

The Foremost Philosopher of the Age

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ON NOVEMBER 9, 1882, a farewell banquet was held in honor of Herbert Spencer at Delmonico's in New York City. E. L. Youmans edited the proceedings of the dinner, reporting that the gathering was "large, cultivated, and brilliant." The two hundred persons who "subscribed" to the dinner represented what was considered to be the elite of America at the time. [E. L. Youmans (editor), *Herbert Spencer on the Americans and the Americans on Herbert Spencer*, 1882.] Again, on October 20, 1949, "1500 men and women from all sections of the community gathered together in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Commodore, New York, to do honor to John Dewey, America's foremost philosopher and educator, on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday." One of the speakers at this dinner said it was "the most important dinner ever tended to a private individual in the United States." [Harry W. Laidler (editor), *John Dewey at Ninety*, League for Industrial Democracy, 1950.]

Among the weaknesses of Americans is the desire to pick out the great philosopher of the day and to declare him to be greater than Aristotle, or others who have been panegyricized as philosophers in the past. President F. A. P. Barnard of Columbia College wrote from the "President's Room" on November 10, 1882, expressing his regret at not having been able to attend the dinner on the previous evening. "It is impossible," he said, "that any one should feel more profoundly than I do the magnitude of the debt which the world owes to that great man. . . . As it seems to me, we have in Herbert Spencer not only the profoundest thinker of our time, but the most capacious and most powerful intellect of all time. Aristotle and his master were not more beyond the pygmies who preceded them than he is beyond Aristotle. Kant, Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling are gropers in the dark by the side of him. In all the history of science there is but one name which can be compared to his,

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and that is Newton's. . . ." However, President Barnard concluded that as Newton had not attempted so wide a field, it is only conjecture whether he would have succeeded as Spencer had by 1882. At Dewey's banquet, F. D. Fackenthal, former Acting-President of Columbia University, acclaimed Dewey because "he brought the world to Columbia and he carried Columbia to the world. His influence was far flung. But over and above his influence stands his personification of democracy. . . . I doubt whether . . . we shall have described Professor Dewey any better than does that brief quotation from Emerson: 'Nothing is more simple than greatness; indeed to be simple is to be great.'"

At the time of Spencer's farewell to America, the Americans had bought more than a hundred thousand copies of his books, and many more were to be sold. John Dewey's book likewise had sold by many thousands when the ninetieth-birthday banquet was held. Both men shared in their day in providing a "respectable" philosophy that could be accepted as a mask of intelligence among its devotees, and both profoundly influenced the ruling or elite groups in America. But there are differences, and one may trace with a broad stroke the evolution of American intellectuals by comparing the views expressed at these two great tributes almost an even sixty-seven years apart. It is an uncertain venture to select the great men of today. One recalls that Thomas Jefferson considered the forgotten Destutt de Tracy a great philosopher, and the judgment of the intelligentsia that picked Herbert Spencer as the great philosopher of all time is a reminder of the archaic past and the fallibility of educated judgment. It is a vain use of prophecy to select the living philosophers who have outdistanced Aristotle, St. Thomas, or Isaac Newton. Fifty years after his farewell toast, Herbert Spencer had become a paragraph in a history of science and philosophy in the nineteenth century.

It is probable that John Dewey enjoyed

his paean more than Herbert Spencer. Yet there is no record, save photographs of a delighted Dewey, to offer in proof of this view. Spencer made a career of being just a little cantankerous, and everyone knew about his many years—twenty-seven years of it by 1882—of insomnia. In his *Autobiography* Spencer has left the following un bubbling account of the evening: "I was able to get through my prepared speech without difficulty, though not with much effect. . . . My address was mainly devoted to a criticism of American life, as characterized by over-devotion to work . . . learning and working are for life. . . . Of the proceedings which followed I need only say they were somewhat trying to sit through. Compliments, even when addressed to one privately, do not give unalloyed pleasure." [Herbert Spencer, *An Autobiography*, 2 vols., New York, 1904, Vol. II, pp. 478-479.] Strange, but there is no word of eulogy for the intellectual effort of the Americans as demonstrated in the oratory of that evening. Henry Ward Beecher's mighty speech passed as a shadow over Spencer—the greatest mind of the age! In his long evening, listening to the benison and optimism of American oratory, Spencer played the role of the tired, sick man. Dewey at ninety was more like a picture of health, and he must have listened with pleasure to the flow of encomia that fluttered down around him.

The difference between the two Americas, of 1882 and 1949, is to be found in the differences between the men, the two heroes, and the guests of honor. But the difference is also to be found in the kind of men who made speeches, told stories, and evoked appreciation and laughter suitable to the occasion. Who were these men, who spoke so in harmony with the philosophies of their principals? How did they differ on the two occasions in their metaphysical commitments? What were their professions?

One fact looms in common—they were believers in science as the source of the answers to questions in American society.

Spencer's science was different from Dewey's, but both philosophers were the exponents of a kind of "literary theory of science" which has been far away, indeed, from the laboratory. The men who spoke were mostly leaders from outside of the scientific fields, and from the more respectable professions of the time. "Science" for those who offered tribute to Herbert Spencer was evolution; and not merely biological evolution, but the trend of society in all art, literature, morality, and learning. Such science was the giver of "values" to men in all fields and a system of prophecy for times to come. From his science, Spencer could predict the coming of a society governed by the ideal of leisure, following upon the achievements of the then contemporary, hardworking, industrial society [See *Autobiography*, Vol. II, p. 479]. Evolution and science seemed to blend together. Dewey's science has been more literary, it seems, than Spencer's; more inclined toward speculation that has been based on a rejection of metaphysical or ontological problems. It has, likewise, been based on the acceptance of a pragmatic epistemology, a theory of logic, and a concept of method devoted to social experimentation, that is, certain kinds of experiments that fit into the liberal, secular, and socialistic conception of the good life. One fact, further, seems to stand out about Spencer and Dewey and the members of their symposia. They were enemies of traditional religion, of the supernatural as recorded either in Christian tradition or in the Bible. It is clear that one motive for the search for "the foremost philosopher of the age" was to get away from any Christianity that had a theology. What they wanted in 1882 and in 1949 was a vague system of ethics and a rejection of sin *in toto*. These were modern men, believers in science, who had an illusory sense of omnipotence. They felt no need for God because of the dogma of "science." Every man, or more particularly, every intellectual was a king; he had a vote, and he could vote God out of office at the end of his term.

These men all were evolutionists—including Dewey—yet they had not learned the old lesson that Huizinga has stressed: History does not move quite that fast. Spencer's men were believers in a fast-moving, expanding, business civilization, and Spencer was known as the philosopher of *laissez-faire*. Dewey's men hailed him standing under socialism, or more especially "The League for Industrial Democracy"; and they, too, would move quickly toward their utopian goals. Liberalism in Spencer's time was for freedom of all kinds—or so it was said—and this included the freedom of businessmen to make important economic decisions. But "liberalism" around Dewey's plaudit-laden table favored the control of business by the civil servant, an abundant freedom to advocate a secular philosophy, and a collectivized economy. Liberal secularism had continued, but the freedom of the economy had been lost in what Americans have come to call liberalism. It is the conservative, rather than the liberal, who sees the necessity of moving slowly, and of working in and through history and not against it. From liberty, the liberals had moved to democracy. The organically organized, group-experience democracy of Dewey might strike with heavy hands against the autonomy of the individual in either economics or in religion. To Spencer, his rich admirers tendered a farewell dinner; to Dewey his less wealthy adulators offered a three-day celebration and a gift of ninety thousand dollars on his ninetieth birthday. This sum Dewey was to distribute among the causes and reform movements of his choice. In such a way, the course of history might be hurried on without tarrying. Yet Spencer's men seemed to sense that evolution restrained in principle the enthusiasm for change; and that conservatives may rest on evolution in an age like that following the Confederate War. Evolution gives time to those who have power today; and improvement must come, not from an aggressive bureaucracy, but from the impersonal drive in nature. The character of the American intelligent-

sia changed much between Spencer and Dewey, yet there has been much continuity in philosophy to observe between these two points in time.

William M. Evarts presided over the Spencer banquet. Spencer's address came first, and a series of speakers then responded to various toasts. William Graham Sumner spoke to a toast in honor of "The Science of Sociology"; Carl Schurz rose to "The Progress of Science Tends to International Harmony"; O. C. Marsh, professor at Yale College, talked in answer to "Evolution—Once an Hypothesis, Now the Established Doctrine of the Scientific World"; and John Fiske and Henry Ward Beecher spoke in response to the toast: "Evolution and Religion: That Which Perfects Humanity Can Not Destroy Religion." It is clear that Beecher's speech was the high point of an evening of salutations to Spencer, yet today it seems an extraordinarily insubstantial performance for what was then regarded as so momentous an occasion. The volume reporting the dinner included also some speeches that could not be delivered at the time; these were the "unspoken speeches" of E. L. Youmans, Lester F. Ward, and E. R. Leland. A number of letters from absent persons concluded the volume.

For Dewey's banquet, there was likewise a committee of notables. Harry W. Laidler, of the League for Industrial Democracy, acted as chairman of the Dinner Committee and made the introductory remarks, while President Harold Taylor of Sarah Lawrence College served as toastmaster. Frank D. Fackenthal, former Acting-President of Columbia, spoke for that institution, regretting that President Eisenhower could not be present. Felix Frankfurter descended from the Supreme Court bench to speak on "The Meaning of Dewey to Us All"; John Haynes Holmes, the pastor of the Community Church and the theological representative of the occasion, discussed "Dewey as a Leader in Public Affairs"; David Dubinsky and Walter Reuther spoke on "Dewey and the World of

Labor"; Ralph Barton Perry, of Harvard University, spoke on "Dewey as Philosopher," which must be considered one of the major addresses of the evening; Irwin Edman considered "Dewey's Contribution to Art"; William H. Kilpatrick spoke on "Dewey and Education for Democracy," and there were other representatives of public education, including the New York Teachers Guild. Hu Shih, the notable Chinese scholar, and Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, offered a "Salute from the Orient." The Committee read a citation "To John Dewey, Philosopher, Teacher, Citizen, and Friend"; and Dewey himself offered some of his observations on philosophy and democracy. In addition unreported remarks were made by Alvin Johnson, Sidney Hook, Elmer Davis, J. J. Singh, and Carlos Delabarra, Chilean Consul-General, who bestowed on Dewey the Chilean Order of Merit.

What are the differences in the kind of men called on to speak? Let it be noted that businessmen were absent in 1949, for Dewey was expected to use the ninety thousand dollars to fight them, to try further to establish a socialist society, and correspondingly to overthrow the American capitalist system. Here we have, then, a powerful symbol of the split between the secular American intellectuals and the whole business community. In 1882, in contrast, the intellectuals could sit down and break bread with representatives of the business community and not be disgraced. In 1949, the intellectuals had a stronger sense of unity with the bureaucracy than with business, whereas in 1882 only one civil servant—Lester F. Ward—made any remarks, and Carl Schurz, a politician or at least one who ran for public office, made one of the principal speeches. One can say, I think, that in 1882, the intellectuals showed a desire to make their atheism work, but they were constrained to show that evolution could be reconciled with Christianity. Their motto might have been: "Some call it evolution, others call it God." Henry Ward Beecher was regarded as the principal

speaker in 1882, but in 1949 John Haynes Holmes was surely remote from any living theology in America, and his remarks are hardly to be considered important in the proceedings of the Dewey celebration. Atheism had become respectable since Herbert Spencer had bade farewell to American intellectuals.

Further, if business was "accepted" in 1882, the leaders of organized labor who were left-wing and who sympathized with the League for Industrial Democracy (the educational wing of the then existing Socialist Party) took their place in 1949. Reuther ventured the opinion that Dewey was as great as Aristotle. In 1882 the intellectuals talked of science and progress through evolution, while in 1949 the intellectuals spoke of science and democracy. Progress now was to make evolution—to direct it, while in 1882 evolution was to generate progress. Both Spencer and Dewey were recognized as foremost philosophers and educators, and the intellectuals on both occasions sensed the necessity of dominating and controlling education if their views were to prevail in both law and popular custom. Democracy, to Dewey, meant "process," but a process in which the traditional moral values and their bases were to be rejected; progress to Spencer, however, meant much the same thing. Evolution was absolute and objective to Spencer, just as "experimentation" of the proper kind has been to Dewey and to the pragmatic school of morals. Can we not say that both Spencer and Dewey along with their intellectual courtiers had a "faith" that was in effect an absolute?

Let us consider the issue of science and religion in 1882 and 1949. John Haynes Holmes, though not important at the banquet, spoke as a further-diluted Henry Ward Beecher might have spoken, had he been available and chosen for this address. Dewey is the greatest living American, said Holmes, but he "would be great in any age. Already he is one of the immortals." Dewey's book *A Common Faith* is "one of the outstanding religious books of modern

times." Dewey is a universal man. A Christian with any theology in his thought will say that surely here is not religion but a practical, contemporary atheism masquerading as religion. And what of Beecher? Today his address seems thin. One may forgive the laughter of the well-fed audience at his feeble jokes. But Beecher's prophecies have turned out feebler than his wit. Spencer, the agnostic, was to him a kind of religious leader, or a proponent of the religion of tomorrow. In any case, it would be a religion that practicing atheists could permit to exist without criticism, and which would offer them no effective opposition. Beecher insisted that moral ideas have evolved, and that the Bible proves it. With regard to original sin, he said: "It will not be twenty years before a man will be ashamed to stand up in any intelligent pulpit and mention it." [Youmans, *op. cit.*, p. 62.] Beecher agreed that through Moses God wrote on stone, but, he continued, "I believe that that was not the first time he wrote on stone. He made a record when he made the granite, and when he made all the successive strata in the periods of time. There is a record in geology that is as much a record of God as the record on paper in human language. They are both true—where they are true." [*Ibid.* p. 65.] And in concluding, Beecher exclaimed: ". . . if I had the fortune of a millionaire, and I should pour all my gold at his [Spencer's] feet, it would be no sort of compensation compared to that which I believe I owe him . . ." [*Ibid.* p. 66.]

In evolutionary theory there was a cosmic purpose, for evolution, as handled by Spencer, offered an answer to all of the cultural and moral issues of society. Professor O. C. Marsh, Yale College, quoted some lines that Spencer had written twenty-five years before the farewell banquet: "This law of organic progress is the law of all progress. Whether it be on the development of the earth, in the development of life upon its surface, in the development of society, of government, of manufactures, of commerce, of language, literature, sci-

ence, art, this same evolution of the simple into the complex, through a process of continuous differentiation, holds throughout." [*Ibid.* p. 48.] Evolution thus becomes the key to all mysteries. And John Fiske ventured to state the essential truths of religion and to show there was no conflict between religion properly understood and evolution; rather, they confirmed and strengthened each other; evolution explains and justifies righteousness.

On the other hand, the gentlemen around Dewey did not like any argument about design or cosmic purpose. Against the argument about design or cosmic purpose, W. H. Kilpatrick placed Dewey's faith in modern science "based solely on *inductive experimental logic*." [*John Dewey at Ninety*, p. 22.] And Kilpatrick said there was no design to be drawn from Darwin's argument, though Darwin at the close of *The Origin of Species* insisted that his views should not shock the religious feelings of anyone, "and as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection. . . . There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one. . . ." And Darwin praised at the same time the evolutionary contributions made by Herbert Spencer to the study of psychology. To Mr. Justice Frankfurter, Dewey's philosophy has meant, quoting a poet, that "man is omnipotent. . . . In him is every quality that he attributes to his god: beauty, wisdom, omniscience, omnipotence, divinity." And quoting Mr. Justice Holmes on Dewey's writings, he said: ". . . so me thought, God would have spoken had He been inarticulate, but keenly desirous to tell you how it was." To Frankfurter, Dewey's ideas are a system beyond systems.

Yet another development has been taking place. As the businessmen of Herbert Spencer's time were busy getting away from religion, and doctrine, they are today returning to them. Andrew Carnegie, who

admired passionately the intellectual labors of Spencer, would have nothing to do with organized religion, and both Darwin and Spencer had helped to lead him away from his religious faith. Carnegie would contribute money to almost any cause save that of organized religion. As businessmen are more religious today, they are more separated from the intellectuals than they were in the age of technological developments of the 1870s and 1880s. Clifford F. Hood, President of the United States Steel Corporation, and a successor in a real sense to Andrew Carnegie, said in March, 1954, to a religious audience: "Three or four months ago an article in one of the national business periodicals discussed the present emphasis being given to religion by the businessmen of the nation. It was pointed out that much of the impetus for this so-called revival is to be found among the businessmen of Pittsburgh. This was especially pleasing to me, for one naturally likes to see his local business associates being recognized for leadership in such an important activity as this. . . . Is it too late to bring the old-time Bible stand down from the attic or up from the cellar? . . . If it is, gentlemen, then it is very late indeed."

The admirers of Spencer and Dewey recognized them both as foremost philosophers and educators. On both occasions, the importance to political power of the control of education was sensed. In both instances it seemed to be taken as legitimate that their respective philosophies should be imposed on the school children of the nation. J. E. Morgan, editor of the *National Education Association Journal*, remarked: "John Dewey had a deep appreciation of the American free public school and its significance as the foundation of democracy. It was his belief that what the wisest and best parent desires for his own child, that must society want for its own children." When the history of this time is written, the speaker continued, "it will be the names like Tolstoi, Gandhi and Dewey" that will be remembered. Yet, in 1882,

Andrew D. White wrote from Cornell expressing his regret at being unable to attend the Spencer dinner: "No competent person can look over the history of education in the United States during the past twenty years and not see that Mr. Spencer's ideas have been among the principal forces in bringing about the great and happy changes which have taken place. . . . In short, the bringing of all human development into harmony with the methods stamped upon the constitution of the Universe—for all this progress our debt to him is great indeed." [Youmans, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.] Yet, White said, we are only at the beginning of the reforms in education that will be inaugurated because of Herbert Spencer's ideas.

To many, the great political struggle in a democracy is that for the control of education. Liberals—Spencer's or Dewey's kind—have almost always favored a school system monopolized by the state, and one in which the freedom of parents, religious groups, and industry are restricted in their right to organize educational programs. Religious liberty means among other items the right of parents to choose the kind of religious training their children shall receive, but it is difficult to conceive of either Spencer or Dewey being interested in such a freedom. Religious liberty means an educational system in which diverse metaphysical commitments are taught, one in which the state guarantees this liberty, even against the prophets of progress we have been examining. The liberal can call his own program "freedom," while those who disagree with him are "authoritarians." But essentially it seems that to the Spencer and Dewey schools of educational philosophy any education based on religious liberty would be authoritarian in character, and a denial of liberty.

Little or nothing was said about "authority" at the time of Spencer's visit, though, indeed, both Spencer and Dewey have represented a highly eulogized "authority." When "authority" is used as equivalent to "authoritarian" and as something in all

cases evil, it seems we are dealing with a subtle and false process of liberal identification, in which religious ideas as authoritarian are identified with tyranny, obscurantism, or in more recent times "fascism." Thus, the great objective either in 1882 or 1949 has been to emancipate education from religion and the "educators" from religious criticism or responsibility. With Spencer, an effort was made to reconcile evolution and religion, as witnessed by Henry Ward Beecher's panegyric and John Fiske's pre-conial address in response to the toast, "Evolution and Religion: That Which Perfects Humanity Cannot Destroy Religion." With Dewey, the scene has changed, for religion is either ignored or attacked by implication. As Ralph Barton Perry said in his encomium of Dewey: that he had a "belief in the power of science to deal with the moral and social questions of the day, provided its scope is liberalized and its underlying motivation properly directed. . . . His humanism, his democracy, his progressivism in education and elsewhere, his moral code, all rest on his belief that man's dignity lies in his capacity to think for himself." The enemies against which Dewey warred have been, Perry said, "arrogance, dogmatism, absolutism, uniformitarianism, servility, tradition, skepticism. . . ."

Contemporary European philosophy has grown increasingly concerned about "communication" between individuals. Language and its difficulties form one of the great approaches to modern philosophy, but whether a man can communicate the attributes of his own existence to another has become a matter of growing doubt. Neither Spencer nor Dewey had any doubt about the ability of men to communicate, especially at a scientific level. It is this theory of ease of communication that underlies both the notion of scientific as against humanistic education and the insistence that all life must be "socialized" or lived in groups having predominance over the individual. For both Spencer and Dewey "sharing" was easy, though in our

world of crisis, communication and any kind of secular or civic sharing become increasingly remote from political reality. Speaking to the problem, Dewey said as he received his crown of laurel: "This educational process is based on faith in human good sense and human good will as it manifests itself in the long run where communication is progressively liberated from bondage to prejudice and ignorance." Thus, fear, suspicion and distrust are expelled, while friendliness and democracy (as a group "process," not as majority rule) are given renewed life and force. Tradition and custom, as guides presumably to the intellectuals, have been broken down, and science, breeding its understanding and good will, gives its energy to a living democracy. Yet it is true there was no serious inquiry into "communication" as a problem in education in the minds of either Spencer or Dewey. It was not recognized as a difficult problem by either one of our dwellers in the prytaneum.

From education, which is political if it is "public," one easily moves on to the consideration of political economics. Here, of course, profound differences are immediately obvious. Spencer seemed to be thinking of time, great stretches of "duration," as Henri Bergson might say, while Dewey, also an exponent of evolution, seems in his advocacy of reform to be a man in a hurry. One must choose here and now, he appears to be saying to those around who had offered their encomiastic words. The conservative in 1882 believed time—that is, Spencer's evolution—was on his side; in 1949 the liberals seem to have acquired this same feeling, even though they might also insist on being in a hurry. In 1882, individualism, or a free-enterprise economy, seemed possible, though William Graham Sumner elsewhere denounced the interference of government in business—that is, jobbery was the vice of a democratic society. But at the midpoint of our century, collectivism in various stages and forms, from Russia's planned economy to the war economies of the democracies, seemed to

have triumphed. Few businessmen believe now that an economic individualism and a free nineteenth-century capitalism can be restored. And many liberals, even those who might offer their golden opinions to Dewey, have begun to doubt that collectivism is necessarily a servant of the common good. It is clear that the new age of transition must be a time for the search for justice, and perhaps not in terms either of Spencer or of Dewey. Invalidated prophecies rest heavily on both evolutionary capitalism and the socialist reformers of other days.

The evolutionary mind, the liberal mind as exemplified in both Spencer and Dewey, is content with prophecies that leap far into the future. Such predictions cannot be checked against the experience of any generation, while most of the evils of the day are granted to exist. Both Spencer and Dewey were men who were confident of the character of time to come. Perhaps even today Spencer might say that more time is needed for his scheme of human welfare than he realized. And Dewey clearly thought of the day when communication will be freed from oppression and suppression and most men will talk in freedom, that is, in the language and under the presuppositions of Dewey's instrumentalist philosophy. Yet such a time is far off, and who can say it will or will not come to be in some remote tomorrow? In this sense, perhaps, no modern experience is adequate to form a judgment of the value of economic systems. There yet may be a triumphant free-market system, and there yet may come a time when the "welfare" or socialistic society will redeem some of its pledges, both philosophical and practical. What we have, however, is precisely other sets of prediction that deny both the optimism of Spencer and the progressivism of Dewey. Such prediction is made of course in the background of world-wide crisis, unanticipated by last-century optimism or liberal prophecy in the earlier years of the twentieth century.

The massive movement of history, that

has robbed Spencer of his readers, his followers, those who would hold him in respect as a great man, may do the same for Dewey in a short space of time. Someone said once that Dewey would be little read in fifty years. In this he would be like Spencer. If men turn toward a belief in God, in Providence, and to an eschatological view of the world, they will surely turn away from Spencer and Dewey. The turning away from biology helped to ruin Spencer, and swiftly moving developments in contemporary science cast some doubt on a literary conception of science that is limited in fact mostly to theories of logic and epistemology. Spencer's "science" was essentially specific, being biology and evolutionary theory, while science for Dewey was a logical method rather than the application of any specific science to particular social enterprises, such as public education and the socialistic economy.

Yet these two banquets—great in themselves as events in intellectual history—provoke thinking about the meaning of the United States in history. For "a philosophy of history" is at least implied in the labors of both Spencer and Dewey. Both men saw the future in a cheerful way, believing in the inevitable and ultimate tri-

umph of their views, their judgments, and their metaphysical conceptions. In both instances our honored guests are continuators of the eighteenth-century theory of progress, in which science leads the way to the millennium. Such was to both of these men the core of the American tradition and, one might add, its validation. As Americans have questioned such an interpretation of the meaning of our tradition, so they have turned away from both Spencer and Dewey, and it would seem in all candor to be for much the same reasons in both cases. Are we not on the road to denying that either Spencer or Dewey can long remain as prime symbols of the American tradition?

Indeed, it is a arrogant enterprise to attempt to discover greater philosophers than Aristotle. Hu Shih, for the Chinese, noted that Aristotle was a baby compared with Confucius, but Dewey's Chinese friends were happy to celebrate his birthday "simultaneously with that of our most honored ancient sage. . . ." And in 1882 a Mr. W. D. Le Sueur wrote from Ottawa that though he could not be present at the dinner, he joined in "paying honor to one who stands forth incontestably as the foremost philosopher of the age."