

“The Ayn Rand School for Tots”: John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and Objectivist Educational Philosophy during the Postwar Years

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ABSTRACT

Objectivism, the libertarian philosophy established by Ayn Rand during the postwar years, has attracted a great deal of attention from philosophers, political scientists, economists, and English professors alike in recent years, but has not received much notice from historians with an interest in education. This article will address that problem by discussing how Rand and her followers established a philosophy of education during the 1960s and 1970s that was based, in part, on vilifying the so-called collectivist ideas of John Dewey and lionizing the so-called individualist ideas of Maria Montessori. Unfortunately, the narrative that emerged during this time seriously misrepresented the ideas of both Dewey and Montessori, resulting in a somewhat distorted view of both educators.

RÉSUMÉ

L'objectivisme, philosophie libertaire conçue par Ayn Rand dans la période de l'après-guerre, a suscité beaucoup d'attention de la part des philosophes, politologues, économistes et professeurs de littérature anglaise, mais rien de tel chez les historiens de l'éducation. Cet article corrige cette lacune, en montrant comment durant les années 1960 et 1970 Rand et ses partisans ont établi une philosophie de l'éducation qui s'appuyait, en partie, sur la diffamation des idées prétendues collectivistes de John Dewey et l'idolâtrie de l'individualisme de Maria Montessori. Malheureusement, leurs travaux ont donné une fausse image des idées de Dewey et Montessori et conséquemment ont déformé les théories ces deux éducateurs.

In “A Streetcar Named Marge,” a season four episode of the popular Fox sitcom *The Simpsons*, Marge Simpson wins the role of Blanche Dubois in a musical version of Tennessee Williams’ classic play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Unable to both rehearse for the play and attend to the needs of Maggie, her infant child, Marge is convinced by the play’s director to enroll her daughter in the Ayn Rand School for Tots, a preschool that operates according to the principles of Objectivism, the libertarian philosophy founded by Ayn Rand after the success of her best-selling novels *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). During Maggie’s first day of school, the viewer is

introduced to a somewhat skewed, yet hilarious take on Rand's worldview. On the walls of the facility are posters proclaiming "A is A," a reference to Rand's belief—by way of Aristotle's Law of Identity—that an objective reality exists independent of those who perceive it, and "Helping Is Futile," a reference to Rand's notorious aversion to altruism. The school's strict headmistress, moreover, reinforces Rand's intense emphasis on self-reliance and individualism by confiscating Maggie's pacifier and refusing access to her bottle, citing its tendency to turn the child into a "leech." Eventually, the school's somewhat inflexible policies result in a toddler insurrection, led by Maggie and set to the music from *The Great Escape*, the classic 1963 film about World War Two-era prisoners of war in Nazi-occupied Poland.¹

"A Streetcar Named Marge" shouldn't, for rather obvious reasons, be regarded as a particularly accurate or sympathetic examination of Ayn Rand's philosophy. Nonetheless, it does hint at something that historians in the fields of childhood and education have failed to take notice of: namely, that Rand and her followers had much to say about how children should be educated. American objectivists began addressing the educational needs of children in highly politicized ways during the 1960s and 1970s, offering a predominantly Manichean narrative (not unlike the ones found in Rand's various works of fiction) in which complaints about contemporary education were reinforced by contrasting the supposedly toxic ideas of John Dewey with the supposedly beneficial educational strategies of Maria Montessori. Unfortunately for Rand and her followers, their understanding of both educators was problematic. For example, Objectivists often under-emphasized Dewey's appreciation of individual initiative as a factor in educating children and over-emphasized his influence on postwar educational planning. In a similar vein, the Objectivist community tended to over-emphasize the importance of individualism in Montessori's educational program and under-emphasize the religious and utopian strains found in her philosophy. The end result was a somewhat simplistic narrative in which Dewey was cast as an irrational, collective-minded villain, while Montessori was heralded as the educational equivalent of Howard Roark, the hero of *The Fountainhead* whose individualism and rationalism were held up by Rand as powerful ideals.

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Though Jennifer Burns and Anne C. Heller, two of Ayn Rand's most recent biographers, spend a significant amount of time examining the controversial author's experiences as a child with the educational system in Russia, Rand's views on education during the formative years of the Objectivist movement—the 1960s and 1970s—have gone largely unnoticed by scholars.² Why this topic has attracted so little attention from academics is difficult to ascertain, if only because Rand and her devotees devoted quite a bit of energy to criticizing the basic features of the American educational system during this period, while also offering their own suggestions on how to educate youth in a manner that complemented their neo-libertarian worldview. Indeed, Rand and her peers made a point of discussing the American educational system in several forums, including Rand's popular campus lectures series,

various best-selling works of non-fiction, and the official organs of the Objectivist movement (most notably *The Objectivist* and *The Objectivist Newsletter*). If Rand and her acolytes are to be believed, the educational system during the postwar era was arranged in such a way as to prevent American youth from living up to their full potential. "The youth of this country have to enter life under a severe handicap," Rand explained during a lecture at Columbia University in the early 1960s. "The honest and intelligent ones will have to spend a long time fighting against and discarding all the wrong ideas they have been taught."³

In keeping with their tendency to glorify free markets and vilify the state, the Objectivist community's views on the basic structure of education during the postwar years were predictable. Rand, for instance, decried publicly-funded education, arguing in the early 1960s that it represented yet another in a long line of "statist encroachments on the economy." Rand preferred a privately-funded approach in which parents were given the exclusive right to determine the kind of schools their children attended. "The premise that government, or public opinion, should prescribe by law what is right for a child is enormously improper," she complained. "It is a parent's responsibility and privilege to decide how a child should be educated." Though parental prerogative was often at the center of Rand's critique of the educational system, she also believed that private schools were superior to their publicly-funded equivalents because they could be established and maintained without resorting to taxation, which Rand and her followers saw as a form of property theft. Rand bolstered her arguments further by suggesting that privately-funded schools would help boost educational standards across the board by encouraging schools and teachers "to compete in achieving excellence." Improvements could be brought about, so the argument went, simply by doing away with the state's monopoly on education and opening it up to market forces. "There would be more and better-equipped schools," she explained, "available to more and more people." Similarly, Rand suggested that market forces could easily address the needs of children whose parents were unable to afford private schooling. "Most of today's great private universities," she argued, "were created by private individuals and are still being supported by private funds. It is obvious that men are interested in fostering education as a charitable activity." Indeed, Rand was firm in her belief that the education of children be dictated by simple supply and demand, featuring benevolent titans of industry who, hungry for skilled workers, deign to create an educational system that teaches all who are willing the skills necessary to perform certain jobs. "A technological society requires a high degree of skills and specialized knowledge," she explained, "without which businesses cannot be run. It is in the interest of the industrialists to have an educated work force," adding "if there is a large need for a certain kind of skill, those demanding it will provide the facilities for developing it."⁴

Rand's acolytes, too, offered firm support for her market-based approach to education, adopting rhetoric that was often much more heated than even their respected leader could muster. Nathaniel Branden, Rand's second-in-command within the Objectivist movement throughout much of the 1960s, explained to his readers in a 1963 edition of *The Objectivist Newsletter* that the government should not "be

permitted to remove children forcibly from their homes, with or without the parents' consent, and subject the children to educational training and procedures of which the parents may or may not approve." Such an approach represented "the death of a free society" and was "consistent with the Nazi or Communist theory of government." The best approach, he argued, was to "bring the field of education into the marketplace," a strategy that would lead to higher educational standards and an increase in the competency of teachers. "When the economic principles that have resulted in the superlative efficiency of American industry are permitted to operate in the field of education," he maintained, "the result will be a revolution in the direction of unprecedented educational development and growth." Like Rand, Branden believed that reforming America's education system was contingent upon at least three factors: minimizing government interference, maximizing market forces, and re-affirming the primary role of parents in determining what kind of schooling their children receive. This line of reasoning would animate neoliberal critiques of the American educational system well into the 21st century.⁵

Much of the Objectivist movement's energy was also directed towards criticizing contemporary approaches to pedagogy. The most ferocious of these attacks came from Rand herself in a fiery 1970 essay entitled "The Comprachicos." Named after a Spanish term (meaning "child buyers") that Rand stumbled across while reading Victor Hugo's 1869 novel *The Man Who Laughs*, "The Comprachicos" argued that contemporary teaching methods did nothing more than produce "monsters—helpless, twisted monsters whose normal development has been stunted." Whether enrolled in nursery school, elementary school, high school, or college, the average American student, Rand claimed, was being taught in an irrational manner, as teachers placed emphasis on "social adjustment," "self-expression," and "conformity to the group" rather than "individuality, achievements, and rights." The primary villain in Rand's eyes was John Dewey, the much-heralded American philosopher/educator whose theories on teaching came to define progressive education during much of the twentieth century.⁶ Besides accusing Dewey of placing too great an emphasis on memorizing, group work, and group discussion, Rand also criticized him for refusing to teach children "theoretical (i.e., conceptual) knowledge," opting instead for an approach that supposedly stressed "concrete, practical action, in the form of class projects which would develop the students' social spirit." According to Rand and her flock, the end result of these types of educational strategies was a generation of young people that could take action but could not think. "Have you heard the modern activists say: Act first, think afterward," Rand asked her readers during the early 1970s. "They got it from John Dewey."⁷

Similarly, Rand accused Dewey of offering ideas on education that expressed "hatred of reason and of everything it implies: of intelligence, of ability, of achievement, of success, of self-confidence, of self-esteem, of every bright, happy, benevolent aspect of man. This is the atmosphere, the leitmotif, the sense of life permeating today's educational establishment." Students educated according to Dewey's philosophy were being trained to think in an illogical manner, emerging from their schooling beholden to collectivist ideals and incapable of thinking original thoughts. "Most of

the students do graduate as full-fledged little collectivists," she concluded, "reciting the appropriate dogma, but one cannot say that this represents their convictions. The truth is much worse than that: they are incapable of holding any convictions of any kind, and they gravitate to collectivism because that is what they have memorized." Dewey's educational theories, Rand concluded, represent nothing more than a "systematic attempt to manufacture tribal mentalities."⁸

Beatrice Hessen, a graduate of Santa Clara University law school and wife of business historian (and fellow Objectivist) Robert Hessen, offered similarly harsh criticisms of Dewey's views on education. In 1968, for example, she used her regular column in *The Objectivist* to sing the praises of Joan Beck's child-rearing tome *How To Raise A Brighter Child*, claiming that it represented an alternative to Dewey and other "so-called progressive educators" who emphasized social goals and emotional expression over individual achievement and reason. Hessen continued her assault on Dewey in the May 1970 edition of *The Objectivist*, claiming that his ideas on pedagogy placed too much emphasis on "conformity to group norms, fantasy play, and freedom to act on one's feelings." She arrived at this conclusion after visiting some progressive nursery schools in New Jersey, all of which were duly criticized for instilling "the importance of 'belonging' or 'relating' to one's three-year-old peers." The children there, she claimed, had nothing to guide them but their "whims," which fostered a "gang mentality" not unlike the "hippies." Ultimately, Hessen suggested that Dewey's methods did nothing more than produce a generation of "wretched neurotics who cry about the tyranny of reality," while also acting as a direct cause of several social ills, including "social disintegration and group warfare," "bitterness, scorn, [and] suspicion" among youth, the "dazed, terror-ridden conformity of hippie herds and communes," and the "spread of drug addiction." Dewey was basically held up by Hessen (and by extension Rand) as a symbol of all that was wrong with American culture during the late-1960s and early-1970s, an argument that may have appealed to an ever-growing number of Americans who feared the counterculture and had doubts about the value of state-run education and government as a whole.⁹

In reality, though, the Objectivist community's characterization of Dewey only occasionally matched up with the ideas that were offered in his various works. For starters, Rand's assertion that Dewey placed a great deal of attention to the well-being of the collective rather than the interests of the individual was only partially accurate. Dewey certainly believed that education was primarily a social phenomenon. In 1897, for instance, he explained that "the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself. Through these demands he is stimulated to act as a member of a unity, to emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling, and to conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs." Dewey would remain consistent on this point throughout the remainder of his academic career. In 1900, for example, he attacked fact-based lesson plans due to their tendency to ignore social goals, arguing that "the mere absorption of facts and truths is so exclusively individual an affair that it tends very naturally to pass into selfishness. There is no obvious social motive for the acquirement of mere learning, there is no

clear social gain in success thereat.” Dewey similarly claimed in 1911 that “the moral responsibility of the school, and of those who conduct it, is to society. The school is fundamentally an institution erected by society to do a certain specific work—to exercise a certain specific function in maintaining the life and advancing the welfare of society.” The system that does otherwise, Dewey proclaimed, is “derelict and a defaulter.”¹⁰

However, the various attempts by Rand and her peers to characterize Dewey as a rabid collectivist oftentimes ignored his healthy respect for self-interest and individual initiative in bringing about positive educational outcomes. Dewey was no socialist; indeed, a recent biographer suggests that Dewey’s brand of progressivism was “basically conservative in philosophy and liberal in activity.”¹¹ In many respects, Dewey was an exceedingly pragmatic reformer who was reluctant to treat individual development separate from social development. Dewey often argued that one of the most bothersome aspects of pedagogical debates during his day was their “oppositional nature,” their attempts to force educators to choose between “individual nature” and “social culture.” As historian Andrew Hartman notes, Dewey “wished to unmask false philosophical binaries,” claiming that, “the rift between the child-centered and academic curriculums was as arbitrary as the rift between subject and object.” In fact, Dewey’s approach to pedagogy often addressed psychological and sociological phenomena in equal measure. “The individual and society are neither opposed to each other nor separated from each other,” he argued. “Society is a society of individuals and the individual is always a social individual. He has no existence by himself. He lives in, for, and by society, just as society has no existence excepting in and through the individuals who constitute it.” To think otherwise, Dewey maintained, would be to perform a disservice to America’s children: “If we eliminate the social factor from the child we are left only with an abstraction; if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass.”¹²

Dewey’s thoughts on the curriculum were similarly reliant on balancing individual growth and personal initiative with social goals. In fact, his intense emphasis on action—on “doing” as a means of learning—was often expressed in individualistic terms. Dewey, for example, claimed that “action is always in the concrete; it is definite and individualized.” Action-oriented approaches to learning, he argued, provide individuals with the skills necessary “to stand up and count for something in the actual conflicts of life” while also training students about the merits of “initiative, insistence, persistence, courage, and industry.” A similar outlook animated Dewey’s thoughts on creating scholarly interest among children. Though teachers were expected to act as guides or interpreters for the children as they learned, Dewey believed that the “child’s own instincts and powers furnish the material and give the starting point for all education.” Moreover, Dewey, like many progressive educators, criticized traditional classrooms for dealing with children “en masse,” reducing them to stationary objects that were expected simply to absorb information from their teachers in a passive manner. “The moment children act they individualize themselves,” Dewey countered, “they cease to be a mass, and become the intensively distinctive beings that we are acquainted with out of school, in the home, the family, on the

playground, and in the neighborhood." The individual, therefore, was given significant attention by Dewey. For Rand and her followers, however, Dewey's views were insufficient because they did not conform to the Objectivist community's Locke-inspired brand of individualism. As philosophy professor Raymond D. Boisvert argues, Dewey made "a distinction between individualism, the ideal of autonomy in a Lockean world, and individuality which he understands as identifying the proper manner in which each person can contribute to the community." In other words, Dewey's reputation as a collectivist was forged among Rand and her peers once he acknowledged that the autonomous individual was an instrument of social change rather than an end in itself.¹³

Some other significant details of Dewey's pedagogy seemed to have eluded Objectivist spokespersons during the postwar years. In fact, Rand and her peers often had a poor eye for detail, referring to aspects of Dewey's educational philosophy that simply did not exist. For example, Rand's suggestion that Dewey-inspired education relied heavily on memorization is just plain wrong, as he was actually one of the most strident opponents of memorization and rote forms of learning. In 1902, for example, Dewey criticized the notion of presenting "scientific matter" in an "external, ready-made fashion," claiming that it did little to improve the child's reasoning abilities. "The subject-matter is evacuated of its logical value, and, though it is what it is only from the logical standpoint, is presented as stuff only for 'memory.'" Moreover, Rand's suggestion that Dewey's approach emphasized free emotional expression and irrational thought was similarly misguided. Dewey understood that emotional expression had a role to play in the schools, but he was also firm in believing that it should never assume too prominent a place in the educational process. "I believe that the emotions are the reflex of actions," he wrote in 1897. "I believe that to endeavor to stimulate or arouse the emotions apart from their corresponding activities is to introduce an unhealthy and morbid state of mind." Dewey punctuated his point by offering an argument that any fair-minded rationalist could appreciate: "I believe that next to deadness and dullness, formalism and routine, our education is threatened with no greater evil than sentimentalism." Indeed, Dewey even expressed appreciation for the various rationalist philosophers who inspired Ayn Rand and her friends in the Objectivist community. Though Dewey had reservations about the rationalists' tendency to completely disregard "the influence of habit, instinct, and emotion," he also suggested in *Democracy and Education* that they played a significant role in undermining "the power of prejudice, superstition, and brute force" and encouraged "clarity and order of exposition." In sum, Dewey's educational philosophy was not in any way based on encouraging irrational impulses in children, nor did it represent an attempt to undermine the primacy of reason.¹⁴

One of the most vexing problems associated with the Objectivist critique of Dewey involves the extent to which Rand and her peers seem to have over-estimated his impact on the American educational system during the postwar years. It should be noted, after all, that Dewey's influence on educational debates peaked during the years leading up to World War I and dissipated soon after. As historian Herbert Kliebard points out, though "all sorts of changes in educational policy and programs

were attributed to Dewey's influence during his long career at Columbia, and although his work attracted devoted disciples, nowhere do we find a coherent and lasting attempt to implement his course of study." Dewey's approach to pedagogy, Kliebard continues, "remained confined largely to the world of ideas rather than the world of practice" due to the simple fact that his ideas were much too ambitious. "The changes that Dewey sought in the curriculum were so sweeping and so revolutionary," he adds, "that they had to be accompanied by an equally great transformation in the way schools were run." In the end, Dewey's educational philosophy can best be compared to the musical composition that ends William Gaddis' 1955 novel *The Recognitions*, a rousing concerto that was spoken of "with high regard, though seldom played."¹⁵

So why, then, did Objectivists insist on blaming Dewey for the purported excesses of progressive education? For starters, it must be noted that Rand and her followers not only disliked Dewey's educational ideas, they also took issue with his basic philosophical worldview, which they claimed was centered on subjective rather than objective processes. Dewey's pragmatic notion of truth, for example, holds that all forms of inquiry are, in effect, subject to revision and refinement over time. Dewey, in effect, adopted a constructivist approach to knowledge, suggesting in his 1938 book, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, that scientific conclusions have a "conditional status" and are "held subject to determination by its fate in further inquires." This idea flew in the face of Objectivist dogma, acting as a rebuke to one of their most cherished organizing principles—namely, the idea that objective truth is immutable and exists outside of those who claim to observe it. "There are no facts," Leonard Peikoff, a prominent figure in the Objectivist moment, complained of Dewey's constructivism in 1982, "only provisional 'hypotheses' which for the moment facilitate human action. There are no fixed laws of logic, only mutable 'conventions,' without any basis in reality."¹⁶

Perhaps more importantly, Dewey's theory of experience, which dealt directly with educational matters, challenged Objectivist notions by arguing that a student's present experience was shaped in large part by subjective processes. For example, Dewey argued in his 1938 book *Experience and Education* that progressive education must rely on "continuity of experience," the idea that past experiences (be they positive or negative) can have a profound impact on how students learn in the present. "From this point of view," Dewey explained, "the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after." Unlike Rand, then, Dewey was willing to grant the subjective experiences of students a prominent role in shaping basic educational strategies, which, of course, rendered him an enemy of the Objectivist community. Indeed, as many in Rand's inner circle found out, Dewey's theories were not to be entertained in any way, as members who flirted with his ideas were often disciplined harshly by Rand and her deputies. For example, Anne Heller notes that Rand actually banished Leonard Peikoff from her inner circle for two years during the late-1950s after he expressed a fondness for Dewey and other so-called "subjectivist" philosophers. The fact that Peikoff was a graduate

student of Sidney Hook, a protégée of Dewey who had recently given Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* a bad review, certainly didn't help matters either.¹⁷

Dewey also raised the ire of the Objectivist community by virtue of the fact that he was the most recognizable figure in the progressive education movement during the postwar years, an easy target due to his authoritative status within the culture at large. In fact, Ann Heller suggests that Rand chose "Objectivism" as the name of her budding movement because she was "concerned with countering the influence of Dewey and his followers' subjectivist theories of education." It is worth noting, however, that Rand and her followers seemed to have conflated Dewey's ideas on education with those of his star pupil, William Heard Kilpatrick. As historian Arthur Zilversmit acknowledges, the ideas expressed by Kilpatrick and his followers during the interwar years diverged sharply from Dewey's, resulting in the type of schools that Objectivists grew to despise after World War Two. The Kilpatrick-inspired schools of the 1920s and 1930s largely abandoned traditional academics, made self-expression through art "the very core of the curriculum" (historian Lawrence Cremin refers to this as "the expressionist credo"), and adopted a particularly virulent strain of anti-intellectualism that would have seemed as off-putting to the bookish Dewey as it did to Rand. Though Objectivists were correct in noting some of the more irrational features of these types of progressive schools, they failed to realize that Dewey's own body of work did not lend much intellectual support to Kilpatrick's various innovations. Ultimately, the Objectivist community was unable to differentiate between Dewey's ideas and those of his followers, many of whom paid tribute to their former teacher by, in effect, abandoning significant features of his basic program.¹⁸

Nonetheless, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that any version of progressive education—Dewey-inspired or otherwise—caught on in the United States during the twentieth century. As several scholars have noted, Americans were legitimately curious about the potential of progressive education during the 1920s, but eventually grew wary of it in the 1930s and early 1940s, when the Depression and World War II reoriented policy debates in a thoroughgoing manner. The situation only worsened after World War II, when the success of Sputnik reinvigorated supporters of traditional pedagogy—many of whom urged a strict return to "fundamentals"—while the rise of McCarthyism transformed any idea with a progressive hue into an elaborate communist plot, a Soviet-inspired attempt to curtail American freedoms. The irony here, of course, is that the fervent anti-communism associated with the Objectivist movement—Rand, after all, was a friendly witness during the 1947 House Un-American Activities Committee hearings—may have played a role in discrediting progressive education at a time when Objectivists insisted on characterizing it as a spectre haunting America's public school system. In the end, the Objectivist community was unable to explain why, if Dewey-inspired progressive education was so strong during the postwar years, the movement's flagship organization, the Progressive Education Association, officially disbanded in 1955 due to lack of both funds and interest.¹⁹

Just as Rand used Howard Roark as a counterpoint for Ellsworth Toohey, the sniveling, collectivist villain in Rand's 1943 novel *The Fountainhead*, so, too, would she employ Maria Montessori as a foil for the arch-socialist John Dewey, offering her audience a clear alternative to the progressive approaches to education that supposedly dominated American schools during the postwar years. In "The Comprachicos," for example, Rand argued that Montessori's pedagogy was friendly to the goals of Objectivism due to its so-called "rationality" and its emphasis on individuality within the classroom, both of which contrasted sharply with the "foggy subjectivism" and "mob spirit" that were supposedly countenanced in progressive schools. Indeed, Rand believed that Montessori's methods could be merged with home-schooling to produce educational strategies that in many ways complemented the basic tenets of Objectivism. In 1971, for example, Rand claimed during a question and answer session in Boston that Elizabeth Hainstock's 1968 book *Teaching Montessori in the Home* should be used as a guide to educate children, claiming that it "provides practical advice for parents on how to start your child on the Montessori method, and how to help him thereafter when he goes into public schools." A mere year later Rand used the renewed interest in Montessori schooling in America as a means of demonstrating "the plight of conscientious young parents on a nationwide scale" and their attempts to avoid "the ravages of Progressive education in public schools." Her followers, as it turns out, were more than willing to take their leader's suggestions to heart, as rank-and-file Objectivists began establishing Montessori schools of their own in subsequent decades, including the VanDamme Academy in Aliso Viejo, California, and LePort Schools in Orange County, California. Objectivists have similarly used the technological advances of the past thirty years to set up scores of blogs and internet discussion groups, many of which offer rousing defences of Montessori and her methods.²⁰

Rand came to appreciate Montessori's methods in part because the Italian educator believed that even the youngest of children should be taught to think logically. Montessori's approach, Rand noted during the early 1970s, "is consciously aimed at developing the conceptual ability in a child's mind," an approach to schooling that Dewey and his followers in the Progressive education movement were thought to oppose. "It is an achievement of genius," Rand continued. "She writes that what she wants to teach a child is not any particular ideas, but the method required to acquire ideas—to bring order into a child's mind, so that he won't feel like a confused stranger in the world. She wants to train a child's ability to deal with cognition—with concepts—which is precisely the ability 'progressive' education is out to destroy." Interestingly enough, Rand also expressed support for Montessori methods because she thought they could be used to immunize children should they ever end up in the public school system. Rand referred to the Montessori system as an "antidote," claiming that "it gives a proper foundation to a child, after which he will be safe and impervious. So if you send him to the worst of today's high schools, he may not be happy, but it won't affect him if he's had Montessori training." However, Montessori never claimed that her methods could actually protect children from other types of schooling. In fact, she argued in 1912 that her methods could help prepare younger children for entry into the "common schools." Rand, it seems,

crafted the immunization argument in order to establish a useful polemic, one that both touted the merits of Montessori education while reinforcing her claims that the public schools were failing to properly educate America's children.²¹

Beatrice Hessen expressed a similarly deep appreciation for the teachings of Maria Montessori. She argued that Montessori education could help establish a new variation on the Three R's, offering children lessons in the value of "reason, reality, and the rights of the individual." The first two components—reason and reality—were supposedly brought about through a "reality-based" curriculum that aids "the development of the child's conceptual—i.e., rational—faculty." Ultimately, Montessori's approach won Hessen's respect because it reinforced Aristotle's Law of Identity, the idea, central to Rand's basic philosophy, that an objective reality exists outside of our means of perceiving it and can be discerned through deduction, reason, and logic (E.M. Standing, a close friend and biographer of the Italian educator, summed up this aspect of Montessori's worldview best when he pointed out that one of the most important features of her philosophy was the idea that "the intellect must be subject to the discipline of external reality"). The final R—the rights of the individual—was supposedly encouraged courtesy of a curriculum that fostered "independence and self-reliance," pride in one's possessions, and solitary forms of learning ("Respect for the right to work alone," Hessen noted favourably, "is taught to these children from the first day they enter school"). Montessori's ideas, in short, seemed to complement many of the basic tenets of Objectivism, striking all the right notes among Rand and her followers. The opposite type of training—what Hessen, unfairly lumping in Dewey with Freud, dubbed the "Pragmatist-Freudian" view—was nothing more than a "recipe for manufacturing hacks."²²

Though the Objectivist community's decision to pit Dewey against Montessori may seem unusual at first glance, it did have some basis in fact. Despite growing interest in her methods during the years leading up to World War One, Montessori's attempts to find an audience in the United States largely fell flat during the first half of the twentieth century. According to Lee Havis, the executive director of the International Montessori Society during the late 1990s, Montessori schools were "virtually nonexistent" in the United States when their founder died in 1952. In explaining why this was so, Objectivists often point to the influence of a 1914 book entitled *The Montessori System Examined*. A mere seventy-two pages long, *The Montessori System Examined* has been characterized by the Atlas Society, a prominent neo-Objectivist organization, as a "highly influential book" that caused Montessori's ideas to be "largely forgotten for several decades." The Atlas Society's argument is admittedly a bit shaky in terms of causation—it is hard to believe that one book could have such a far-reaching impact on educational debates—but they are correct in asserting that *The Montessori System Examined* offered a predominantly negative appraisal of Montessori's ideas, taking the Italian educator to task for (among other things) having a "scientific attitude" in theory but not in practice, for promulgating a "notoriously disastrous" view of liberty in the classroom, and for relying on didactic materials that inhibit self-expression, resulting in a form of "repression" that destroys both "happiness and mental growth." Adding insult to injury was the fact that *The*

Montessori System Examined was written by William Heard Kilpatrick and had been proofread by none other than John Dewey. Despite Kilpatrick's claim in the preface that it would be "unfair" to pin blame on anyone else for the opinions expressed in his book, Dewey's involvement in bringing *The Montessori System Examined* to press linked him directly to one of the earliest and most influential attempts to discredit the Montessori method, which no doubt cemented his reputation as an enemy of Rand and all that she and her followers stood for.²³

Nonetheless, the establishment of the Dewey-Montessori binary is problematic due to the simple fact that the Objectivist community's appreciation for Montessori's work was expressed in an exceedingly selective manner, as Rand and her followers seem to have ignored aspects of her pedagogy that ran counter to their own basic philosophy. It is worth noting, for example, that Montessori's approach, like Dewey's, had explicitly social aims. In 1913, for example, Montessori claimed that her methods could "help along the civil progress which science has revealed to us" and bring about the "regeneration of humanity." Moreover, Montessori believed that teaching students about the importance of altruism and self-sacrifice—concepts that rankled with Rand—could go a long way towards improving society. "The honest man, the worthy man, the man of honour, is not he who avenges himself," Montessori argued, "but he who works for something outside himself, for the sake of society at large, in order to purify it of its evils and its sins, and advance it on its path of future progress." Indeed, in many respects, Montessori was much more of a dreamer than Dewey ever was, suggesting in 1915 that the "practical consequences" of her educational philosophy were "the realization of ideals thought to be utopian."²⁴

Similarly, Montessori's criticism of traditional educational methods was based, in part, on her observation that "all those who are undergoing education are isolated from society." Montessori, in short, agreed with Dewey that education should take on a greater social role, and that Rand's old foe—the state—could actually play an important role in bringing this to fruition.

Education can no longer remain isolated from society but must acquire authority over society. Social machinery must arrange itself around what is to be done so that life be protected. All must be called upon to collaborate: mothers and fathers must, of course, do their part well, but if the family has not sufficient means, then society must give not only knowledge, but enough means to educate the children. If education means care of the individual and if society recognizes that such and such a thing is necessary for the child for its development and the family is not capable of providing for it, then it must be society which provides for the child. The child must not be abandoned by the state.²⁵

According to Montessori, education was a process by which the individual, acting in concert with the state, serves and improves upon society. "Education as protection to life affects not only the child," Montessori claimed, "but the mothers and fathers as well as the state and international finance. It is something which moves every part of society, indeed it is the greatest of social movements."²⁶

It would be unfair, however, to suggest that the Objectivist community's tendency to key in on the importance of individualism in Montessori schools was completely off the mark. Superficially at least, their claims were somewhat accurate, as individual development was most certainly an important feature of Montessori's larger program. In 1913, for example, Montessori argued that the one-size-fits-all teaching strategies favored by traditional educators should be replaced with an approach that treats each child as "a living individuality." Educators, she argued, ought to adopt a "naturalistic method" that offered a "description of [students] as individuals and their classification on a basis of characteristics in common." Montessori also made a conscious effort to individualize her students through spatial means, as the central learning spaces in her schools were arranged in such a way as to ensure that her students have control over their own work areas—that "every child has his own drawer, in which to put things belonging to him." Moreover, Objectivists were also correct in suggesting that Montessori students were encouraged to engage in solitary work. While discussing how her students responded to her various formal exercises, Montessori claimed that her students "like to do [them] alone," oftentimes removing themselves from their teacher and fellow students in order to avoid "inopportune help." That this feature of Montessori schooling would meet with Rand's approval is not particularly surprising. According to Jennifer Burns, Rand was "a lonely, isolated child" who often found happiness in solitary pursuits of her own, such as writing plays and reading fiction. Rand, it would seem, had firsthand experience with the pleasures of being an autodidact.²⁷

Nonetheless, Objectivists seem to have misunderstood what Montessori actually meant by "working alone." As E.M. Standing argues, Montessori emphasized "psychological isolation"—the idea that students become so engrossed in their work that they shut out the world around them—rather than "solitude" in a strictly physical sense. Rita Kramer discusses this phenomenon in her biography of Montessori, mentioning an amusing anecdote in which the Queen of Italy visited a Casa dei Bambino (House of Children) in Rome before World War One and was "ignored by one little girl who was busy repeating her arrangement of squares and circles." The Objectivist community, however, refused to distinguish between physical and psychological isolation, using their rather one-sided definition of solitary work as an excuse to reaffirm their lionization of the individual and downplay the importance of group work and social interaction in Montessori's basic philosophy. Indeed, Objectivists have proven themselves incredibly reluctant to discuss Montessori's belief that intellectual development depended, in large part, on emulation, in allowing children to copy each other and share insights with each other. "The children learn from one another and throw themselves into the work with enthusiasm and delight," Montessori explained. "This atmosphere of quiet activity develops a fellow-feeling, an attitude of mutual aid, and, most wonderful of all, an intelligent interest on the part of the older children in the progress of their little companions." The end result, she claimed, was the development of a "clan spirit," the formation of "a society of children, united by a mysterious bond" and acting "as one body."²⁸

One of the most striking examples of Montessori's appreciation for group work

was the “silence exercise,” an activity that promised to “quicken the child’s attention in special relation to sounds.” Instructors in Montessori’s schools were told to gather all the students in a darkened room, ask them to take their seats, and then tell them to remain quiet and completely still for an extended period of time. If performed correctly, the “silence exercise” supposedly caused the children to “give themselves up to a kind of spell,” bringing about a “profound silence” the entire group could benefit from.

Here is demonstration of the cooperation of all the members of a community to achieve a common end. The children gradually show increased power of inhibition; many of them, rather than disturb the silence, refrain from brushing a fly off the nose, or suppress a cough or sneeze. The same exhibition of collective action is seen in the care with which the children move to avoid making a noise during their work.²⁹

As an added bonus, the “silence exercise” was also seen by Montessori as having a “practical effect upon the discipline of children,” offering teachers the means of pacifying large classes while singling out any “disturber” who failed to play along. “One rebel is sufficient to mar this achievement,” Montessori explained. “One noisy child, walking on his heels or banging the door, can disturb the peaceful atmosphere of the small community.” Though Rand and her peers in the Objectivist movement had little to say about the merits of the silence exercise, one cannot help but note that many of the heroes in Rand’s fictional work have more in common with the “rebel” who disrupts the serenity of the group than the students who willingly submit to their teacher’s demands for silence.³⁰

Perhaps the most surprising features of Montessori’s works, however, were the various analogies and metaphors in which socialism — Rand’s *bête noir* — was spoken of in highly favorable terms. In many respects, this was a product of both Montessori’s upbringing (as Rita Kramer notes, Montessori’s mother “trained her early to do her part for those less fortunate than she was”) and her time at the University of Rome (which Kramer describes as “a seedbed of Marxist thought”). Both influences revealed themselves shortly before World War One, when Montessori not only touted the benefits of public ownership of utilities and transportation — what she dubbed “the communistic transformation of the general environment” — but also described the founding of one of her early *Casa dei Bambini* using language that suggested sympathy for socialist ideas. Though financed by the *Institutio Romano dei Beni Stabili*, a group of developers underwritten by several prominent Italian banks, Montessori’s first school was characterized as an experiment in socialist education. Owned by “the collectivity,” Montessori’s school offered free education to sixty poor children in a working-class tenement in Rome, an idea Montessori deemed “beautiful and profoundly educational.” In fact, she believed that her school, by allowing even the poorest mothers to “go away to work with easy minds,” represented “the first step toward the socialization of the house,” a “communizing” of the maternal function, which Montessori saw as part of a larger trend towards collectivist methods of organization.

"I believe," she somewhat cryptically concluded, "that in the future of society other forms of communistic life will come."³¹

Even relatively minor features of Montessori's pedagogy were discussed in ways that suggested an affinity for socialism. In 1912, for example, she expressed anger that scientific ways of thinking led to the development of the stationary desk, "an instrument of slavery in the school" whose design represented a willful ignorance towards "the movement of social liberation, growing and developing throughout the world." The emergence of "scientific benches," she concluded, was an anachronism, a step backwards during an age when the working classes were being freed "from the yoke of unjust labor." Interestingly enough, Montessori's appreciation for socialism cannot be chalked up as an act of folly during an age before the excesses of Bolshevism and Stalinism came to light. As late as 1949, just as the Cold War was starting to heat up, Montessori drew analogies between her own educational philosophy and the ideas of Karl Marx, suggesting that the empowerment of children was comparable—in terms of both structure and historical importance—to the empowerment of the workers. The individual child, she argued, should be seen as a worker who "produces humanity itself" while parents should act as enlightened capitalists who provide "the means of construction to the worker." In establishing her admittedly shaky analogy, Montessori had nothing but kind words to say about those with a collectivist bent, suggesting that "socialists and communists... started a movement in order to obtain better conditions of life for the working man" and "free themselves from restraints and repressions."³²

Regrettably, Montessori's thoughts on socialism seem to have passed without much comment from Rand and her friends within the Objectivist community, a phenomenon that would repeat itself with regards to her religiosity and mysticism. Though some of Montessori's basic ideas on education may have seemed sufficiently rational to Objectivists, it is hard to conclude that Montessori herself was in any way a proponent of rationalism. After all, Montessori was a devout Roman Catholic who often peppered her works with biblical quotes and calls for divine guidance. Her 1914 text, *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*, is especially thick with references to Christ and scripture, ending with the famous quote about rendering "unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." A later work similarly ends with an invocation in which Jesus is called upon to help teachers "penetrate into the secret of the child so that we may know him, love him and serve him, according to your laws of justice and following your divine will." Montessori's references to Christianity, moreover, were something more than mere lip-service, as she often defended the inclusion of religious instruction in the curriculum while offering "religious exercises" and the singing of hymns in her schools. She even published several children's books—most notably, *The Life in Christ* and *The Mass Explained to Children*—that reinforced her belief that religion deserved a prominent place in the educational process.³³

By the end of her life, moreover, Montessori's ideas on education were being heavily influenced by esotericism, particularly theosophy. Though E.M. Standing noted that Montessori always had "a mystical side to her personality," an extended stay in

India between 1939 and 1946 seemed to have intensified that aspect of her identity. Her appreciation for Christianity remained—she claimed in a 1949 book that her methods were comparable to the New Testament (“it says positive things”) while suggesting that traditional methods were like the Old Testament (which featured “mostly negative” commandments)—but one cannot help but notice that her prose and her ideas were being influenced more and more by a somewhat hazy form of Eastern mysticism. “We are not created only to enjoy the world,” she explained in a particularly oblique section of *The Absorbent Mind*, “we are created in order to evolve the cosmos. Today the influence of the existence of a cosmic plan is gradually changing the theory of the linear evolution of past times.” Montessori similarly claimed that children had a “latent cosmic energy,” offering a unique source of love that could be harnessed to better society. In explaining what she meant by this, Montessori employed language that could easily be mistaken for the ramblings of the beatniks and hippies Rand grew to despise during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. “Love is a gift of the Universal Consciousness for a special aim and purpose,” she proclaimed, “as is everything lent to man by the Cosmic Consciousness.” Suffice it to say that these kinds of sentiments should have been considered anathema among the strict rationalists who made up the bulk of the Objectivist community during the years following World War II.³⁴

* * *

So why is it important to revisit the manner in which Objectivists incorporated the ideas of John Dewey and Maria Montessori into their basic educational philosophy during the postwar years? First and foremost, doing so might help bring a sense of balance to the discussion. As it turns out, Dewey’s reputation as an enemy of rationalism remains as firm today as it was during the 1960s and 1970s, when Rand and her followers originally assessed his impact on education. For example, the Atlas Society continues to claim that Dewey held a “collectivist view of man,” was concerned primarily with “fostering the imagination and the development of social relationships,” and “disliked Montessori’s decidedly individualistic view of the child.” Meanwhile, the Ayn Rand Institute, the official organization of orthodox Objectivist thought, has raised similar concerns about Dewey’s tenacious hold on America’s educational establishment. In April 1998, Onkar Ghate, a senior fellow at the Ayn Rand Center, published an article (which was subsequently reprinted in both the *Fresno Bee* and the *Florida Sun-Sentinel*) on the proper way to teach children how to read. In keeping with Objectivist tradition, Dewey was excoriated for “believing that the child must be encouraged to follow his feelings irrespective of the facts, and to have his arbitrary ‘opinions’ regarded as valid.” Five months later, Ghate attacked Dewey again, suggesting that the long dead educator saw “logic is a ‘straitjacket’” and that students unfortunate enough to be subjected to his views on pedagogy were often taught to think that “there are no rigid principles in life, and that emotion, not reason, is one’s link to reality.”³⁵

Even more disconcerting, however, was the attempt by at least one Objectivist commentator to link Dewey’s ideas with the spate of school shootings that took place

in the late 1990s. In April 1999, just as the Columbine massacre was making headlines across much of the planet, Glenn Woiceshyn, a senior writer and curriculum expert for the Ayn Rand Institute, wrote an article entitled "Socializing Students for Anarchy" which suggested, in no uncertain terms, that "the phenomenon of school violence, of classroom terrorism, gang fights, [and] the use of deadly weapons" was a by-product of Dewey's views on education and their supposedly over-riding influence on American public schools. Dewey's purported disdain for reason and logic were the culprits in this particular instance. Without reason to guide them, Woiceshyn argued, students are reduced "to the status of beasts—to slaves of their impulses—where no rational persuasion is possible. Their only ultimate recourse is to deal with each other by brute force—by the law of the jungle." "If students are taught that mindless conformity to the group is a virtue," he added, "is it any surprise that they gravitate toward gangs?"³⁶

Accusations about Dewey being a dyed-in-the-wool socialist continue to hold sway among Objectivists, too, despite the fact that both the Soviet Union and Dewey have long since shaken off this mortal coil. In 2004, for instance, Gennady Stolyarov, a commentator for a group called "Sense of Life Objectivists," one of many splinter groups within the Objectivist movement, accused Dewey of advocating tactics associated with Big Brother from George Orwell's classic dystopian novel *1984*. "A parallel can be produced to the theoretical suggestions of Mr. Dewey," Stolyrov explained, "who proposed that schools remain continually vigilant in regard to the private lives of their students and even (as was also the purpose of the Spies in Oceania) recruit the youths themselves to watch their relatives with suspicion, all with the motive of broadening the influence of the socialist State." Indeed, the internet has not been particularly kind to Dewey, as illustrated by the widespread dissemination of half-baked quotes that supposedly reinforce the notion that Dewey was an unapologetic communist. The most prevalent one is this gem in which Dewey is portrayed as a Stalin-esque monster intent on turning free-thinking children into mindless collectivist slugs: "You can't make Socialists out of individualists. Children who know how to think for themselves spoil the harmony of the collective society which is coming, where everyone is interdependent." A simple Google search offers approximately 12,300 hits for this quote, none of which provide the reader with a means of tracking down the original source. The reason for this is quite simple: Dewey never said anything of the sort.³⁷ Given the extent to which this quote has been posthumously added to Dewey's already vast literary output, it is no surprise to hear one New Jersey-area Objectivist suggest on an internet discussion board that the soft-spoken Columbia professor "was one of the most evil men to occupy America in the last 150 years."³⁸

The ideas of Maria Montessori, by contrast, continue to be discussed in a largely positive manner, although one gets the impression that Objectivists have become more aware that their own views of the world do not necessarily jibe with Montessori's. For instance, Marsha Enright, a representative for the Atlas Society and co-founder of the Council Oak Montessori School in Chicago, Illinois, argues that "the Montessori classroom deeply implements a philosophy of individualism," while

also conceding that “the ideas and practices of collectivism often hold sway among many of its teachers, parents, and administrators.” Michael Berliner, the first executive director of the Ayn Rand Institute, offered similar caveats in a 2002 article on education, suggesting that while the Montessori method is “the most promising educational method now available,” the Italian educator’s adherents often try “to ground the method in Maria Montessori’s personal philosophy, a mixture of Catholicism and Indian mysticism.” Nonetheless, the popularity of Montessori’s methods within the Objectivist community is hard to deny, regardless of the forms they tend to take. As was noted earlier, the Objectivist community has established in recent years a small, yet vibrant educational infrastructure that mixes the ideas of Montessori with those of Rand, a phenomenon that has thus far eluded the attention of scholars working in the Arts and Social Sciences.³⁹

There are signs, however, that some Objectivists are beginning to re-assess the merits of both Dewey and Montessori in a much more systematic manner. The list of revisionists is admittedly short, but it does include the name of Jerry Kirkpatrick, a prominent spokesperson for Objectivism and a Professor Emeritus of International Business and Marketing at California State Polytechnic University. In his 2008 book, *Montessori, Dewey, and Capitalism*, Kirkpatrick admits that his understanding of Dewey has been somewhat lacking throughout much of his academic career. Though he continues to take Dewey to task for refusing to question “the idea of state-compulsory education” — a charge he fails to make against Montessori — Kirkpatrick admits that his “criticism of John Dewey turned to a guarded admiration” once he actually read the educator’s works and recognized that his pedagogy “emphasized uniqueness and independence” (a claim that would have resulted in banishment during the early days of the Objectivist movement). Conversely, Kirkpatrick admitted that his understanding of Maria Montessori’s pedagogy was also in need of some revision, albeit for reasons that reinforced rather than challenged prevailing ideas within the Objectivist community. “My long-time admiration of Maria Montessori was shaken somewhat,” he explained, “when I read that she considered herself to be a progressive educator.”⁴⁰

Kirkpatrick, in short, has come to realize that the ideas advanced by Dewey and Montessori do not always neatly align with the arguments offered by Rand and her followers. This trend is worth noting for a couple of reasons. By challenging Objectivist orthodoxy in such a forthright manner, Kirkpatrick might just encourage his peers in the movement to re-assess their views on Dewey and Montessori — or, to quote a character in *Atlas Shrugged*, to “check their premises.” Though the Objectivist community’s views on Dewey’s may have hardened over time, an opportunity still exists to correct the historical record and bring some amount of reason to the debate. Indeed, Kirkpatrick’s act of revisionism might just ensure that future discussions of Objectivist educational philosophy become something more than a mere punch line on *The Simpsons*.⁴¹

Notes

- * I would like to thank Marlene Shore, Todd Webb, and the two anonymous referees for providing me with valuable feedback on my article. Without their guidance my first foray into educational history would have been much more arduous.
- 1 "A Streetcar Named Marge," *The Simpsons*, DVD. Season 4, episode 2; dir. Rich Moore. Fox Video, June 15, 2004.
 - 2 See, for example, Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), chs. 1-3; Anne C. Heller, *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), ch. 1.
 - 3 Marlene Podritske and Peter Schwartz, eds., *Objectively Speaking: Ayn Rand Interviewed* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books), 83.
 - 4 *Ibid.*, 82-83, 90.
 - 5 Nathaniel Branden, "Intellectual Ammunition Department," *The Objectivist Newsletter*, June 1963, 22. Similar arguments can be found in Nathaniel Branden, "Common Fallacies About Capitalism," in *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, ed. Ayn Rand (New York: New American Library, 1966), 82-85. For more on the neoliberal critique of education, see Carol Ascher et al, *Hard Lessons: Public Schools and Privatization* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996), ch. 1; Patricia Burch, *Hidden Markets: The New Education Privatization* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-10.
 - 6 I use the term "progressive education" in a very specific manner in this paper. Following David F. Labaree's lead, my use of the term corresponds with the so-called "pedagogical progressives," who emphasized (among other things) child-centered forms of instruction, self-directed learning through active engagement, and the importance of justice, democracy, equality, and tolerance in the curriculum. This group was pitted against the "administrative progressives," who essentially ran the American educational system throughout much of the twentieth century and emphasized efficient governance, a scientific curriculum, and vocational instruction. See David F. Labaree, "Progressivism, Schools and Schools of Education: An American Romance," *Paedagogica Historica* 41 (February 2005): 275-88. Unfortunately, Rand and her followers didn't offer a particularly coherent definition of "progressive education" in their various critiques. In fact, as I discuss later in the paper, the Objectivist community assumed that "pedagogical progressives" such as Dewey and William Herd Kilpatrick were in control of the American educational system, when in reality that task had fallen to the "administrative progressives," who ran the system in a more utilitarian, business-like manner.
 - 7 Ayn Rand, "The Comprachicos," in *The New Left: The Anti-Industrial Revolution*, ed. Ayn Rand (New York: New American Library, 1971), 152, 154-55; Ayn Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It?* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1982), 26.
 - 8 Rand, "The Comprachicos," 172, 176, 178; Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It?*, 52. For more examples in which Dewey is excoriated for encouraging collectivism and irrational thought, see Podritske and Schwartz, *Objectively Speaking*, 85; Leonard Peikoff, "The American School: Why Can't Johnny Think?" in *The Voice of Reason: Essays in Objectivist Thought*, ed. Leonard Peikoff (New York: Meridian, 1990), 222, 225.
 - 9 Beatrice Hessen, review of *How to Raise A Brighter Child* by Joan Beck, *The Objectivist*, September 1968, 14-16; Beatrice Hessen, "The Montessori Method, pt. I," *The Objectivist*, May 1970, 12-14; Beatrice Hessen, "The Montessori Method, pt. II," *The Objectivist*, June 1970, 7-9.
 - 10 John Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed* (New York: E.L. Kellogg, 1897), 3-4; John Dewey, *The School and Society*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900), 29; John Dewey, "Ethical Principles Underlying Education," in *Educational Essays*, ed. J.J. Findlay (London: Blackie & Son, 1911), 27.

- 11 Jay Martin, *The Education of John Dewey: A Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 200.
- 12 Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, 8; Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 24; Dewey, "Ethical Principles," 22-23, 29; Dewey, *The School and Society*, 19-20. Dewey's disdain for dualistic ways of thinking is also discussed in Raymond D. Boisvert, *John Dewey* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 97.
- 13 Dewey, "Ethical Principles," 64, 66; Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*, 4-5; Dewey, *The School and Society*, 49; Boisvert, *John Dewey*, 106.
- 14 Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, 33-34; Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*, 15-16; John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1916), 348-49. Dewey's opposition to memorization is also noted in Arthur Zilversmit, *Changing Schools* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1; William Hayes, *The Progressive Education Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 16. Dewey's association with "un-bridled self-expression" is debunked in Rita Kramer, *Maria Montessori* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 373.
- 15 Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004), 73, 75; William Gaddis, *The Recognitions* (New York: Penguin, 1993), 956. Dewey's lack of influence on the American education system is also noted in Zilversmit, *Changing Schools*, 19-20, 89.
- 16 John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1938), 345; Leonard Peikoff, *The Ominous Parallels* (New York: Meridian, 1982), 127. For an excellent discussion of Dewey's constructivism, see Larry Hickman, "Dewey's Constructivism: From the Reflex Arc Concept to Social Constructivism" in *John Dewey: Between Pragmatism and Constructivism*, ed. Larry Hickman (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 84-105.
- 17 John Dewey, *Education and Experience* (1938; reprint New York: Collier, 1973), 35. Peikoff's banishment and his affiliation with Sidney Hook are discussed in Heller, *Ayn Rand and the World She Made*, 267, 327. For more on Dewey's theory of experience, see James Scott Johnson, *Inquiry and Education: John Dewey and the Quest for Democracy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 61-103; Jim Garrison et al., *John Dewey's Philosophy of Education* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012), 41-76.
- 18 Zilversmit, *Changing Schools*, 12-14; Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (New York: Vintage, 1964), 206.
- 19 The declining popularity of progressive education is discussed in Zilversmit, *Changing Schools*, 34-35, 89, 106-10; Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, 338-47; Hayes, *The Progressive Education Movement*, 35-39.
- 20 Rand, "The Comprachicos," 155; Robert Mayhew, ed., *Ayn Rand Answers: The Best of Her Q&A* (New York: New American Library, 2002), 173; Ayn Rand, "Tax Credits for Education," in *The Voice of Reason: Essays in Objectivist Thought*, ed. Leonard Peikoff (New York: Meridian, 1990), 252. Rand also speaks highly of Montessori's methods in Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It?*, 214. For a small sample of websites and blogs that address education from an Objectivist perspective, see <http://rationalparentinglist.com/>; <http://www.olist.com>; <http://rationaljenn.blogspot.com/>; <http://www.amymossoff.com/>.
- 21 Rand, "The Comprachicos," 175, 177; Mayhew, *Ayn Rand Answers*, 173-74; Maria Montessori, *The Montessori Method*, trans. Anne E. George (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1912), 64.
- 22 Hessen, "The Montessori Method, pt. I," 12-14; Hessen, "The Montessori Method, pt. II," 7-9; E.M. Standing, *Maria Montessori* (New York: Plume, 1998), 176. The virtues of solitary work are also discussed in Rand, "The Comprachicos," 164, 166.

- 23 Havis's comments can be found in Standing, *Maria Montessori*, xii. Marsha Enright, "Foundations Study Guide: Montessori Education," <http://www.atlassociety.org/guide-montessori> (accessed March 3, 2012); William Heard Kilpatrick, *The Montessori System Examined* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), iii, 4, 10, 30. Kilpatrick's attacks on Montessori education are also discussed in Angeline Stoll Lillard, *Montessori* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 341-42; Marion O'Donnell, *Maria Montessori* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 84-85; Kramer, *Maria Montessori*, 227-32.
- 24 Maria Montessori, *Pedagogical Anthropology*, trans. Frederic Taber Cooper (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1913), 9-10, 14; Maria Montessori, *My System of Education* (New York: House of Childhood, 1915), 21.
- 25 Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind* (Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1949), 16-17.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 27 Montessori, *Pedagogical Anthropology*, 17-18; Maria Montessori, *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1914), 11, 31; Burns, *Goddess of the Market*, 10.
- 28 Standing, *Maria Montessori*, 176; Kramer, *Maria Montessori*, 125; Montessori, *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*, 25; Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, 344-45. Montessori's emphasis on co-operation and community is also discussed in Hayes, *The Progressive Education Movement*, 91-92; Stoll Lillard, *Montessori*, 193.
- 29 Montessori, *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*, 65, 69.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 68. The silence exercise is also discussed in Standing, *Maria Montessori*, 199-200.
- 31 Kramer, *Montessori*, 36, 57; Montessori, *The Montessori Method*, 61, 63, 65-66. Montessori's first Casa dei Bambino is discussed in greater detail in Standing, *Maria Montessori*, 36-40.
- 32 Montessori, *The Montessori Method*, 18; Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, 20-22.
- 33 Montessori, *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*, 121; Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, 408; Montessori, *The Montessori Method*, 119, 123, 372.
- 34 Standing, *Maria Montessori*, 31; Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, 90, 420. Montessori's relationship with theosophy and the Theosophical Society is discussed in Kramer, *Maria Montessori*, 342-43. The links between progressive education and theosophy are quite extensive. For example, the New Education Fellowship, an organization created in the 1920s to bring lay enthusiasts interested in educational reform into the debate, emerged from the Theosophical Fraternity in Education. Interestingly enough, both Dewey and Montessori contributed to the various conferences and publications associated with the New Education Fellowship. See Kevin J. Brehony, "A New Education for a New Era: The Contribution of the Conferences of the New Education Fellowship to the Disciplinary Field of Education, 1921-1938," *Paedagogica Historica* 40 (October 2004): 733-55.
- 35 Enright, "Foundations Study Guide," <http://www.atlassociety.org/guide-montessori> (accessed March 3, 2012); Onkar Ghate, "Are the Reading Wars Over?" April 1998, <http://www.aynrand.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&cid=5357> (accessed February 23, 2012); Onkar Ghate, "Say No to the 'Self-Esteem' Pushers," September 1998, <http://www.aynrand.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&cid=5372> (accessed February 23, 2012). For more Dewey-bashing from the Ayn Rand Institute, see Andrew Bernstein, "Our Schools vs. Our Children's Minds," December 9, 1999, <http://www.aynrand.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&cid=5370> (accessed February 23, 2012); Onkar Ghate, "Educators vs. Students," February 2005, <http://www.aynrand.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&cid=10853> (accessed February 23, 2012).
- 36 Glenn Woiceshyn, "Socializing Students for Anarchy," April 21, 1999, <http://www.aynrand.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&cid=6147> (accessed February 23, 2012).

- 37 This was confirmed by Craig Cunningham, a representative from the Center for Dewey Studies. Craig Cunningham, email message to author, June 5, 2012.
- 38 Gennady Stolyarov, "1984-Style Surveillance, Today," http://solohq.solopassion.com/Articles/Stolyarov/-Style_Surveillance,_Today.shtml (accessed April 24, 2012). Dewey's capacity for evil is discussed on <http://www.objectivistliving.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=6241&st=0&p=66489&hl=dewey&entry66489> (accessed April 24, 2012). For an excellent example of how the falsely attributed Dewey quote has been employed in Objectivist discussions on education, see Amber Pawlik, "An Overview of Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook," <http://www.amberpawlik.com/Montessori.html> (accessed May 2, 2012). Though she's not an Objectivist, right-wing author Ann Coulter also reproduces this quote in Ann Coulter, *Godless* (New York: Random House, 2007), 152.
- 39 Enright, "Foundations Study Guide," <http://www.atlassociety.org/guide-montessori> (accessed March 3, 2012); Michael S. Berliner, "Ayn Rand and Education," December 29, 2001, <http://www.aynrand.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=6151> (accessed November 12, 2011).
- 40 Jerry Kirkpatrick, *Montessori, Dewey, and Capitalism* (Claremont, CA: TLJ Books, 2008), 10-11, 31.
- 41 Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, 35th ed. (New York: Dutton, 1992), 618.