



John Dewey, Library of Congress

A LIBERAL EDUCATION LIBERATES THE MIND

- Includes History, Philosophy, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, and Ethics along with Writing, Math and the Hard Sciences
- Develops critical thinking skills, negates need to have information overly simplified and spelled out
- Noted philosopher John Dewey believed education to be a process of growth and development, and advocated for a **liberal education**.
- A liberal education **liberates and frees the mind** from conventional wisdom and pernicious influence, allowing the student to develop, form, and grow their own values, opinions and beliefs, to not just rely on the loudest voice in the room.
- Such a student is at ease in the world, knowledgeable of the sciences natural and social, well-informed concerning their government's function and their role as a citizen, preparing the student for economic, political, and social life.



ILLIBERAL EDUCATION TODAY UNDER CULTURAL ADMINISTRATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL RATIONALITY

- Education today is no longer focused on liberty and freedom, focusing instead on the **demands of the student consumer and the market**, and **governmental influences**.
- Federal spending on education has increased since the early 1980's. Education is **perpetually in crisis**, always urged to **produce students** more **attuned to the needs of the economic market**. **Better productivity is demanded** in math, science, and writing.
- Professional administrators** come to administrate education, responding to the demand for learning directed towards economic market demands and the demands of political administrators. Such administrators need not have experience in education.
- The **technological rationality** described by **Herbert Marcuse**, which should liberate and free us both from unreasonable economic demands and seductive demagoguery, is instead used in the administration of education to **support, maintain, and perpetuate the current economic and political order**.
- The classes that would prepare the student for the **totality of life** and the **ability to relate to the peoples, places, and ideas around them**, are **denigrated and removed** by those with no experience in the field, using metrics and data alien to their subject, in what Theodor Adorno calls **cultural administration**.

THE UNLIBERATED LIFE UNDER THE TECHNOLOGICALLY RATIONAL ADMINISTRATION OF LIFE AND CULTURE: THE UTILITY OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION



JESSE YOUNG, PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR OF ARTS CANDIDATE, CSU STANISLAUS



THE UNLIBERATED LIFE: ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

- Under Such an Administered Life, **Humanity is Reduced to a Thing** Geared Toward **Productive Expenditure**, in the Words of **Georges Bataille**.
- Such a Thing is **Limited in Scope Consciously and in Action**, Concerned With **Maintaining its Economic Function** and **Supporting those Political Parties that Support That Function**.
- Arts, Culture, and Leisure**, Without Utility in the Educational, Economic, and Political Order, Themselves **Become Subservient to Technological Rationality**, and now **Cultural Administration**.



THE SOCIALLY UNLIBERATED LIFE

- Many of the subjects studied in a liberal education deal with Bataille's notion of **unproductive expenditure**: non-procreative sex, religious impulses, death and mourning.
- Such subjects involve human interaction; they are the **ways in which we relate, interact, and connect to ourselves and with each other**.
- Sex, for example, whether procreative or not, is in the unliberated life only a **function of utility**. What is an **affirmation of and/or creation of life**, the means in which deep and lasting personal bonds are created, is **reduced to a function or commodity**.
- The **unliberated life**, denied a liberal education, learns to accept sex as a function of personal enrichment, a pre-packaged lifestyle to pull off the shelf, **a thing** in which one acquires economic, political, or social utility.

LIMITING LIFE'S TOTALITY

- Life's totality** includes not just productive expenditure towards accumulation, but unproductive expenditure as well.
- In our current educational, economic, and political order **those aspects of life most intimately connected with our humanity are dismissed as without utility**, as they **neither serve said order**, and in many cases, **limit said order**.
- The diminution and forced obsolescence of a liberal education**, in which the student is familiar with and prepared for all aspects of life in its fragmented totality, **is the diminution and forced obsolescence of our life's totality**.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adorno, Theodor. "Culture and Administration." *The Culture Industry*, 2001.
- Bataille, Georges. "The Notion of Expenditure". *Visions of Excess, Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, 1985.
- Brill, Steven. *Class Warfare*, 2011.
- Dewey, John. *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 1916.
- Marcuse, Herbert. "The Containment of Social Change in Industrial Society." *Towards a Critical Theory of Society: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, Vol. 2. 2001.
- Unger, H. G. *Encyclopedia of American Education*, Vol. II F-Q, 2001.