others, we learn to be both appreciative and reflective of our own culture, although it is also true that we are currently concerned about losing our cultural values and beliefs as well as talented students and scholars to the lure of the Euro-western world. But a truth is that the world is the largest garden, if we agree with Dewey, where there are no boundaries, but free communication, interaction, and cooperation that is beneficial to all members. Combining Confucius’s wisdom and Dewey’s democratic theory, we keep in mind that “maintaining discrepancy while being in accord” is something we always strive for in a democracy.

After 9/11, Americans seem to have a greater fear of others who are culturally different, rather than seeing them as friends and supporters who can help expand their perspectives and contribute to the improvement of their lives. In response to America’s present severe recession, Americans’ fear of others has expanded from a fear of terrorists to a more generalized xenophobia. Dewey would be disappointed to see that his fellow Americans have abandoned the value of community and inclusion in seeking economy recovery. In doing this, they run the risk of taking democracy as an economic and financial pursuit instead of a moral and human way

of living. I share Dewey's position that however different we could be in terms of individualities, values, beliefs, positions or financial situations, we should find a way to work together in which we both gain enlarged understanding and enriched experiences that will help us better cope with our own problems. This very idea is the cornerstone of a nonexclusionary human community, which grounds a world we may someday call a democracy.

Notes

1. EW 3: 322. Sor-Hoon Tan, in *Confucian Democracy*, has also taken notice of Dewey's concept of community. While our works share some similarities in terms of Dewey's equal emphasis on both community and individuals, and sociality and individuality, we take different perspectives and focus on different issues. Tan is more concerned about rights, freedom and ethico-political orders, while my focus is on human relationships, communal living, individual growth, diversity, and the issue of power. My study is located within feminist, pragmatist, and cultural studies scholarship; my examination is grounded in a broader historical, social, and educational context; my goal is to present the possibility and necessity of the ideal of human unity and relate it to educational practice.

2. For more details on Dewey's social notion of self, see Peng, "Toward a Fully Realized Human Being."

3. Dewey, Jane, "Biography," 29.

4. EW 3: 335.

5. LW 2: *The Public and Its Problems*.

6. *Ibid.*, 331, 330.

7. *Ibid.*, 324.

8. MW 9: *Democracy and Education*.

9. *Ibid.*, 87.

10. *Ibid.*, 88.

11. *Ibid.*, 89.

12. LW 5: *Individualism—Old and New*.

13. *Ibid.*, 123.

14. LW 13: 78.

15. LW 14: 228.

16. LW 2: 327.

17. MW 9: 366.

18. LW 2: 329.

19. LW 1: 157.

20. LW 2: 332.

21. Dewey, *Lectures in China*, 92.

22. LW 2: 324.

23. MW 9: 7.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. LW 16: *Knowing and the Known*.

27. LW 2: 330.

28. EW 3: 326.

29. LW 13: 181.

30. LW 14: 228.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Zhang, *The Analects*, 186. Work originally published in Chinese, the English is my translation.
33. LW 7: 325.
34. *Ibid.*, 329.
35. Dewey, *Lectures in China*, 105.
36. For instance, Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*; Thayer-Bacon, *Relational "(e)pistemologies"*; and Young, *Justice and the Politics of Differences*.
37. EW 1: "The Ethics of Democracy."

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