Loving Wisdom with Dewey and Simone Weil

H. Dirk Windhorst

ABSTRACT: This paper attempts to explicate and compare the ideas of John Dewey and Simone Weil on wisdom. It is a conceptual analysis which proceeds on the assumption that cultivating a love of wisdom in a student is a teacher's highest calling. The comparison is focussed around two main questions: 1) How is wisdom connected to experience from a psychological perspective? 2) How is wisdom connected to the social dimension of experience?

Why compare John Dewey and Simone Weil on their views of wisdom? It seems that the two major research teams in the modern psychology of wisdom–the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm (Baltes & Smith, 1990; Smith, Staudinger, & Baltes, 1994; Staudinger, 1999; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Pasupathi, Staudinger & Baltes, 2001; Baltes, Glück & Kuntzmann, 2002; Staudinger & Pasupathi, 2003) and Sternberg's Balance Theory of Wisdom (Sternberg, 1990; Sternberg, 1998; Sternberg, 2001a; Sternberg, 2001b; Sternberg & Lubart, 2001; Sternberg, 2003)–share at the heart of their conceptions a pragmatic orientation. The Berlin Paradigm identifies the domain of wisdom to be the "fundamental pragmatics of life." At the base of Sternberg's Balance Theory is practical thinking which is invoked when the problem-solving components of intelligence consider how to respond to a precarious environment. At the heart of this practical base, there is tacit knowledge which can only be learned through experience. The terms "pragmatic," "practical," "problem-solving," "responding to an environment," and "learning through experience" bring to mind John Dewey. If it is true that the Berlin and Sternberg groups are implicitly[1] assuming a Deweyan position when they think about wisdom from a psychological point of view, then it might be illuminating to uncover what Dewey's position on wisdom was.

Little work has been done in articulating Dewey's views on wisdom. Two notable exceptions are *Dewey and Eros: Wisdom and Desire in the Art of Teaching* (Garrison, 1997) and *Eros and the Good: Wisdom According to Nature* (Gouinlock, 2004). Like Dewey, both authors eschew transcendent forms of good in considering how humans discover or construct "goods" within the daily joys and struggles of life. Gouinlock (2004) borrows much from Dewey's pragmatism in articulating an idea of moral wisdom grounded in nature. Wisdom emerges when the pursuit of desired goods is tempered by a realistic acknowledgement of the ways in which nature can assist or limit this pursuit. Nevertheless, Guoinlock (2004) acknowledges the existence of human cupidity in a way that Dewey would resist. It is very likely that Dewey would have strongly disagreed with the following assertion: "Even with the best of education, sometimes, not much can be done to develop a talented and virtuous human being. Nature has made some persons impervious to such instruction" (p. 103). In Garrison's (1997) view, Dewey would certainly counter Gouinlock's assertion–no matter how warranted it may seem: A teacher is called to bestow value on such students by using sympathetic moral perception to imagine the possibilities for them in the midst of what might seem like an impossible situation. Recounting a case study of a boy who was on the verge of being placed on a remedial track, Garrison (1997) applauds the efforts of one teacher who believed in him and successfully fought a system that was ready to label him as somewhat "impervious" to normal classroom instruction. Even though this boy was three or four years behind his peers in the ability to read and write, the teacher had perceived a practical intelligence in him that no one else had. The teacher believed that this intel-

ligence and interest in practical things needed to be nurtured in the reading and writing workshops of a regular classroom (pp. 178 - 202).

Although wisdom and Dewey are addressed by both Garrison (1997) and Gouinlock (2004), neither attempts to elaborate Dewey's concept of wisdom in a direct or systematic way. Gouinlock (1997) uses Deweyan pragmatism as a platform from which to develop his own theory of wisdom. Garrison (1997) comes much closer to articulating Dewey's views on wisdom. Nevertheless, he focuses more on uncovering Dewey's philosophy of *eros* than on explicating his view of wisdom.

Granted that a case can be made for unearthing John Dewey's concept of wisdom, why bring in Simone Weil? John Dewey's position needs to be appraised by someone who holds foundational assumptions that he rejected or found problematic. A comparison of two thinkers who seem so opposed to each other can sometimes pull into bold relief ideas that would otherwise remain hidden. A person often experiences this sort of thing in relationships with different people. With one friend, the humorous side is evoked. With another, being serious seems more "natural." What will Weil evoke from Dewey? What will Dewey bring to light in Weil? In addition, when commonalities surprisingly emerge between thinkers who inhabit radically different ontological and epistemological paradigms, the shared conceptions seem more valid, or at least, more plausible.[2]

John Dewey (1859 - 1952) and Simone Weil (1909 - 1943) were philosophers in the original sense: in their writings can be found a genuine love for wisdom. Yet, it would be difficult to find two figures in the history of philosophy who would seem more opposed to each other. Raised as a secularized Jew, Weil became a Christian Platonist who died in relative obscurity at the youthful age of 34. In contrast, Dewey slowly and carefully discarded the Christianity in which he grew up in tandem with eschewing the absolute idealism of Hegel that captivated him as a young man. He established a name for himself by espousing a down-to-earth-yet-thoughtful pragmatism well before he died at the ripe old age of 92. Simone Weil critiqued the foundations of modernity as it came to expression in her native France and wrote a treatise which envisioned a radically different social order (Weil, 1952). John Dewey embraced the modern spirit and challenged his fellow Americans to build a more democratic society through technological science and educational reform (Westbrook, 1991). She was a religious mystic who believed in a "supernatural physics of the soul." He advocated a "natural piety" that rigorously excluded serious contemplation of anything beyond the natural realm, notwithstanding Kestenbaum's (2002) thesis that Dewey allowed the "transcendent" more room in his thought than is generally believed. In fact, Kestenbaum unwittingly employs Simone Weil[3] to support his position that Dewey was more interested in transcendent values than is generally believed. Is Kestenbaum reading into Dewey a Platonism that Garrison (1997) would adamantly maintain isn't there?

Although Kestenbaum (2002) points to a transcendent dimension that Weil and Dewey might share, there are other grounds on which they could find a basis for discussion. Both thinkers adopted a similar approach in pursuit of wisdom: for both, experience was the foundational platform on which they constructed their ideas, and for both, practical action was the criterion for testing the validity of those same ideas. Even though Dewey was much more explicit in connecting his notion of experience to his ideas of nature (Dewey, 1929a), art (1934/1979), and education (1938/1963), Weil's respect for experience is revealed in a statement that enucleates her thought: "Faith is the experience that the intelligence is lighted up by love" (Weil, 1956, p. 240). Dewey echoes this: "That God is love is a more worthy idealization than that the divine is power. Since love at its best brings illumination and wisdom, this meaning is as worthy as that the divine is truth" (Dewey, 1929a, p. 167). However, for Weil, "idealizations" of God were problematic. She shows this in one striking illustration (Cayley, 2002): Imagine two people who have not experienced God. One is an atheist. The other believes in God. Who is closer to God? The atheist is closer, because he doesn't have a false conception of God which gets in the way. This raises all kinds of questions about how one can properly interpret an experience, but it does demonstrate how fundamental the notion of experience is in her thought.

This paper will analyze and compare John Dewey and Simone Weil on wisdom. It employs a dialectical or back-and-forth method: Dewey's assertions are examined through the eyes of Weil, and vice-versa . The comparison attempts to answer two questions: How is wisdom connected to experience from a psychological perspective? How is wisdom connected to the social dimension of experience?

How Is Wisdom Connected to Experience from a Psychological Perspective?

Dewey considered wisdom to be a moral activity that constructed a moral self (Dewey, 1922; Dewey & Tufts, 1932/1989). It had its roots in the habitual transactions that humans forged with their environments. The moral self was a bundle of habits that were continually re-constructed as the self adapted to changing environments or responded to problematic transactions. Wisdom was the cord which held the bundle of habits together. Wisdom was a meta-habit: a habit of habits. The habit of deliberation developed at the core of wise activity. It meant thinking before doing by rehearsing various courses of action in the mind before deciding on one. It meant learning from mistakes, learning from experience, and re-constructing habits. A teacher with wisdom derived from experience could visualize a classroom activity well enough to anticipate student responses to instructional directions. She could enter a classroom of new students and know how to read the situation, alert to signs of attention or inattention, careful not to jump to conclusions, but also willing to take appropriate action if the situation required it. To act wisely was to think before, during, and after acting–it was the habit of reflective practice, a habit which expressed her moral self-as-a-teacher and, at the same time, modified this same self as it was embodied through action.

Transactions with events in environments were central to Dewey's conception of the moral self, and of these transactions, the ones connected to other selves–the social dimension of experience–held the most value for "shared experience is the greatest of human goods" (Dewey, 1929a, p. 167). For the development of a moral self, the meta-habit of wisdom continually took others into account so that a shared experience–the democratic way of life–would enrich the lives of each one.

For Weil, it also would be fair to say that the roots of wisdom lay in transactions with an environment. It was difficult, if not impossible, to conceive a self separate from the transactions which defined it. The surrounding conditions were the backdrop that brought a self into relief, and without the environmental backdrop which sustained it, the self would disappear. The transactions were a composite of a self with its environment–each acting on the other (Weil, 1987, p. 69). Nevertheless, this composite self was divided, craving to be unified, to be whole, to have integrity:

> I am always a dual being, on the one hand a passive being who is subject to the world, and on the other an active being who has a grasp on it; .... Can I not attain perfect wisdom, wisdom in action, that would reunite the two parts of myself? (Weil, 1987, p. 78)

Like Dewey, Weil saw wisdom developing through action. One's actions not only revealed the degree to which one possessed wisdom as a force that unified the self–that tied the habits together–these actions created that very self. Weil (1987) was emphatic about it: "...my existence as I know it is not a feeling but my creation" (p. 59). Activity which exhibited a grasp on the world might look passive to someone looking from the outside, just as passivity which exhibited the world's grasp on the self might appear as activity to the same observer. The colloquial term, "acting out," denotes such a passive state where anarchic desires are given "free" reign. As Dewey (1938/1963) made clear, such a person's conduct is

> dictated by immediate whim and caprice; that is, at the mercy of impulses into whose formation intelligent judgment has not entered. A person whose conduct is controlled in this way has at most only the illusion of freedom. Actually he is directed by forces over which he has no command. (p. 64 - 65)

Effective action was tempered by thinking which Dewey (1922) would translate as "deliberation" or "dramatic rehearsal" or "activity following intra-organic channels" (p. 191). Deliberation is a wonderful word to describe how conflicting impulses lost their freedom to go unchecked: they were not liberated but de-liberated. Here, scientific thinking–what Weil (1987) called "directing one's reason well"(p.47) – transformed crude impulse into refined action. The result would be what Weil called indirect action or work and what Dewey called intelligent action.

Indirect action (work) was the key to changing one's self for the better: trying to control one's impulses directly was a recipe for failure–like a dog chasing its own tail. Work consisted of directing one's attention outward, grappling with the surrounding conditions of existence which more or less resisted one's efforts at control. Out of this struggle, the necessary discipline could be furnished to master oneself. Dewey could not agree more:

> We cannot change habit directly: that notion is magic. But we can change it indirectly by modifying conditions, by an intelligent selecting and weighting of the objects which engage attention and which influence the fulfillment of desires. (Dewey, 1922, p. 20)

In this way, the wisdom of the Socratic dictum became concrete: to know oneself was to reveal and to re-fashion oneself through the indirect action of work.

So far in our comparison, we could say that Dewey's and Weil's views on wisdom dovetail very well. Both of them undertake a psychological journey in their quest for wisdom and both stay with their starting point–the transaction between a self and the environment. However, a slight tension can be detected in the way they conduct their inquiry. Written in the third person, *Human Nature and Conduct* (Dewey, 1922) is a more conventional scholarly approach: the investigator appears as a detached observer taking notes on what is happening in the psyche. "Science and Perception in Descartes" (Weil, 1987, pp. 31 - 88) is divided in two sections: the first part is a third-person commentary on Descartes; the second part, Weil's own Cartesian journey of doubt, is appropriately–given the nature of her task–written in the first person.[4] Would not Dewey have applauded the following statement which seemed so close to his view of science and his theory of education?

> And so outside of effective action, when the body, in which past perceptions are inscribed, is relieved from the necessity of exploration, human thought is given over to the passions, to the kind of imagination that conjures up gods, to more or less reasonable-sounding arguments received from others. That is why mankind needs science, provided that instead of imposing its proofs it is taught in the way that Descartes called analytic, that is, in such a way that each student, following the same order he would follow if he were methodically making discoveries himself, may be said less to receive instruction than to teach himself. (Weil, 1987, pp. 85 - 86)

Weil not only believed that she was being faithful to the spirit of Descartes by undertaking her own journey of self-instruction, but that Descartes had demanded such a journey from any reader who wished to understand him:

> Cartesian thought is not something that one can comment on from the outside; every commentator must become, at least for a time, a Cartesian. But how does one become a Cartesian? To be a Cartesian is to doubt everything, and then to examine everything in order; without believing in anything except one's own thought insofar as it is clear and distinct, and without trusting the authority of anyone, even Descartes, in the least. (Weil, 1987, p. 54)

Where is the tension between Dewey and Weil? None of the foregoing is meant to imply that Weil's first-person journey is superior to Dewey's third-person approach. What attracts us to Weil is her impetuosity–her boldness to plunge in with little regard for what her supervisor might think. We think along with her as we are drawn

vicariously into the water with the swimmer who feels that mixture of pleasure and pain (Weil, 1987, pp. 55 - 56). The determined reader has to work harder to experience the same with Dewey, and perhaps the increased effort demanded of the reader provides a greater reward.[5] Nevertheless, in Weil's account we see more vividly a person struggling with her thinking in a way that makes Dewey appear relatively calm. Perhaps this simply reflects the difference in their ages–comparing the impetuosity of a twenty-something with the serenity of a sixty-something. Or perhaps Dewey, like his pragmatist predecessor, C. S. Pierce, would question the wisdom of undertaking the Cartesian journey of doubt and might wonder if it is truly possible to doubt everything except "one's own thought insofar as it is clear and distinct." Outside of testing ideas in practical experience, why should one trust or assume that one's thinking is clear?[6]

Wisdom and the Divided Self

To return to the question: What bearing has the above excursus on discovering an important tension between Dewey and Weil? Dewey's third-person stance puts him in the position of observing the psyche from the outside. Look again at the way he describes deliberation:

> Deliberation means precisely that activity is disintegrated, and that its various elements hold one another up. While none has force enough to become the center of a re-directed activity, or to dominate a course of action, each has enough power to check others from exercising mastery. Activity does not cease in order to give way to reflection; activity is turned from execution into intra-organic channels, resulting in dramatic rehearsal. (Dewey, 1922, p. 191)

The "self" seems to have disappeared. It has no ontological status apart from the pattern of biologically derived impulses holding themselves in check and eventually reorganizing themselves into a new pattern or re-constructed habit where the previously incompatible desires achieve a new harmony. The beginning of wisdom appears in a new and better ordering of desires: temperance is the root of reasonableness, rationality means that the relations among competing desires have been tempered, each relation defined by a new ratio that when combined with other ratios achieve a new harmony which is expressed in effective action. The "self" comes back into view. Although Dewey lays out in detail how habits are re-constructed through enduring interests, one cannot help feeling that there is something magical and mysterious about how the self reappears after deliberation as a morally stronger bundle of habits.

By contrast, Weil examines her own thinking from the inside and cannot allow her "self" to disappear because she is more explicitly both spectator and participant. Her "self" is a dual being which seeks unity through self-mastery (Dewey's tempered mingling of desires). From Weil's perspective, this unity is effected through a painful struggle where the active part–the being which can effect a grasp on the world through work–seeks to diminish the weight of the passive part in so far as it is subject to the world. Implied (but never stated) is Weil's identification of her "true self" with the active part.

There is a sense in which Dewey both agrees and disagrees with her. Yes, the "self" is created in action, but one must be careful that in conceiving the self this way one does not fall into the trap of hypostatization–reifying a concept into a real existent. Reminded of his own youthful struggles with absolute idealism, Dewey might look kindly at this intense young woman and gently remonstrate her for falling into the "philosophic fallacy" where functional distinctions are mistakenly awarded ontological status. For Dewey, the "self" is shorthand for denoting a more-or-less ordered system of processes and impulses. As a naturalist, Dewey sees no separate existence of a "self" or a "soul" apart from the biological and chemical activities which define it, just as a beautiful snowflake does not exist apart from the water molecules which together with certain environmental conditions determine the snowflake's unique pattern. Surprisingly, Weil (1950/1977b) agrees with him. The soul or its modern counterpart–the person–has no existence independent of the biological and social mechanisms which make it what it is: an organized yet dynamic series of events. Yet, she maintains, there is something "sacred" within each

human being, and it has nothing to do with personality or personhood:

> At the bottom of the heart of every human being, from earliest infancy until the tomb, there is something that goes on indomitably expecting, in the teeth of all experience of crimes committed, suffered, and witnessed, that good and not evil will be done to him. It is this above all that is sacred in every human being. (p. 315)

Dewey made a strong case for avoiding the pitfalls of hypostatization when doing scientific or theoretical work. But what about everyday practical living–something that both Dewey and Weil prized? Do we not need to cultivate what Laing (1973) called "ontological security" to live with some measure of sanity? Does not one need to develop confidence that one is real and that one can relate to others who are experienced as real through acts that demonstrate a faith in oneself? If this is simply a noble lie or a "useful" reification, it loses its functional power as soon as one regards it as such in the warp and woof of daily life. Dewey would acknowledge this, but he would add, we can believe in our real existence naturally defined without necessarily believing in a soul or a self existing apart from the dynamic series and organized patterns of events that we call a living body. Can a soul exist apart from a body? Can form be separated from matter? Here we have another footnote to the long-standing debate between two giants of Greek philosophy with Weil taking Plato's side and Dewey reiterating the Aristotelian position.

Wisdom and Thinking Clearly

Weil demonstrates a variation of ontological security throughout her Cartesian journey. She doubts everything at the outset except one thing–her own thought "insofar as it is clear and distinct" (Weil, 1987, p. 54). One is tempted to say that the one part of her self whose reality she will not doubt is her *ability to think clearly*. But she does not say *that*, and here she departs from Laing (1973) and modern self-actualization theorists: she only trusts *clear thoughts*. And this is consistent with the way she lived: she would rather have been challenged on the truth of her thoughts than have been complimented on her intellectual ability to formulate those thoughts. The important issue was not whether the thoughts belonged to her as a form of intellectual property, but whether the thoughts were true. For her, clarity was the initial–though not necessarily the final–criterion of truth. Clarity impelled her to examine the truth of an idea in the crucible of experience. To use Deweyan language: "Truth as a positive, achieved thing simply means that use *has* tested and *has* approved what was an intellectual, and so problematic affair, and thereby has given it an assured status in further effort" (Dewey, 1911/1985b, p. 46). Successful deliberation cleared up a problematic situation, but the clarity, elegance, and coherence of the hypothetical solution was not enough to satisfy a pragmatic conception of truth: The act of thinking was not complete until it was tested in practice (Dewey, 1910/1985c, pp. 234 - 241). In this regard, she was zealously Deweyan: Is Marxism a path of liberation for oppressed workers? She involved herself with trade unions to find out. Will educating workers help them achieve steps towards liberation? In her spare time from her day job as a high school teacher, she instructed railway workers to examine this notion. Why were the Communist unions unable to challenge Nazism? She visited Germany to see for herself. Was the Soviet Union simply another form of oppression for the working class? She tested her hypothesis in a long argument with one of the Russian Bolsheviks, Leon Trotsky.[7] Convinced that the Republican militia were fighting for Spain's "famished peasants against landed proprietors and their clerical supporters" (Weil, 1938/1977c, p. 75), she joined up and soon discovered how the justice of one's cause can quickly be obscured in war by cowardice, cruelty, and wanton disregard for the value of human life: "People get carried away by a sort of intoxication which is irresistible without a fortitude of soul which I am bound to consider exceptional since I have met with it nowhere" (p. 77). Is manual labour a path to wisdom? She worked in a factory and in a vineyard to experience this for herself.

Her whole intellectual journey–from before her 1930 student dissertation through to her death thirteen years later–is based on a trust of clear and distinct thoughts that are tested, purified, modified, or discarded in the fire of one's own experience. By 1942, despite her unshakeable faith in the reality of a realm transcending

nature–a confidence born of her mystical experiences which she articulated in a Christian idiom–she refused to compromise her intellectual scruples by accepting baptism in the Catholic church. In fact, far from being threatened by religious superstition, her early confidence in clear thinking was somehow connected to her developing view of supernatural truth. Weil (1950/1959) believed "that one can never wrestle enough with God if one does so out of pure regard for the truth" (p. 36).

Thinking clearly–the active part of the self–operated through a conduit to the environment, what Dewey called the transaction and what Weil (1987) called the imagination, "this knot of action and reaction that attaches me to the world" (p. 70). On closer examination, two types of thoughts can be distinguished in the imagination: a) those which impose themselves and are fused with impulse, feeling or emotion–a pang of hunger, a painful injury, a friend's rebuke; and b) those which do not impose themselves but require work to make themselves apparent and clear–knowing how to swing an axe with grace and power, knowing how to write a line of poetry, understanding a theorem in geometry.[8] Weil (1987) concluded:

> If I try to discover how much trust should be put in the thought harbored by the imagination, I find that the clear ideas alone do not represent the encroachment of the world on me, since they are made present to me only by an act of my own attention. (p. 72)

Developing the ability to pay attention increasingly became her preferred method of discerning clear ideas–whether such thought was provoked by the imposition of a problem or whether the thing attended to was contemplated as an object of beauty. For Dewey (1929a), thinking and knowing were, strictly speaking, associated more with problem-solving and productive action than they were with contemplation (pp. 269 - 270; 289 - 290).

Unlike Dewey, Weil rejected the view that thinking could be explained as a natural product issuing forth from a progressively sophisticated pattern of material forces. Following Plato's teaching in conjunction with the scientific conception of entropy, Weil (1943/1962b) maintained that "the imperfect cannot give rise to the perfect or the less good to the better" (p. 44).[9] Regardless, Weil (1955/1958) believed that the connection between thought and action would remain an unfathomable mystery despite advances in neuroscience or physiological psychology: "The extreme complexity of vital phenomena can perhaps be progressively unravelled, at any rate to a certain extent; but the immediate relationship linking our thoughts to our movements will always remain wrapped in impenetrable obscurity" (p. 89). It is difficult to understand how she can be so sure. Dewey might counter that her bold assertion is based on a false, ontological dichotomy between thinking and acting. If one asserts, as he did, that thinking is acting turned inwards, then the problem disappears.

To sum up the comparison so far: Dewey and Weil substantially agree on what wisdom is from a psychological point of view. They locate its genesis in the transaction between a self and its environment. Wisdom begins to take root in mindful work–when activity is diverted from immediate outward expression through inward deliberation towards mediated, indirect action. For both, the test of experience is essential in verifying or modifying ideas and developing wisdom. However, a fissure seems to appear in their respective positions when we examine their views of the moral self. From her first-person perspective, Weil experiences a binary tension within the transaction where the self and its environment are linked in a wrestling match: her active self seeks to increase its grasp on the environment while her passive self allows the environment to encroach. Impelled by a desire to achieve mastery of herself–the active part overcoming the passive part–Weil discovers that clear thoughts (the only thing she trusts at the outset) are secured through the active work of attention. From his third-person perspective, Dewey describes a plurality of tensions among competing desires which hold each other up in deliberation as old habits are disrupted. Thinking is employed to find a way to unite the desires around enduring interests in order to forge a better transaction with the environment, i.e. a new habit is constructed out of the remnants of the old one. The widening fissure can be postulated as follows: Dewey loves experiential wisdom inasmuch as it creates a self that grows progressively stronger and richer from a moral point of view. Weil

loves experiential wisdom inasmuch as it reveals clear thoughts that act as stepping stones on the way to truth. To Dewey, Weil is dangerously close to committing the philosophic fallacy, a form of self-delusion that seeks to vouchsafe the hard-won insights of experience by inventing a realm called "transcendent." Is she not holding on to "either/or" thinking–that ancient dualism that kept mind and matter ontologically separate? To Weil, Dewey may be guilty of "lowering the sights" of philosophy by aiming at personal growth and social usefulness at the expense of a commitment to truth.

How Is Wisdom Connected to the Social Dimension of Experience?

Both Dewey and Weil would agree that humans are unavoidably social beings, and that the wisdom of moral deliberation entails taking into account connections that bind a self to others. Dewey finds meaning through making connections, and the more connections that are ascertained in deliberation, the more meaningful a chosen activity becomes, no matter how mundane that activity may seem at first glance. For Dewey and Tufts (1932/1989), the social dimension understood in a democratic sense is the criterion that distinguishes fleeting pleasure from enduring happiness: "Harmony and readiness to expand into union with other values is a mark of happiness. Isolation and liability to conflict and interference are marks of those states which are exhausted in being pleasurable" (p. 199).

Dewey's (1927/1954) democratic idea was the meta-habit of wisdom socially transposed: it bound individuals and groups together without strangling them. More than being simply the social corollary of the moral self, the unavoidable web of social connections were necessary to the very construction of that moral self:

> ...a good citizen finds his conduct as a member of a political group enriching and enriched by his participation in family life, industry, scientific and artistic associations. This is a free give-and-take; fullness of integrated personality is therefore possible of achievement, since the pulls and responses of different groups reinforce one another and their values accord. (p. 148)

The individual was not only circumscribed by the groups to which she belonged, she was to a great degree defined by them. Each group had a share in making the self what it was.

Both Dewey and Weil believed that wise deliberation kept the social dimension constantly in view. Weil followed Marx in emphasizing that society was the fundamental human fact. Although she debunked the Marxist formula that "social existence determines consciousness,"[10] she appreciated his attempt to analyze the relationships of force in reference to human society in the manner of a physicist who analyzed these relationships in reference to inert matter. She took Marx's position and re-framed it in a way that kept the relationships of social forces intact while maintaining that humans understood as individuals were relatively free:

> Men are not the impotent playthings of fate; they are eminently active beings; but their activity is at each moment limited by the structure of the society which they form among themselves, and only modifies that structure in its turn by a ricochet, once it has modified the relations between them and nature. The social structure can never be modified except indirectly. (Weil, 1955/1958, p. 149)

The structure of society, like the structure of the moral self, could only be transformed indirectly through work, which from a social perspective meant conjoint activity channeled through the means of production. Amish Mennonites understand this: to conserve their social structure which is constructed around the value of manual labour, they resist technological change. Whoever *owned* the means of production was *not* the decisive issue. Altering the *means* of production was the key to real social change, even though the issue of ownership was inextricably linked to it. If this is true, then education could only effect Dewey's hoped-for social transformation if it was aimed at equipping students with the ability and the desire to comprehend technology, i.e. clearly

understanding how humans interact with human and non-human nature through productive work and intelligently changing that interaction based on a knowledge of foreseeable consequences. No wonder that Dewey's laboratory school had occupations at the core of its curriculum. The ever expanding patterns of relationships that working individuals formed around the means of production, patterns that became increasingly complex through specialization and division of labour, crystallized into powerful social mechanisms that could be as blind and as dangerous as any force of nature. Ironically, unruly nature, seemingly domesticated through collective human action, reappeared within the social structure with all the oppressive power of an arbitrary deity.[11] How could it be mastered? Weil (1955/1958) answered:

> ... to gain mastery over it means to subject it to the human mind, that is to the individual. In the subordination of society to the individual lies the definition of true democracy and that of socialism as well. (p. 20) ... The only hope of socialism resides in those who have already brought about in themselves, as far as is possible in the society of today, that union between manual and intellectual labour which characterizes the society we are aiming at. (p. 23)

This union between manual and intellectual labour had to begin at a very young age in a school system where abstract thinking was grounded and tested in concrete experience. Weil (1942, 1977b) was beginning to envision the laboratory school which Dewey had begun at the University of Chicago forty years earlier:

> [The school] must be conceived in an entirely new way, that it may shape men [sic] capable of understanding the total aspects of the work in which they will be taking part. Not that the level of theoretic studies must be lowered; rather, the contrary. More should be done to excite intelligence to wakefulness, but at the same time teaching must itself become more concrete. (Weil, 1942/1977a, p. 71)

Nevertheless, Weil was much more wary of the social dimension than Dewey. This was part of the reason she never joined the Communist party or the Catholic church: "As soon as a party finds itself cemented not only by the coordination of activities, but also by unity of doctrine, it becomes impossible for a good militant to think otherwise than in the manner of a slave" (pp. 30 -31). Like Dewey, she saw how a community of relatively free individuals could be become unthinking cogs in a collective machine. Nevertheless, her notion of freedom was not the romantic ideal of rugged individualism so often celebrated in American westerns. All that an individual owned–even her sense of worth, her self-esteem–was derived from the social element. Weil's experience as an anonymous factory worker removed all doubt on that score. Yet, there was one thing that an individual could do which a collectivity never could. An individual could think. Weil (1950/1977b) described it in stark terms: "A collectivity is much stronger than a single man; but every collectivity depends for its existence upon operations, of which simple addition is the elementary example, which can only be performed by a mind in a state of solitude" (p. 320). By solitude, she did not mean physical isolation from others, although this may be necessary from time to time. She was merely pointing out that when thinking clearly and effectively, a person had to focus on an issue or problem without being intimidated by the presence of others or what others might think. Since calculating machines have taken over many of these "simple operations" and computers are able to process information in speed and quantity in ways that literally boggles the best of human minds, one wonders whether a collectivity has the potential to be exponentially more powerful than even Weil could imagine. This raises a number of related questions: Could a society exist without depending on human minds performing operations in solitude? In theory, is there anything about human reasoning that could not be duplicated by a machine? And if such a dimension of reasoning could be shown to exist, would it be considered essential for maintaining or improving a social order? Or, alternatively, would it be considered a threat to that order? If not, would there be any use or purpose for a uniquely human form of thinking?

Weil's (1955/1958) criterion for measuring freedom and democracy in a society was the extent to which the patterns of relationships among individuals could be understood by each thinking individual:

> Thus, if we wish to form, in a purely theoretical way, the conception of a society in which collective life would be subject to men as individuals instead of subjecting them to itself, we must visualize a form of material existence wherein only efforts exclusively directed by a clear intelligence would take place, which would imply that each worker himself had to control, without referring to any external rule, not only the adaptation of his efforts to the piece of work to be produced, but also their coordination with the efforts of all other members of the collectivity. (pp. 98 - 99)

Is this not a clear statement of the democratic ideal which Dewey prized?

In *The Need for Roots*, Weil's (1949/1952) blueprint for a democratic society was built on a startling assumption that challenged the principles of the French Revolution: rights were a social phenomenon and existed only when obligations were exercised by humans toward each other. Hence, obligations were prior to rights:

> A right is not effectual by itself, but only in relation to the obligation to which it corresponds, the effective exercise of a right springing not from the individual who possesses it, but from other men who consider themselves as being under a certain obligation toward him. (p. 3)

For the Christian Platonist Weil, keeping an obligation was a duty whose roots lay in a supernatural realm beyond the immediate and changing context of a specific situation. However, when an obligation was exercised and made its appearance as a right, it had to take into account particular social conditions. In the following illustration, I draw an analogy from something that Weil, following the ancient Greeks, considered precious and is hinted at by Dewey in his study of deliberation: the mathematical idea of ratio and proportion. Rights in different situations and contexts can appear analogous to different ratios that are nevertheless equivalent: 2 to 4, 3 to 6, 4 to 8, etc. When the obligation, 1 to 2, needs to be constructed as a right in a particular situation where the prevailing conditions provide 32 as the first term, then the conditions more amenable to modification must be manipulated in such a way that 64 as the second term may appear. There is a sense in which Dewey (1929b) echoed this idea: If certain ideals or values were to be secured in social life, one had to understand how the conditions of existence supported or hindered their existence. By modifying these conditions through the experimental methods of modern science, Dewey was very hopeful that the moral traits found in nature could be as firmly established in the social sphere as mechanical, electrical, and atomic forces had been harnessed in the physical sphere. Of course, in Dewey's metaphysics, these moral traits had no root in a supernatural realm–they were completely natural. And obligations were conditional; any sense of "owing" or "duty" was predicated on what one judged to be a worthwhile value. By the same token, these judgments were never final: They were hypotheses that guided inquiry into the objective conditions that could or could not support the existence of the chosen value. By being tested in action, hypotheses were open to ongoing modification. If any obligation had unconditional status in Dewey's system, it was the one owed to using and constantly improving the methods of experimental science.

Weil might respond to Dewey by citing Nietzsche: If the supernatural is a human construction, how could the idea of equality as a foundation for human rights and democracy survive, since nature produced beings unequal in strength and intelligence? Ironically, Nietzsche could not help inventing his own version of the supernatural on which to pin his hopes–the *Ubermensch*. Even heroic atheism had to have larger-than-life heroes. For Weil, the fact that humans could not help constructing ersatz forms of the supernatural (idols), was an indirect proof for its reality. Real hunger expresses a need for real food.[12] Idols, however, could not deliver the justice, equality, and liberty which humans craved. Quite the contrary, they enslaved and oppressed them.

Ersatz forms of the supernatural were social constructions that derived their power from energy derived from collective ties. Hitler understood this. Organized religion more or less succumbed to it. This is why Weil was so wary of the social element, and why she took great pains to construct an ideal society that was based on the needs of individuals rather than vice-versa. Nevertheless, the social element was an unavoidable necessity for human

beings. Hence, Weil (1949/1952) argued, "we owe our respect to a collectivity, of whatever kind–country, family, or any other–not for itself, but because it is food for a certain number of human souls" (p. 7).

To sum up the comparison regarding wisdom and the social dimension of experience: Dewey and Weil agreed that wisdom involved taking into account how humans could best live together in community. Both of them formulated a substantially similar democratic ideal that functioned as an end-in-view for the type of society each wanted to help build. Dewey used the criterion of openness to wider connections–the possibility of further growth–in distinguishing a moral community from one which was less moral. For example, a band of robbers was by definition limited in its potential for wider connections with individuals and groups who were not involved in crime. Weil, on the other hand, used the criterion of individual needs to distinguish a relatively free society from a relatively oppressive one.

Both Dewey and Weil valued intelligent conjoint activity. Just as a moral self was created indirectly through work, so a moral social structure developed indirectly via conjoint activity through the means of production. However, Weil emphasized that thinking could only be done by individuals not by associations. Dewey and Weil agreed that the substance of thought was largely a social construction, but Weil maintained that only an individual with an unyielding commitment to truth would be able to think about the relationships of force in society with any degree of clarity. Nevertheless, both of them wanted to reconnect intellectual with physical labour, and both saw that the best way to achieve this was through a radical reform of education.

Dewey and Weil saw shared experience as an unqualified good. However, Weil believed that the only foundation for a democratic and free society were rights effectively exercised through the recognition of obligations that were rooted in a realm beyond nature. Dewey, of course, would wonder why Weil would need to posit a realm beyond nature to establish a foundation for the type of morality that undergirded democracy. Since moral traits appear in experience alongside amoral forces–or as Weil put it, human beings crave for justice while being subjected to force–Dewey (1929) deduced that moral traits "may also be supposed to reach down into nature, and to testify to something that belongs to nature as truly as does the mechanical structure attributed to it in physical science" (p. 5). In all construction projects–whether material or intellectual–the building blocks are provided by nature, and human beings, who are thoroughly part of nature, endeavour to secure these blocks in full knowledge that there are no guarantees. There are no certainties in the mixture of stability and contingency that humans experience in their transactions with nature. Just as a tsunami can devastate the lives of millions, so a tyrannical force can destroy a stable democracy. However, humans committed to democratic ideals will resist this force, just as those humans who care for others in misfortune will come to the aid of tsunami victims. The moral traits found in nature are the only source for fashioning the foundational blocks of a democratic form of life. We have no omnipotent, supernatural ally to help us build the good society–we are on our own.

How open would Weil be to the possibility that what she calls "supernatural" may simply be what Dewey calls the moral traits found in nature? Could the argument be resolved by an appeal to semantics? Could they possibly be using different words to describe the same phenomenon? This appears to be the case when we examine Weil's (1949/1952) argument against a dualism which asserted that force was sovereign in the natural world but that somehow human beings who are part of nature could have a conception of justice that was not itself subject to force: "Either we must perceive at work in the universe, alongside force, a principle of a different kind, or else we must recognize force as being the unique and sovereign ruler over human relations also" (p. 241). Could we not translate this into Deweyan language? Is not this "principle of a different kind" the same conception as Dewey's "moral traits" which are as much a part of nature as the mechanical forces studied by a physicist?

It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine these questions in any detail. Suffice it to say that for Dewey wisdom was connected to nature through the moral striving of the human part of nature. It came into existence as humans modified actual conditions towards ideal ends which themselves were suggested by natural situations previously experienced. The wisdom of human action took into account the generic traits of nature (stability

and contingency) to which it was always subject even as it sought to manipulate these traits in creating a better life for all.

For Weil, wisdom was connected to nature in a double relation. Nature was subject to a divine wisdom even as human wisdom was subject to nature. Human modification of actual conditions was not a one way street: both human actions which changed natural environments and human joys and sufferings given or inflicted by nature were tempered and enlightened by a divine love–a wise persuasion–which was communicated to those who ardently desired it and who were willing to wait patiently and attentively for it.

Finally, Weil not only believed that nature was subject to a divine wisdom, but that a democratic society would only thrive if it was watered by supernatural springs. Dewey could not see how one could move outside nature or experience and believed that any attempt to do so would stunt the growth of wisdom. Wisdom could only be nourished by natural rivers–even if one named some of them "God" (Dewey, 1934/1960, p. 51).

Notes

1. Except for one brief citation by Birren and Svensson (2005, pp. 12 - 13), Dewey is nowhere to be found in any of the reference lists of those who are researching wisdom as a psychological construct.
2. Fishman (2007) found this to be the case in comparing a non-theist (John Dewey) with a theist (Gabriel Marcel) on their views on hope. Similarly, when comparing a pragmatist (Dewey) with someone who was very critical of pragmatism (George Grant), Windhorst (1995) was astonished to discover that their philosophical conceptions of technology were virtually identical.
3. Actually, Kestenbaum (2002, pp. 17 - 18; pp 32 -33) uses Iris Murdoch to bolster his argument. I do not know if he is aware of it, but Murdoch was deeply influenced by Weil and acknowledged her debt, especially to Weil's concept of attention which Kestenbaum uses second hand. See Murdoch (1985, pp. 34, 40, 50, 104).
4. "Science and Perception in Descartes" was written by Weil when she was a student at the École Normale Supérieure in 1930. Writing a short dissertation was one of the requirements for graduation. Weil rarely (if ever) consulted her supervisor. He disagreed with her reading of Descartes and gave her the lowest possible passing mark (McLellan, 1990, p. 29). Lest the reader think that she lacked the ability to do good scholarly work, it should be pointed out that in the entrance examinations for this elite school two women had the highest scores: Simone de Beauvoir placed second, and Simone Weil was first.
5. Not everyone would agree. For Egan (2002), untangling Deweyan syntax is not worth the effort. He considers Dewey to be a mere plagiarist of Herbert Spencer.
6. "We cannot begin with complete doubt. We must begin with all the prejudices...we actually have....A person may...find reason to doubt what he began by believing; but in this case he doubts because he has a positive reason for it, and not on account of the Cartesian maxim" (Pierce cited in Dipert, 1999, ¶ 11). Since we begin our lives believing the ideas given to us by our parents, care-givers, teachers, and other authorities, there is no practical reason to doubt an idea until it is found to be false or problematic in an actual, specific situation in which the idea is put to a test. Weil's Cartesian journey of doubt can be interpreted as a series of thought experiments or tests performed through reflecting on her own accumulated experience, but unlike Descartes, she sees no need to base the clarity of her thoughts on the existence of God.
7. See Pétrement (1976) for a description of Weil's activities in this regard.
8. Except for the example drawn from mathematics, the illustrations presented here for both types of thoughts are mine not Weil's. The three examples of thoughts that require work correspond to categories of learning outcomes drawn from Posner and Rudnitsky (2001): respectively, they are psychomotor-perceptual skills, cognitive skills, and cognitive understandings.
9. Weil might reason analogically as follows: A perfect triangle exists nowhere yet we refer to it in our minds when we attempt to draw one. If we used a less than perfect triangle as our referent, our drawing would be even less perfect. She translates this to the realm of human morality as follows: "It is only the thought of perfection that produces any good–and this good is imperfect. If one aims at imperfect good, ones does evil"

(Weil, 1950/1970, p. 342). But where does this thought of perfection originate?
Weil distinguished between plural goods embodied in existence and the Good beyond being. Following Plato, she believed that existent goods derived their "goodness" from transcendent Good. Plural goods existed on the same plane as, and were opposed to, plural evils. The Good transcended the good/evil opposition. It had no opposite (Weil, 1956, pp. 592 - 593). It was her contention that if one oriented one's attention and desire to the Good beyond being, then and only then, would existent goods be strengthened and non-existent goods come into being. If one oriented one's attention and desire wholly to existent goods, then these goods would degrade and evil would increase. To use Deweyan language, this hypothesis required a proper test, but what would constitute a proper test outside of employing Weil's method of paying attention?

10. Dewey (1929), who asserted that mind was "a function of social interactions" (p. xvii) would probably agree with her refutation of Marx: "Seeing that what is 'social' can have an existence only in human minds, 'social existence' is itself already consciousness; it cannot in addition determine a consciousness which would in any case remain to be defined. To posit in this way a 'social existence' as a special determining factor divorced from our consciousness, hidden no one knows where, is to make a hypostasis of it; and it constitutes, furthermore, a beautiful example of Marx's tendency towards dualism" (Weil, 1955/1958, pp. 133 - 134).
11. See Crozier (1964) for a brilliant analysis of how modern bureaucratic structures imprison and warp human intention and behaviour. However much it may appear as perfectly rational in an organizational flow chart, the phenomenon of bureaucracy often belies the intentions of those who "run" it and is often experienced as a pitiless and indifferent machine by those who inhabit it.
12. Strictly speaking, the existence of hunger does not necessarily prove the existence of food, even though it may provide grounds for *hoping* in the existence of food. Weil said she would never let go of her desire for absolute good, even if it could be proved that there was no such thing. Like a Penelope waiting for her Odysseus, she would rather remain unsatisfied than to betray her desire and aim it toward relative goods.

References

Baltes, P. B, Glück, J. & Kuntzmann, U. (2002). Wisdom: Its structure and function in regulating successful life span development. In C. R. Synder, & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (pp. 327 - 3470. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Baltes, P. B. & Smith, J. (1990). Toward a psychology of wisdom and its ontogenesis. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Wisdom: Its nature, origins, and development* (pp. 87-120). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Baltes, P. B. & Staudinger, U. M. (2000). Wisdom: A metaheuristic (pragmatic) to orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence. *American Psychologist*, *55* (1), 122 - 136.

Cayley, D. (Writer/Producer).(2002). *Enlightened by love: The thought of Simone Weil*. (Cassette Recording No. BC2-216/2002E-A). Toronto, ON: CBC Audio

Crozier, M. (1964). *The bureaucratic phenomenon*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dewey, J. (1922). *Human nature and conduct*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Dewey, J. (1929a). *Experience and nature* (2nd Ed.). Lasalle, Ill: Open Court.

Dewey, J. (1929b). *The quest for certainty: A study of the relation of knowledge and action*. New York: Minton, Balch & Company.

Dewey, J. (1954). *The public and its problems*. Chicago: Swallow Press. (Original work published 1927)

Dewey, J. (1960). *A common faith*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (Original work published 1934)

Dewey, J. (1963). *Experience and education*. New York: Collier. (Original work published 1938)

Dewey, J. (1979). *Art as experience*. New York: Paragon. (Original work published 1934)

Dewey, J. (1985a). The problem of truth. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey: The middle works, 1899 – 1924: Vol. 6. 1910 – 1911* (pp. 12 - 68). Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press. (Original work published in 1911)

Dewey, J. (1985b). How we think. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey: The middle works, 1899 – 1924: Vol. 6. 1910 – 1911* (pp. 177 - 356). Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press. (Original work published in 1910)

Dewey, J. & Tufts, J. (1989). Ethics (2nd Ed.). In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey: The later works, 1925 – 1953: Vol. 7. 1932* (pp. 3 - 462). Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press. (Original work published in 1932)

Dipert, R. (1999). Two unjustly neglected aspects of C. S. Pierce's philosophy of mind. Retrieved June 9, 2008 from <www.neologic.net/rd/chalmers/Dipert.html>

Egan, K. (2002). *Getting it wrong from the beginning: Our progressivist inheritance from Herbert Spencer, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Fishman, S. (2007). Dewey in dialogue with Gabriel Marcel: Hope with and without God. In S. Fishman & L. McCarthy, *John Dewey and the philosophy and practice of hope* (pp. 32 - 53). Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press

Garrison, J. (1997). *Dewey and eros: Wisdom and desire in the art of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Gouinlock, J. S. (2004). *Eros and the good: Wisdom according to nature*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus.

Kestenbaum, V. (2002). *The grace and severity of the ideal: John Dewey and the transcendent*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Laing, R. D. (1973). *The divided self*. Middlesex, UK: Penguin.

McLellan, D. (1990). *Utopian pessimist: The life and thought of Simone Weil*. New York: Poseidon Press.

Murdoch, I. (1985). *The sovereignty of good.* London: Ark Paperbacks.

Pasupathi, M., Staudinger, U. M. & Baltes, P. B. (2001). Seeds of wisdom: Adolescents' knowledge and judgment about difficult life problems. *Developmental Psychology*, *37*, 351 - 361.

Pétrement, S. (1976). *Simone Weil: A life* (R. Rosenthal, Trans.). New York: Pantheon. (Original work published 1973)

Posner, G. & Rudnitsky, A. (2001) *Course design: A guide to curriculum development for teachers* (6th ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Smith, J., Staudinger, U. M. & Baltes, P. B. (1994). Occupational settings facilitating wisdom-related knowledge: The sample case of clinical psychologists. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *62*, 989 - 999.

Staudinger, U. M. (1999). Older and wiser? Integrating results on the relationship between age and wisdom-related performance. *International Journal of Behaviorial Development*, *23*, 641 - 664.

Staudinger, U. M. & Pasupathi, M. (2003). Correlates of wisdom-related performance in adolescence and adulthood: Age-graded differences in paths towards desirable development. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *13*, 239 - 268.

Sternberg, R. J. (1990). Wisdom and its relations to intelligence and creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Wisdom: Its nature, origins, and development* (pp. 87-120). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sternberg, R. J. (1998). A balance theory of wisdom. *Review of General Psychology*, *2*, 347 - 365.

Sternberg, R. J. (2001a). What is the common thread of creativity? Its dialectical relation to intelligence and wisdom. *American Psychologist, 56*, 360 - 362.

Sternberg, R. J. (2001b). Why schools should teach for wisdom: The balance theory of wisdom in educational settings. *Educational Psychologist*, *36* (4), 227 - 245

Sternberg, R. J. (2003). *Wisdom, intelligence, and creativity synthesized*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sternberg, R. J. & Lubart, T. I. (2001). Wisdom and creativity. In J.E. Birren and K. W. Schail (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of aging* (pp. 500-522). San Diego: Academic Press.

Weil, S. (1952). *The need for roots: Prelude to a declaration of duties towards mankind* (A. Wills, Trans.). New York: Harper Colophon. (Original work published 1949)

Weil, S. (1956). *The notebooks of Simone Weil* (A. Wills, Trans.)(Vols. 1 - 2). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Original work published 1952 - 1955)

Weil, S. (1958). *Oppression and liberty* (A. Wills & J. Petrie, Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Original work published 1955)

Weil, S. (1959). *Waiting on God* (E. Crauford, Trans.). London: Fontana. (Original work published 1950).

Weil, S. (1962b). The Romanesque renaissance (R. Rees, Trans.). In S. Weil, *Selected essays, 1934 - 1943* (pp. 44 - 54). London: Oxford University Press. (Original article published 1943)

Weil, S. (1970). *First and last notebooks* (R. Rees, Trans.). London: Oxford University Press. (Last notebooks first

published 1950)
Weil, S. (1977a). Factory work (F. Giovanelli, Trans.). In G. Panichas (Ed.), *The Simone Weil reader* (pp. 53 - 72). New York: David McKay. (Original article published 1942)
Weil, S. (1977b). Human personality (R. Rees, Trans.). In G. Panichas (Ed.), *The Simone Weil reader* (pp. 313 - 339). New York: David McKay. (Original article published 1950)
Weil, S. (1977c). Letter to Georges Bernados (R. Rees, Trans.). In G. Panichas (Ed.), *The Simone Weil reader* (pp. 313 - 339). New York: David McKay. (Original letter written 1938)
Weil, S. (1987). *Formative writings, 1929 - 1941* (D.T. McFarland & W. Van Ness, Trans.). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
Westbrook, R. B. (1991). *John Dewey and American democracy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Windhorst, H. D. (1995). *Is technology a threat to education? The contribution of George Parkin Grant*. Unpublished master's thesis, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

Address Correspondences to:

H. Dirk Windhorst
Department of Education
Redeemer University College
Ancaster, Ontario, Canada
dwindhorst@redeemer.ca