INTRODUCTION: LIPPMANN, DEWEY, AND DEMOCRACY IN A HAILSTORM

Kristian Bjørkdahl

"Optimism about democracy is to-day under a cloud," wrote John Dewey, in 1927, in *The Public and Its Problems*.[1] As we began our effort to assemble the present volume, almost one hundred years later, optimism about democracy had taken a turn for the worse: it now found itself in the midst of a violent and seemingly never-ending hailstorm of obnoxious and divisive tweets emanating from the White House, Air Force One, Mar-a-Lago, or whatever posh golf course was currently hosting the forty-fifth president of the United States of America—each shower washing out even further the hopes anyone might still have had in the rule of the people. The *people*, a score of academics and commentators now suggested, was precisely the problem, for it was what had enabled Trump's ascent to the presidency in the first place.

One much-cited contribution to the debate about the state of democracy in the second decade of the twenty-first century made this implication explicit: in *The People vs. Democracy*, Yascha Mounk warned that "the preferences of the people are increasingly illiberal" and added that the current moment amounted to an "existential crisis of liberal democracy."[2] Mounk argued that we were witnessing a parting of the ways of liberalism and democracy, and he explained how this development had opened up avenues for "elites [who] are taking hold of the political system and making it increasingly unresponsive," concluding that "the powerful are less and less willing to cede to the views of the people."[3] Others ventured much further into democratic skepticism and suggested that the long-standing democratic romance with the people needed to be left behind. The solution to our ills could be found in *10% Less Democracy*, one book proclaimed in its title, and offered reasons "why you should trust elites a little more and the masses a little less."[4] From

every corner of the academic world, not to mention from the newspaper columns, came fresh analyses of the troubles of democracy, the threats of populism, or the mechanics of demagoguery.

As adept as Donald Trump was at making himself the center of attention within this turbulent moment, it soon dawned on most that he was only a player, and that a more disconcerting circumstance was how the game of politics itself appeared to have changed. We had allegedly entered a "post-truth" era, where regard for science, knowledge, and the very notion of truth had vanished or been dethroned.[5] With a long line of ominous book titles, scholars and authors suggested that we were witnessing the "end of democracy," the "death of democracy," or the "twilight of democracy."[6] All these bearers of bad omens did appear to have a point: in 2016, the *Economist* for the first time categorized the United States as a "flawed democracy" on its Democracy Index—an event that, just as one would expect, sparked a flood of news stories in various outlets across the world. More recently, Freedom House has noted that the United States between 2010 and 2020 experienced a significant decline on the Freedom in the World index, placing it behind countries such as Panama, Romania, Argentina, and Mongolia, though still ahead of Ghana and Trinidad and Tobago.[7] As embarrassing as these indexes are for the United States, this type of "democratic backsliding" is not unique to America,[8] but can be observed across countries and continents—for instance in Turkey, Hungary, Poland, and Brazil—in what many have come to think of as a new populist moment.[9]

More recently, Russia's war in Ukraine has seen the emergence of a form of territorial authoritarianism that appears old and new at the same time. It is old in the sense that its aims are roughly those of similar movements of the past (i.e., power), but new in the sense that its methods have been adapted to the circumstances of our time: authoritarianism today is not fixed within any grand ideology but fueled by a more straightforward belief in the strongman. Interestingly, though disconcertingly, this means that "democracy," too, can be used as a sort of placeholder for authoritarianism. This is what Victor Orbán famously did when he expressed "the [need] to state that a democracy is not necessarily liberal," and adding, in a sort of slogan for "illiberal democracy," that "just because something is not liberal, it still can be a democracy."[10]

While these tendencies have terrified many, and led some to double down on their defense of science or expertise or otherwise urge a "return to normalcy," others have discouraged such a response and explained why "we can't have our facts back."[11] Some even find in the contemporary predicament a scene of opportunity and potential positive change. Chantal Mouffe, for

instance, has suggested that the current moment carries great promise, since it has been articulated not just within the authoritarian, far-right version represented by the likes of Erdoğan, Trump, Orbán, and Bolsonaro, but also within leftist movements like Occupy in the United States (and elsewhere), Aganaktismenoi and later Syriza in Greece, and Indignados and later Podemos in Spain. In *For a Left Populism*, she argues that the current era is seeing a reanimation of politics after decades of bland, "third way" consensualism, and that the chains of equivalence between various democratic demands—which she, with Ernesto Laclau, has called for since the mid-1980s—have now finally begun to form.[12] A different, but equally optimistic, assessment comes from Steve Fuller, who argues that the current moment is characterized not so much by the alleged novelty of "post-truth" as by the ascendancy of foxes over lions—that is, of those who want to topple the current order above those who want to preserve it—and that we can understand what is now surfacing as a further democratization of society.[13] These authors help us see that perhaps the most important characteristic of the present political moment is the way it has exploded calcified attitudes and practices of politics, opening up a new space for political creativity.

This more hopeful rendering of our situation is perhaps more inclined to highlight the flaws of the regime that remained hegemonic up to 2015 or so, and to consider that the liberal democracy of the recent few decades has been overdue for exposure to the "masses." This reading is more likely to acknowledge and even promote the sentiment at the core of the current movement, namely that the old elites had *already* left ordinary citizens behind. From this perspective, the problem is not, as Mounk argues, that powerful demagogues suddenly have become "less and less willing to cede to the views of the people"; it is that these allegedly benign elites have not ceded to the views of the people for a long while. The fact that this insight appears to have struck many politicians, pundits, advisers, and scholars only late in the game[14] is perhaps a sign of just how important the insight is. Before Brexit and Trump's win, the elites of established liberal democracy had grown so disinclined to consider the concerns and complaints of ordinary citizens that they solipsistically thought that "Brexit will not happen" and "Trump cannot win." While such pronouncements might have had the air of expert opinion at the time, it soon became clear that these were not manifestations of political insight, but only the latest instance of elites parading their arrogant ignorance. Hilary Clinton's infamous "basket of deplorables" trope served only to underline what many had known for a long time, namely that "Washington" did not have the people's best interests at heart.

Not all members of the elite were as oblivious to the growing estrangement between the elites and "the rest": almost immediately after Trump's win, the internet meme machine dived into its archives and resurfaced with an excerpt from philosopher Richard Rorty's then eighteen-year-old book, *Achieving Our Country*, where he appeared to prophesy the future coming of a strongman in the United States. If such a situation did come to pass, Rorty had argued, it would be as a consequence of the elites' infatuation with symbolic "identity politics" at the expense of more tangible, redistributive, class politics, a shift of priorities that over time would leave large parts of the population estranged from and dismayed by the urban elites.[15]

One of the most striking attempts to portray the elites' failure to listen to the concerns of common folk came in the form of the based-on-true-events film *Brexit: An Uncivil War*. The film opens with the Leave campaign manager, Dominic Cummings, giving a to-camera speech about the *sound* of popular discontent: "Britain makes a noise. An actual noise, did you know that? It *groans*. It's been groaning for some time. A hum, that only very few people can hear. Never stopping. A million important questions to be asked of our nation, our species, our planet, and no one's asking the right ones." To ask the right questions and listen when ordinary people respond is exactly what Cummings does, and this inclination is what the film puts forth to explain the Leave campaign's success. In a key scene, Cummings and his colleagues visit a poor, elderly couple whose everyday existence falls firmly outside the radar of the political parties. The couple are somewhat perplexed—no political party has knocked on their door "since about the eighties"—but soon enough they express the apathy they feel in the face of their neighborhood's deterioration. All of a sudden, Cummings hears a noise and leaves the room; he goes out onto the street, where he lays down on the asphalt, with his ear to the ground, *listening*. A voice-over says, "The noise, it's getting louder. Much louder. What does it mean? What's it trying to tell us?" As Cummings comes to realize, the noise is telling us that people want to "take back control" of their lives. He puts the phrase to use as the Leave campaign's populist slogan—and wins.[16]

Brexit: An Uncivil War renders the zeitgeist in another way: Importantly, Leave's success did not come only, or even predominantly, from knocking on people's doors and listening to what they had to say, but also, notably, from the magic offered by the tech companies—more specifically, the collection of great masses of personal data used for unprecedented online microtargeting. The current moment, then, is very much about how certain groups of people feel they have been left behind, and about how this sentiment—or even ressentiment—can be transformed into politics. It is, at the same time, about

the technological means of doing just that, by way of big data, social media, echo chambers, filter bubbles, fake news, and all the other—still unfolding—aspects of what some call "surveillance capitalism."[17]

Even if one acknowledges the value of the current moment, and appreciates how calcified structures have been taken apart, one must confront the issue of how one might exploit this moment *well*, maybe even responsibly. In this, the Leave campaign is surely no model, since it was involved in shady methods of collecting personal data and circulating demonstrably fake news. This is arguably just to say that if this is a moment of political opportunity and potential, it is also, at the same time, and for many of the same reasons, a moment of *risk*.

Lippmann/Dewey: The Indispensable Distinction?

From this brief attempt to encapsulate some of the tendencies of our political present, it should be clear that what has recently been put into play—in a way that was never the case in the decades leading up to ours—is democracy itself. Gone are the days when liberal democracy was taken for granted: the question of what kind of democracy we should have, if we should even have one at all, has recently come alive with renewed force and urgency—to the point where some scholars have called for a *reinvention of popular rule*. The book from which that phrase is borrowed, Hélène Landemore's *Open Democracy*, is symptomatic of the times: even those who are committed to liberal democracy are now beginning to question some of its workings, and, like Landemore, draw on democratic experiments like Citizens' Councils and Citizens' Conventions for inspiration "to imagine and design more participatory, responsive, and effective institutions."[18]

Such proposals often sound as echoes of the past—whether this is openly acknowledged or not. The starting point for this book is that among the most important ideas to echo in the present, and which should in fact *continue* to do so, is the work of Walter Lippmann and John Dewey. As recent, "revisionist" scholarship has shown, a somewhat peculiar picture of Lippmann's and Dewey's respective contributions to political thought began to form in the 1980s, and perhaps even before that, which construed the relation between the two as a "debate," and which in turn painted this debate as one between thesis and antithesis. Their respective approaches to democratic deliberation and decision-making have often been taken to represent opposing poles, to the point where the differences between them were ingrained as a sort of

typology of democracies: on the one hand, the expert-oriented, elitist, centralized type favored by Lippmann; on the other, the grassroots, bottom-up, participatory type favored by Dewey.

The critics of this picture have argued that its originator was the noted communication scholar James Carey, who, as Anna Shechtman and John Durham Peters put it in this volume, painted a "tendentiously rosy portrait of Dewey for field-reforming purposes." More specifically, critics have suggested that Carey rendered the opposition between Lippmann and Dewey in far starker terms than the evidence could support, in order to establish a distinction between an "administrative" or "realist" approach to political communication and his (or was it Dewey's?) "critical" or "participatory" ideal. What went by the wayside in this account was, quite simply, Walter Lippmann—of whom Carey made a "straw man" caricature and an "anti-democrat."[19] But contrary to what Carey suggested, these critics argued, Lippmann was no anti-democrat, and he did not denigrate the common citizen. All he did was think realistically through what we could sensibly expect from the common citizen and what we could not. This scholarly pushback against Carey's representation of Lippmann and Dewey, has in turn been met with countercriticism, not least the work of Lana Rakow, who not only has targeted the empirical base of these critics' revisionism but has also mounted a defense and a restatement of Carey's Deweyan emphasis.

In the context of this volume, the debate about the Lippmann/Dewey "debate" is an important backdrop, not least because it, in many ways, has rekindled the interest in these two undeniably important political thinkers. The purpose of the present book, though, is not primarily to set the record straight on this issue, but to ask, first, how we can tell a richer story of the contributions of Lippmann and Dewey, and second, what each of them—or both, in concert—has to offer our attempt to think through our own predicament. In part, the book looks back in time, to consider the historical context of these two thinkers, and in part, it looks toward the present and future, to inquire into their enduring relevance. What might these two thinkers help us understand, but also take advantage of, in the current political moment? More specifically, the book asks what can be gained from revisiting their writings on democracy and democratic publics—notably, though not exclusively, Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) and *The Phantom Public* (1925), and Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems* (1927)[20]—in order to further the cause of democracy, in a situation where democracy appears to face greater challenges than it has since World War II.

We realize that this question might strike some as strange, for if the current moment is really such an anomaly, why would one want to rummage about in the archives and inspect what happened one hundred years ago? There are two main reasons.

The first is that the era that produced these writings has some clear parallels with our own. They are both marked by great social and political shifts, which constantly border on, and sometimes erupt in, conflict—and which are seen and even used as opportunities to enact change. They also share the aspect of risk, the feeling—or even the real possibility—that space opens up to those with less than democratic agendas. This situation stands in contrast to the post–World War II decades, which were characterized rather by stability and steady growth within the frame of the Cold War. Even after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dismantling of the Soviet Union, a great deal of postwar stability lingered. Only with great difficulty was anyone able to imagine that the global triumph of liberal democracy was less than permanent. But however strong the convergence around liberal democracy grew—and by the mid-1990s it had grown very strong—it could always be broken, and that is in fact what has begun to happen in our day, as new political space has opened up and as questions of the relation between rich and poor, elites and commoners, experts and layfolk, again have been put at the center of politics. In this context we are, at least in some ways, back where Lippmann and Dewey were in the 1920s, when they felt that things were changing rapidly and dramatically, that one could not know which way things would go, but where it, precisely for this reason, was imperative to take hold of one's moment in time. As they tried to diagnose their present, Lippmann and Dewey asked themselves what, given these new and rapidly changing circumstances, would be apposite means to our democratic ends. To the extent our situation is like theirs—and while it is not perfectly so, there are some clear parallels—it should be more obvious why we should take an interest in Lippmann and Dewey.

This leads to the second reason, which is that the Lippmann/Dewey axis—understood not just as a series of analyses of democratic publics, but as a pair, as an expression of opposite democratic emphases—has proven to be remarkably productive. In short, the Lippmann/Dewey distinction has to a large extent become constitutive of the scope of democratic alternatives. As hinted at above, this situation is not just for the good; as several of the contributors to this volume point out, there were and are still other ways of construing democratic deliberation and decision-making than those highlighted

by the Lippmann/Dewey axis, and this distinction has been the root of a certain calcification by which no one is well served. There was, historically, a much larger universe of discourse around Lippmann and Dewey than what the model-oriented representation lets us believe, and many political diagnoses and cures circulate today that have nothing much to do with either of them. That said, it should be just as clear that many of the issues at stake in their writings from the 1920s have not at all gone away. And even if recent efforts to tone down the opposition between them have been worthwhile and sensible, we cannot deny that their respective visions for democracy were, in significant ways, very different, and that they represent live options for us today. To put it simply, we are either justified in placing our hopes in broad popular participation in democracy—or we are not.

Today, the stakes are perhaps even higher than they were one hundred years ago. In circumstances where the sustainability of the democratic way of life appears to be challenged from many sides at once—climate change and biodiversity loss, racism and xenophobia, wars and territorial ambition, economic inequality and political polarization—we are faced not just with the doomsayers' concern with *whether democracy will survive*, but just as important, with the question of *what democracy can and will become*. On the latter issue, Walter Lippmann and John Dewey are still indispensable guides to the options available to us.

Excavations, Appreciations, Rediscoveries, Elaborations

In writing for this book, the authors have faced no "partisan" premise to which they had to align their contributions. Instead, they were free to explore the history of Lippmann/Dewey opposition or its continued relevance, to focus on Lippmann or on Dewey or on both, and to take any "side"—if any at all. The only requirement was to keep the conversation about these two authors going. Naturally, they have chosen to approach this task in many different ways.

First, a few of the contributors issue what we might call appreciations of the protagonists, in part to respond to recent scholarship, in part to establish a framework to think through our own time.

Michael Schudson, in his chapter, refines his position on the debate about Lippmann/Dewey. He underlines here the importance of distinguishing between singling out *citizens'* lack of capacity for oversight, knowledge acquisition, and rational decision-making (which Lippmann did *not* do) and making a general point about *human beings'* lack of such capacity (which

Lippmann *did* do). For Lippmann, the incompetency in question is certainly real and represents a problem for democracy, but he never suggested it had something to do with the people qua people. Rather, when Lippmann says that citizens are not sufficiently equipped for self-governance, this reflects a "situational condition and not an individual trait." Ordinary citizens are incapable of self-government simply because government, in a modern mass society, involves all sorts of things that "they are not personally and professionally acquainted with." This point had no particular reference to "the people." Rather, as Lippmann wrote, "every one of us is an outsider to all but a few aspects of modern life."

Nathan Crick starts from the idea that there is not one Walter Lippmann, but (at least) two. Specifically, the Lippmann of *A Preface to Politics* (1913) is in many ways an entirely different thinker than the Lippmann of *The Phantom Public* (1925). While the former, according to Crick, renders social movements as "instruments of progress," the latter is dotted with statements to the effect that no great hope should be placed on "public opinion and the action of masses." Excavating the earlier Lippmann, Crick finds that central terms of the Lippmann/Dewey debate can already be found in the "debate" that the late Lippmann had with his earlier self. Crick argues that the two positions are distinguished not so much by matters of epistemology but by trust—"namely the trust in ordinary people to contribute something positive to the creative life of politics in the form of social movements."

In his chapter, Bruno Latour reads Lippmann as a latter-day Machiavelli—one who wanted to free politics from all its ingrained illusions. The value of Lippmann's work, as Latour sees it, is the conviction and clear-sightedness with which he pursues his goal; Lippmann is an open and flexible thinker who bravely takes on broad thoughts that others relate to as taboos. No grounds to believe in the idea of "the Public"? Let's get rid of it! More specifically, Latour argues that "Lippmann has identified with maximum precision what is paralyzing the apprenticeship of liberty: the very idea of society." Only by going along with Lippmann, and exposing the appearances of democracy, can we give ourselves "the means to obtain the necessary adjustments," he writes. As for Dewey's role, Latour aligns himself with Dewey's insistence that the adjustments to be had from Lippmann's realism will never be sufficient to "compose a viable world," and that Lippmann leaves us without any impulse toward the creation of a common good.

Another set of authors use this book as an opportunity to build a wider context around the alleged debate, to counter the somewhat flat distinction that has come down to us. Not only was the "Lippmann/Dewey debate" not

really a debate, it also was not a concern for this pair alone. In fact, there is much more to be said about both where Lippmann and Dewey were coming from, and about the intellectual environment of which their books and articles were but a part.

Anna Shechtman and John Durham Peters note that while James Carey's construal of the difference between Lippmann and Dewey was overdrawn and schematic, Carey was nevertheless right "to locate in these figures and this moment important precedents for the problems we continue to face around media and democracy." Importantly, though, the issues that Lippmann and Dewey raised were not theirs alone. In fact, a whole host of scholars and commentators responded to that moment in time, and Shechtman and Peters resurrect some of the many intellectual figures and exchanges that, in the shadow of the Lippmann/Dewey debate, have been largely forgotten, among them Randolph Bourne, Floyd Allport, Max Horkheimer, Lewis Mumford, and Reinhold Niebuhr. Unlike Lippmann, many of these thinkers were explicit critics of Dewey. According to Shechtman and Peters, these critics have tested and adjusted Dewey's legacy, but they have not thereby put it to rest—since democracy, for Dewey, was a "project of liberating humanity" that involved "a socializing of the means of communication"—and hence, an ongoing project.

Slavko Splichal emphasizes that Lippmann's and Dewey's ideas about public opinion are still relevant today, but that they are now surrounded by a new context, where issues of "transnationalization" and "datafication" of public opinion are among the central concerns. To take hold of the current moment, however, we need to recognize that the study of public opinion did not spring "fully panoplied" from Lippmann's and Dewey's publications in the 1920s; serious inquiry into the issue had already gone on for some time before this pair, and can even be traced back so far as to Machiavelli. Significant work was also ongoing alongside Lippmann and Dewey, including by such prominent thinkers as Gabriel Tarde and Ferdinand Tönnies. Later, substantially new approaches were added, including polling and, more recently, data mining. Reflecting on this history, Splichal concludes that, while the current technological moment offers democratic potential, it will not materialize by itself. Neither authoritarian powers nor commercial corporations will make it happen, and instead we should reignite the call, which unites Lippmann and Dewey with Tarde, to expand citizens' level of education.

In his chapter, Steve Fuller reads the differences between Lippmann and Dewey as a "struggle for the soul of Progressivism" and retraces some of the stakes of that struggle, focusing mostly on Lippmann's trajectory. Fuller suggests that the two in this pair were indeed distinct in their respective

construals of the State: While Dewey was an "emergentist" on this issue, Lippmann was a "dualist." Importantly, however, Fuller introduces a much wider set of characters to his story, so as to downplay the binary framing that the Lippmann/Dewey contrast has often served. Both of them were actors in wider historical processes and projects, and they had various—not to mention changing—roles within them. Fuller doubts the usefulness of the pair as intellectual resources today since, as he writes, "If Dewey was clearly on the losing side of history, it doesn't follow that Lippmann was clearly on the winning side." They were both important historical actors, however, and their lives and works are central sites from which to write history—say, of Progressivism and its fate.

A final set of authors transpose Lippmann and/or Dewey to other places and settings—like Europe, the present, or practical politics—than the ones we normally associate with them—like the United States, the past, or intellectual culture.

Lisa Villadsen starts from what many have felt is a romantic weakness in Dewey's account, namely his idea that democracy, in order to flourish, requires face-to-face interaction among citizens. Although this type of interaction is not always directly involved in high-level decision-making, that does not mean it is irrelevant or marginal. In fact, for Dewey, as for Villadsen, this type of interaction is crucial, and arguably even more important than the "results" of democratic decision-making, since "the communicative processes undergirding public and political life" are what enable people to come together and form a public at all. Seen in this way, the central importance of *The Public and Its Problems* is that it shifts our priorities from Lippmann's results orientation toward an ideal of democracy as a process—or as he himself put it, as a way of life. Villadsen's argument is that practical sites and processes of engagement and interaction have a propaedeutic function, that they enable and build rhetorical citizenship. She provides an illustration of this point by way of an in-depth account of Denmark's Borgerlyst initiative (whose name means Civic Desire)—a semiorganized series of events designed to foster democratic discussion and agency.

Kristian Bjørkdahl, in his chapter, suggests that the Lippmann/Dewey complex has unduly constrained our political imaginations, to the point where we fail to see that there exist practical ways of overcoming the choice between them. Specifically, he argues that the tradition of tripartism in Scandinavian social democracy strikes a compromise between the pair. As a political mechanism, tripartism is both top-down and bottom-up; it creates bridges between experts and citizens; and it encourages various sorts of

traffic back and forth between insiders and outsiders. That does not mean it aligns with either Lippmann or Dewey, but that is exactly the point: real politics does not conform to models or ideals; rather, it is messy, full of compromise and second-best solutions. Norwegians have usefully made a cultural virtue of the will to compromise, which they see encapsulated in the tripartite arrangement, but the flip side of this "culturalization" of tripartism is that it tends to underestimate the contingent and largely coincidental history of this mechanism, instead presenting tripartism as a sort of gift given to the Chosen People of the North. In this way, it gets in the way of a discussion of whether the Norwegian experience could hold lessons for other countries.

In a meditation that traffics back and forth between Lippmann and Dewey, as well as between their age and ours, Scott Welsh aims to find out how we can find inspiration in this pair today. Without discounting the differences, Welsh points out that even Dewey underlined the difference between *political* democracy and the *idea* of democracy, and that his hopes, just like Lippmann's, were rather constrained on behalf of the first. Still, there is no way around political democracy and all its restrictions. A problem with both writers, Welsh argues, is that they "demeaned the practice of democratic politics in the moment" by setting up a future democracy that allegedly would be more satisfactory or sufficient, thus making actually existing democracy look "somehow compromised, tawdry, or democratically second-rate." To counter this problem, Welsh sets out to reclaim the pragmatism that is also inherent in both writers, by focusing on what each actually does appreciate in existing democracy—an exercise that is important to our current democratic hopes, since those cannot be sustained without an appreciation of the day-to-day work of politics.

Patricia Roberts-Miller, in her chapter, points out that what Lippmann and Dewey share is an inclination to think that the problem of the public is somehow connected to (mass) mediation and that "direct knowledge is preferable." Thus, they both assumed that the problems they were grappling with were consequences of the huge demographic and societal changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. But this, Roberts-Miller contends, is a "very problematic assumption." She puts Lippmann's and Dewey's assumption to the test of more recent research, which leads us to think that to privilege direct knowledge is deceptive and false. Indeed, Roberts-Miller claims that this tendency is "at the base of how and why people reason badly." More specifically, this tendency makes us overlook or discount such phenomena as confirmation bias and in-group favoritism, which science has shown to be far more ubiquitous than either Lippmann or Dewey—or indeed most of

us—would like to admit. The implication of this, Roberts-Miller says, is that we "keep trying to solve the wrong problem," that is, to identify the entity (the people? the experts?) whose judgments best qualify it to govern. We are thus fooled by the opposition between Lippmann and Dewey not to reflect on the basic—but wrong—assumption, that the best judgments come from those with direct knowledge. Against the pair, we should not see good decision-making as the outcome of an *identity*, but of a *process*.

Robert Danisch and William Keith start from the point that Lippmann and Dewey addressed a common set of problems, but that those problems had little to with the viability of deliberative democracy as such. Rather, the core of the problem, they suggest, is that US society by the 1920s had grown so big and complex that the systems that had seemed to work up to the past century now seemed insufficient and mismatched to the current predicament. What both Lippmann and Dewey did, in that situation, was to formulate a new rhetorical sociology, which is to say that they offered new accounts of how "social structures, institutions, and forms of individual agency are both guided by and constituted by communicative practices." As Danisch and Keith see it, there is good reason, still today, to be inspired by their respective formulations, but there is no point in assuming that our rhetorical sociology cannot combine elements from both thinkers. What we need to take from Dewey, they suggest, is the need for "institutional mechanisms capable of forming, building, and maintaining social relationships between diverse sets of strangers," while from Lippmann we should take "institutional mechanisms for ensuring that the information circulating in public discourse is reliable and accurate."

Notes

1. Dewey, *Public and Its Problems*, 304.
2. Mounk, *People vs. Democracy*, 12, 16.
3. Mounk, 12.
4. Jones, *10% Less Democracy*.
5. For an insightful, though in many ways atypical, account of post-truth, see Fuller, *Post-Truth*.
6. Runciman, *How Democracy Ends*; Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*; Applebaum, *Twilight of Democracy*.
7. Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index 2016*; Repucci, *From Crisis to Reform*, 2. The downward trend continues in the latest EIU report (*Democracy Index 2021*).
8. Silva-Leander, *Global State of Democracy*.
9. Müller, *What Is Populism?*

10. Tóth, "Full Text of Viktor Orbán's Speech."

11. Marres, "Why We Can't Have Our Facts Back."

12. Mouffe, *For a Left Populism*. See also Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*; as well as much of the pair's subsequent publications.

13. See Fuller, *Post-Truth*.

14. Mudde, "Why Is American Political Science Blind on the Right Eye?"

15. See Helmore, "Something Will Crack"; and Senior, "Richard Rorty's 1998 Book." An argument much in the same vein was offered in real time, as it were, by Mark Lilla in *The Once and Future Liberal*.

16. If this film is an instantiation in popular culture of a growing awareness of the importance of *listening*, this tendency has also been notable in scholarship; see, for example, Dobson, *Listening for Democracy*; Scudder, *Beyond Empathy and Inclusion*; Ercan, Hendriks, and Dryzek, "Public Deliberation."

17. Zuboff, *Age of Surveillance Capitalism*.

18. Landemore, *Open Democracy*, xviii.

19. The main entries in the debate have been Jansen, "Phantom Conflict"; Jansen, "Walter Lippmann, Straw Man"; Schudson, "'Lippmann-Dewey Debate'"; Schudson, "Trouble with Experts"; Schudson, "Walter Lippmann's Ghost"; Rakow, "Family Feud"; and Rakow, *John Dewey*. Other central contributions include Crick, "Search for a Purveyor of News"; Tell, "Reinventing Walter Lippmann"; and Goodwin, "Walter Lippman, the Indispensable Opposition."

20. Lippmann, *Public Opinion*; Lippmann, *Phantom Public*; Dewey, *Public and Its Problems*.

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