

## John Dewey, Randolph Silliman Bourne, Albert Coombs Barnes, and Frederick Matthias Alexander: The 1918 Controversy

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Retired Dr. mult. Jeroen Staring taught mathematics at secondary schools in The Netherlands. His 2005 Medical Sciences dissertation describes the life, work and technique of F. Matthias Alexander. In 2013 he successfully defended a second dissertation, on the early history of the NYC Bureau of Educational Experiments.

### Abstract:

*This case study discusses the controversy that arose between Randolph Bourne and John Dewey over the 1918 American edition of F. Matthias Alexander's book "Man's Supreme Inheritance." Not only is the history surrounding the 1918 American and especially the 1918 British edition of the book a jumble of facts and distortions, but it seems that even now, more than a century later, secrets are coming to light, secrets that beg for an explanation. Some are explained, but a great mystery remains for which no explanation can be given: Why did John Dewey have a private letter to Randolph Bourne published in the 1918 British edition of Alexander's book? This case study is an update of the text of a 1994 booklet discussing the 1918 Bourne-Dewey controversy, incorporating new finds into the 1994 detective tale.*

**Key Words:** Irene Tasker (1887-1977); Ethel Webb (1866-1955). Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955); Albert Coombs Barnes (1872-1951); Randolph Silliman Bourne (1886-1918); John Dewey (1859-1952).

### Introduction

John Dewey [...] endorses enthusiastically the panaceas offered in a pompous tome entitled "Man's Supreme Inheritance." The book is a collection of childish piffle which purports to point out the road to perfect health. (Selwyn-Brown, 1938, p. 705).

Going over the book carefully I tried [...] to find what the author considers "Man's Supreme Inheritance" and could find no single definite thought, not even along the line of the author's very athletic and gymnastic reasoning, to warrant the title. The change from subconscious control of muscles and organs to the conscious control of them, surely is neither an "inheritance" nor is it supreme, and this thought constitutes the entire body of the book. (Roeder, 1920, p. 7).

Sometimes research activities can unearth old and forgotten texts. Browsing bookstores is one of the ways to try your luck. Or browsing internet bookstores or browsing auction sites. Plus, people who trade in used books and know what you're looking for can bring unexpected joy to a researcher's life. On October 29, 1993, luck struck the author of this case study when he got his hands on the second edition of Frederick Matthias Alexander's book *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. Not the 1918 American edition of the book (Alexander, 1918b), but the 1918 British edition, published by Methuen & CO., LTD (Alexander, 1918a). Finding a copy of this edition in a second-hand bookshop is rare these days. Its rarity can be attributed to the fact that copies are on shelves in private and public libraries, and that many copies have not survived to this day.

On the other hand, it is curious that the colophon page of a later British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, the third edition of 1946 published by Chaterson Ltd., states that the second British edition appeared in 1941 (Alexander, 1946, p. iv). And the fourth British edition, published in 1957 by Integral Press, also mentions that the second British edition dates from 1941 (Alexander, 1957, p. iv).

This is indeed remarkable. Somehow the true second British edition, published by Methuen in 1918, was written out of history, first by Chaterson, and later by Integral Press. That's a quirky way indeed to tell the story of the different editions of the book.

The essence of this statement will emerge when an analysis of the contents of the 1918 Methuen edition of Alexander's book *Man's Supreme Inheritance* is presented in the following sections of this case study, where, in passing, more light will be thrown on the book's history of editions and printings, and more (see *Note 1*).

## “Appreciations” by Dewey, Granger, Jowett, and Kallen

The full title of Alexander’s book — its second British edition — is: *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*. (*Conscious Guidance and Control in Relation to Human Evolution in Civilization; with an Introductory Word by Professor John Dewey and Appreciations Received from Professor Frank Granger, Rev. J. H. Jowett, Professor H. M. Kallen, and Professor John Dewey*). If we consult the (UK) British Museum’s *General Catalog of Printed Books*, and if we also consult the (US) *National Union Catalogue*, we will find that the book is not listed under its full title:

- The *General Catalog of Printed Books* lists the book as *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (Trustees of the British Museum, 1965, p. 435).
- The *National Union Catalogue* lists the book under a longer, but still incomplete title: *Man’s supreme inheritance; conscious guidance and control in relation to human evolution in civilization, with an introductory word by John Dewey, and appreciation received from Frank Granger and others* (Williams, et al., 1969, p. 241).

The so-called “appreciations” Alexander received from Professor Frank Granger consist of a one-page commendation (in Alexander, 1918a, p. xxiii), and an 11-line quote from an article published in *The Expositor* of September 18, 1918 (in Alexander, 1918a, p. xxiv; see Granger, 1918, p. 205). The so-called “appreciation” Alexander received from Rev. John Henry Jowett is a one-paragraph endorsement (in Alexander, 1918a, p. xxv). Professor Horace Meyer Kallen’s so-called “appreciation” (in Alexander, 1918a, pp. xxvi-xxviii) consists of a reprint of his review of the 1918 American edition of Alexander’s book, originally published in the *Dial* of June 6, 1918 (Kallen, 1918).

Please note these appreciations were not included in the American editions of the book. Note further that both Granger’s and Jowett’s appreciations also appear in a four-page order form advertising the 1919 American edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, published by the book’s New York publisher (Dutton, n.d.; see *Figure 1*), and that the almost full appreciation by Jowett, in addition to a more extended quotation of the text of Granger’s first appreciation mentioned above (in Alexander, 1918a, p. xxiii) appeared in a full-page advertisement in *The Dial* of 1918 (Dutton, 1918).

Excerpts from Jowett’s and Kallen’s appreciations, now called “estimates,” were published in a *Christian Century Press* advertisement in the February 26 and July 29, 1920, issues of *The Christian Century* (*Christian Century Press*, 1920ab; see *Figure 11*). And part of the first line in Jowett’s appreciation was used in an advertisement in the Philadelphia newspaper *Public Ledger* (Dutton, 1919; see *Figure 12*).



**Figure 1: First 3 pages of a 4-page order pamphlet advertising the 1919 American edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (Dutton, n.d.). (Courtesy of Rosslyn McLeod).**

No further consideration is given to the aforementioned “appreciations,” or “estimates,” that Alexander received from Granger, Jowett, and Kallen. Attention is only paid to Dewey’s appreciation(s).

Dewey’s appreciation was twofold:

a). The first is entitled “Professor John Dewey’s Reply to a Reviewer of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* in *The New Republic*.” This first appreciation (in Alexander, 1918a, pp. xviii-xx) is a reprint of “Reply to a

Reviewer,” a letter to the editor of *The New Republic*, first published May 11, 1918 (Dewey, 1918c), in which Dewey refuted a review of the 1918 American edition of Alexander’s book written by Dewey’s ex-student Randolph Bourne (Rosenfeld, 1961), published in *The New Republic* of May 4, 1918 (Bourne, 1918a). This appreciation was also, partially, published in the order form issued by the US publisher of the book, mentioned above (Dutton, n.d.; see *Figure 1*).

b). The second is called “Another Letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey” (see *Note 2*). This appreciation (in Alexander, 1918a, pp. xx-xxii) is the text of a personal letter to an unnamed person, dated May 22, 1918, and unidentified until 1994 (Staring, 1994ab):

What Mr. Alexander calls conscious control has practically nothing but the name in common with what you associate with conscious control. Do you imagine, for instance, that the Germans or any other nation had actually been employing Mr. Alexander’s method before the war? Pardon me for repeating that only an almost incredible bias could have led you to write as if the thing you are objecting to had anything to do with Mr. Alexander’s theory and practice, so completely is his theory as to conscious control the theory of his own technique. If you will put to yourself that what you object to as conscious control is simply one side of what Mr. Alexander is attacking as abnormal, namely the isolation of the higher or ‘intellectual’ centres. If you will see that to him conscious control integrally involves control by *sensory* appreciations which have been rendered habitually normal, and that in fact what you call conscious control is with him chiefly a part of the agency of getting a re-educated sensory appreciation, you may get in the right attitude for understanding him, provided you are willing to study the book and his work more carefully. ‘Sensory’ is here used to cover, of course, all immediate data of bodily organs, ‘organic sensations,’ as well as general kinesthesias. If you accept James’s theory of the emotions, you will be able then to see the extent to which if Mr. Alexander’s technique is sound, it is completely impossible that there should be conscious control-in his sense-and the impulses of which you speak remain uncontrolled, or the attitude towards life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness remain unaffected.

Another way to get at it is to realize that instead of being inverted psycho-analysis, his method is a *completed* psycho-analysis, completed by having its organic basis placed under a merely floating parallelistic ‘psychic,’ and by being carried from the negative into the positive. All of the ‘psychic’ complexes have their basis in organic dis-co-ordinations and tensions, with compensatory flabbinesses, and his technique is a technique for resolving and unravelling these, reducing the present technique of the psycho-analyst to an incidental accompaniment, and cutting out the elaborate ritualistic mummerly with which the present psycho-analysts have been obliged to surround their method. In addition, Mr. Alexander’s technique unravels the kinks and complexes by a process of positive replacement in which sound co-ordinations are built up with their corresponding alterations in habitual sensory and emotional data, while at the best the psycho-analysts merely untie a knot and leave the organic causes which produced it untouched. I dwell on this point because before I had lessons myself, although I had talked with him, read his earlier book, and members of my family had had many lessons, I argued against what seemed to me prejudice on his part against psycho-analysis, on the ground that in principle his method was similar. Only after I had had experimental demonstration did I see how completely right he was in saying that their method was negative, and left the patient subject to the same thing in some other form; in fact, their own doctrine of transfer is an unconscious admission of the fact; no ‘transfer’ is possible with Mr. Alexander’s method.

I have written at some length, although I realize that to you this is all probably a matter of argument and opinion, while with Mr. Alexander and with those who have had the good fortune to get inside his principle or method it is matter of sheer fact; he is the only person I have ever known, or known of, who knows what he is talking about in the sense that a competent engineer knows when he is talking about his speciality. (Dewey, 1918a).

### **Conflicting History of British Editions and Reprints of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance***

We may wonder what is so curious about the appreciations by Dewey and others.

**First**, these appreciations (all Dewey, Granger, Jowett, and Kallen, appreciations, but not Dewey’s third text in the book, *i.e.*, his “Introductory Word”) have never been reprinted in

subsequent printings or editions of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, except for a 1939 British reprint (Alexander, 1939a) and a 1996 British edition (Alexander, 1996).

However, Granger and Jowett's appreciations were also published in an order form for the 1919 American edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* — mentioned above, as well as part of Dewey's letter to the editor of *The New Republic*, first published May 11, 1918 (Dutton, n.d.; see *Figure 1*). Advertisements for Alexander's book in American newspapers and magazines also featured parts from Dewey's, Granger, Jowett, and Kallen's appreciations.

The history of British editions and reprints since 1918 is rather strange to say the least (consult also the history as presented in Alexander, 1996, pp. 233-238):

—*i*). In 1918 the British second edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (Alexander, 1918a) was published, including appreciations by Dewey, Granger, Jowett, and Kallen.

—*ii*). In 1937 a British reprint appeared, according to its colophon page, of the “First English Edition published October 1916. Reprinted November 1918” (Alexander, 1937, p. *iv*). However, apart from the fact that the first English edition had appeared in October 1910 and *not* in October 1916, this specific 1937 reprint was *not* a reprint of the first British edition (1910), *nor* of the second British edition (1918), but a reprint of the 1918 American edition of Alexander's book *Man's Supreme Inheritance*.

The American second edition from 1918 has pages *i-xvii* and pages 1-354. The British second edition from 1918 has pages *i-xxviii* and pages 1-239. Note that the British edition from 1937 has pages *i-xvii* and pages 1-354.

Under the print history it reads, “Printed in the United States of America.”

(Note again: American editions and reprints of the book never included appreciations by Dewey, Granger, Jowett, and Kallen).

—*iii*). The history of editions and reprints in the 1939 reprint of the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* reads, “1<sup>st</sup> English Edition 1910; 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Revised and Enlarged) 1918; (Reprinted) 1937; (Reprinted) 1939” (Alexander, 1939a, p. *iv*).

This colophon information does not conform to reality, since — as stated under point *ii* above — the 1937 reprint was a reprint of the 1918 American edition and *not* of the second British edition of Alexander's book *Man's Supreme Inheritance*.

Under the print history in this 1939 reprint of the 1918 British edition it reads, “Printed by offset in Great Britain by Phototype Limited, Barnet, Herts.”

—*iv*). Not long after, some copies of the 1939 reprint of the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* had a notification paper slip glued to the title page with the text, “The publication of F. Matthias Alexander's books has now been transferred to Chaterson LTD, 5 Johnson's Court, London, E.C.4” (Alexander, 1939b; see *Figure 8*, below).

The colophon information is equivalent to the 1939 British reprint of the 1918 British second edition, as mentioned under point *iii* above.

—*v*). An undated reprint of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, published by Chaterson during World War II (Alexander, n.d. 2), is a reprint of a slightly enlarged 1918 American edition of the book.

It has pages *i-xvii*; a new text, dated February 1941, entitled “Preface to New Edition” on pages *xix-xxviii*; and pages 1-354. This corresponds to the American “Sixth printing ... March, 1941,” published in the US by E. P. Dutton & Company (Alexander, 1941).

No information was given on the history of editions and printing(s), except for the information given on page *ii* of the book, under the heading “The four books of F. Matthias Alexander:” “*Man's Supreme Inheritance*, First published 1918. Reprinted 1943” (Alexander, n.d. 2, p. *ii*). This info does *not* correspond to reality, except for the suggestion that this actual reprint of the 1918 American edition of the book was published in England in the year 1943 (compare points *i-iv*, above).

—*vi*). In 1946, another British edition of Alexander's *Man's Supreme Inheritance* was published by Chaterson. As already indicated above, the information regarding earlier editions and printings in this 1946 edition does *not* correspond to reality: “First Edition 1910; Second Edition 1941; Third Edition 1946” (Alexander, 1946, p. *iv*; see *Note 3*). It is certainly strange that Chaterson in their undated edition states that the book was first published in 1918 and reprinted in 1943 (see

point v), while in their third edition of 1946 they state that the first edition appeared in 1910, and that a second edition was published in 1941.

—*vii*). Another later edition, published by Integral Press, dated 1957, repeats Chaterson's statement that the second edition of the book dated from 1941 rather than 1918 (Alexander, 1957, p. iv).

—*viii*). In 1996 the (then) London publishing house Mouritz published another edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. The colophon page has the following history of various editions of the book: "First published 1910. Second edition 1918. Third edition 1941. Fourth edition 1946. Fifth edition 1957." That would make the 1996 British edition the edition number 6, but the colophon page only states, "This edition published October 1996" (Alexander, 1996, p. iv).

Like all editions, this 1996 British edition features Dewey's "Introductory Word." It also contains the text of Dewey's "Reply to a Reviewer," first published in *The New Republic*, May 11, 1918. It further contains the "appreciations" by Granger, Jowett, and Kallen, as in the British edition of 1918. Surprisingly it also features the text of Dewey's letter, dated May 11, 1918: "Another Letter From the Pen of Professor John Dewey, 22 May, 1918" (Dewey in Alexander, 1996, pp. xxix-xxx), albeit without any editorial indication by the editor of the 1996 edition as to who the recipient of the letter was.

### Ignorance of US Scholars of the 1918 British Edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*

We may further wonder what is so curious about the appreciations by Dewey and others.

**Second**, after Dewey's contributions to the 1918 British edition of Alexander's book were not mentioned in the "Bibliography of the Writings of John Dewey: (To October 1939)" in the first edition of *The Philosophy of John Dewey* (Schilpp (Ed.), 1939) nor in the "Bibliography of the Writings of John Dewey (1882-1950)" in the second edition (Schilpp (Ed.), 1951), Milton Halsey Thomas's 1962 *John Dewey: A Centennial Bibliography* also does not refer to Dewey's three above-mentioned texts in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. And neither do other Dewey bibliographies.

Although Thomas's centennial bibliography listed Dewey's works chronologically, and although it was "exhaustive," as expressed by editor Thomas (1962, p. v) himself in the preface to the bibliography, not one of Dewey's three texts (in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*) was mentioned by Thomas. This is rather curious, because while the editor of the bibliography and his colleague Herbert Wallace Schneider were preparing earlier editions of the bibliography, Dewey had personally assisted them. And: Dewey must have known!

We can discover the following in *John Dewey: A Centennial Bibliography*. On page 54 we find only a reference to Dewey's "Introductory Word" to the 1918 American edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (= Alexander, 1918b). The "Introductory Word" to the 1918 British edition of the book (= Alexander, 1918a) was *not* mentioned by Thomas (1962, p. 54). Underneath the heading of Dewey's "Introductory Word" there is a reference to his letter "Reply to a Reviewer:" "See Dewey's Reply to a Reviewer (*New Republic*, 11 May 1918), below." Indeed, on page 56 we find the reference to "Reply to a Reviewer." No word, however, can be traced to the reprint of this letter to *The New Republic* in the 1918 British edition of Alexander's book. And, as already mentioned, Dewey's letter of May 22, 1918, quoted above, published in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, was also not entered — although we can certainly say that the letter is a Dewey publication worth mentioning in the centennial bibliography.

But that's not all one can say about Dewey's contributions to the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. If we consult the publication of Dewey's collected works, edited by Jo Ann Boydston, we will not find any reference to this edition of Alexander's book. The "Introductory Word" is reprinted in Volume 11 of *The Middle Works* of Dewey's collected writings (Boydston (Ed.), 1982, pp. 350-352), and "Reply to a Reviewer" is reprinted in the same volume (Boydston (Ed.), 1982, pp. 353-355). Both texts have been reprinted with references to place and date of publication in the United States. Although Boydston has referred to the publication of Dewey's "Introductory Word," published in the 1918 American edition of Alexander's book (Boydston (Ed.), 1982, p. 350), she has made no mention of the 1918 British edition of the book. Furthermore, no reference by Boydston to the reprint of "Reply to a Reviewer" in the British 1918

edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* has been disclosed. And Dewey's other letter published in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, called "Another Letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey", has also not been (re-)published in Dewey's collected writings.

All this means that at the Center for Dewey Studies, where Boydston edited Dewey's collected works, the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (with its three texts by Dewey) was completely unknown.

The above omissions are noteworthy, as the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* is included in *The National Union Catalog*. The catalogue even mentions that copies of the 1918 British edition of Alexander's book discussed in this case study are in the collections of two universities in the United States. The ignorance of US scholars about the existence of the 1918 British edition of the book is rather odd and has serious implications for the Bourne-Dewey controversy over *Man's Supreme Inheritance* and Alexander's work.

### The 1918 Bourne-Dewey Controversy over Alexander's *Man's Supreme Inheritance*

The Bourne-Dewey controversy over the 1918 American edition of Alexander's *Man's Supreme Inheritance* consisted of three texts (until 1994). In chronological order, the history of the debate can be schematically represented as follows:

January 1918	Publication of the first printing of the 1918 American edition of <i>Man's Supreme Inheritance</i> by E. P. Dutton & Company, New York (Alexander, 1918b).
May 1918	Publication of the second printing of the 1918 American edition of <i>Man's Supreme Inheritance</i> by E. P. Dutton & Company, New York (Alexander, 1918c).
May 4, 1918	Publication of Randolph Bourne's review, "Making over the Body," in <i>The New Republic</i> (Bourne, 1918a).
May 11, 1918	Publication of John Dewey's reply to Bourne's review, "Reply to a Reviewer," in <i>The New Republic</i> (Dewey, 1918c).
May 25, 1918	Publication of Randolph Bourne's rejoinder, "Other Messiahs," in <i>The New Republic</i> (Bourne, 1918b).
December 1918	Publication of the 1918 British edition of <i>Man's Supreme Inheritance</i> by Methuen & CO., LTD, London (Alexander 1918a).

The controversy consisted of three May 1918 texts published in *The New Republic*, mentioned in the table above. Bourne's "Making over the Body," his critical review of the 1918 American edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* initiated the controversy (see *Note 4*). He opened his review with the statement,

Mr. Alexander rather needs the delighted "introductory word" of Professor Dewey's to justify his own philosophical exuberance. For without such a ratification the reader is bound to question whether the author of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* has been able to put his mind into that state of delicate balance and harmony into which he can put other people's bodies by his system of conscious muscular guidance and control. The practice seems more significant than the philosophy. (Bourne, 1918a, p. 28)

Bourne then described Alexander's 'technique,' using terms such as "physiological intuition," "re-educating the body;" "direction of the will." Someone who has long experience of taking lessons from an Alexander Technique teacher would certainly describe Alexander's teaching practice differently, with more elaborate terms. (Note that Alexander Technique teachers call their practice 'the Work,' in imitation of, and following, George Gurdjieff adepts; it distances their practice from the competition, and it accolades their own practice; see Evans, 2001). However, Bourne wrote a review outlining the perspective a reader of Alexander's book would likely have developed while reading *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. On the other hand, the preamble to Bourne's review reveals parts of his annoyance and vexation, for he did not endorse of Alexander's "cosmic and evolutionary" philosophy. He rejected Alexander's way of "presenting this technique as the symptom of a conscious guidance and control which is to be humanity's next step in evolution" (Bourne, 1918a, p. 28) He rejected Alexander's evolutionary claims.

The old unconscious days are to be over, and intelligent manipulation is to reign in their stead. But is not the task he suggests a little appalling? For if this next step in evolution is to mean anything it

means that every separate human being must make over his bodily coordinations. And the secret of that making-over lies—we must conclude—almost exclusively in the rare intuition and skill of Mr. Alexander. If the school must wait until every one of its children has learned conscious guidance and control, the next step in evolution will be very long delayed. (Bourne, 1918a, p. 28).

Bourne's interpretation of Alexander's evolutionism was wrong, but that should not be emphasized here and now (see *Note 5*). It is clear: Bourne did not accept Alexander's theory of evolution, if only because Alexander had presented human evolution as an ascending process of 'gaining' conscious control.

Mr. Alexander's application of his idea to the large problems of social evolution, and the shortcomings of civilization, shows an attentive modern ear. But do we any longer think of evolution as a road along which mankind moves abreast in solid phalanx onward and upward forever? Isn't mankind, if it is anything, a pitiful struggling army, strung along by degrees all the way between heaven and hell, between rationality and instinct, between attainment and futility? Will it ever be anything else? (Bourne, 1918a, p. 28).

Bourne rejected Alexander's idea that his 'technique' could help people solve their social and political problems in the long run. In the quote above, he interpreted Alexander's evolutionism as a theory of "social evolution," but did not fully agree with Alexander's statements. He clarified his view by referring to the 1914-1918 war.

Is an era of world-war, in which statesmen are proving as blind and helpless as the manipulated masses, quite the most convincing time for so far-flung a philosophy of conscious control? Of desire, will, revolt—yes; but not the anticipation that we begin a new era of human intelligence. Mr. Alexander thinks the war is the product of too much reliance on instinctive guidance in human affairs. (Bourne, 1918a, pp. 28-29).

Bourne completely rejected Alexander's philosophy. Instead of Alexander's philosophy of evolution, he proposed a philosophy of desire, or a philosophy of the will, or a philosophy of rebellion. In other words, he suggested a philosophy based on sociological and political premises. In fact, he suggested a philosophy of social and political psychology; he rejected Alexander's philosophy of evolutionary psychology.

Although Bourne wrote that Alexander had a "psychological technique which is apparently a kind of reversed psycho-analysis, unwinding the psychic knots by getting control of the physical end-organs" (Bourne, 1918a, p. 29), he did not reject Alexander's teaching practice. The very last line of his book review proves this statement:

But Mr. Alexander's empiric idea and practice are too valuable to be wrapped up in a philosophy that is not just as vigorously integrated and intelligently guided as the muscular system he skillfully directs towards perfect functioning. (Bourne, 1918a, p. 29).

Dewey's "Reply to a Reviewer" formed the second part of the Bourne-Dewey controversy in 1918. It was published in the issue of *The New Republic*, dated May 11, 1918. Dewey opened the first section of his reply to Bourne's review of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* by paraphrasing Alexander's evolutionism, thus misinterpreting Alexander's evolutionary ideas as much as Bourne had done in his book review "Making over the Body."

Sir.—[Randolph Bourne's] review of Mr. Alexander's *Man's Supreme Inheritance* exhibits such ingenuity in evading perception of its significant points that it seems worth while to make a statement for the protection of readers who might otherwise be misled. Mr. Alexander's book is not concerned with setting forth instrumental, pragmatic, or evolutionary philosophy, within which is wrapped a personal intuition or quasi-magical personal knack. (Dewey, 1918c).

Dewey's misconception about Alexander's evolutionism cannot be addressed here and now either (see *Note 5*). Furthermore, Dewey wrote,

With adults the integration which is accomplished by the technique at Mr. Alexander's commands, is obviously a re-education that is at best remedial and more or less palliative. With subsequent generations it can, to the degree in which it is utilized with children, become positive and constructive. If Mr. Alexander is wrong, the name given to the estate of humanity which would ultimately be produced is of no consequence. If he is right, history of humanity would be of such

crucial significance that the use of the word evolution in connection with it is at most a mere matter of literary taste. (Dewey, 1918c).

Perhaps Dewey himself knew the exact meaning of these lines, but many readers will not be able to discern Dewey's intentions from his words. Dewey leaves his readers confused. What did he mean by stating that "the use of the word evolution in connection with it is at most a mere matter of literary taste"?

Regardless, Dewey discussed Bourne's views on the (biological? social?) evolutionary effect of Alexander's 'technique,' and he advised Bourne to take lessons from Alexander:

Mr. Alexander's positive principle is, in effect, an education which will integrate the functions now so disastrously divided. The principle is experimental; it can be asserted and rendered intelligible in a book; proof lies in doing it. From the book the idea which the reader can get will be but a more or less clear 'intuition.' To say, as 'R. B' [= Randolph Bourne; J.S.] does, that it is an intuition with Mr. Alexander is to intimate that he is either the most self-deluded of mortals or that he is a deliberate faker of the first magnitude. The cleverness which presents a principle which claims to be one of conscious control, as if it were a matter of personal intuition, is not a cleverness which I envy 'R. B' [= Randolph Bourne; J.S.]. (Dewey, 1918c).

Dewey ended his "Reply to a Reviewer" in *The New Republic* by once again making some cryptic statements about eugenics-through-education, thus unequivocally demonstrating that he fully agreed with Alexander's evolutionism, and had thereby completely fallen for its built-in (Butlerian) eugenics and racism (see Note 5):

Certainly one of the prime effects of acquaintance with the method of "conscious control" is to make one realize the superficial and over-hasty character of the methods upon which we are relying, and the corresponding importance of a fundamental method of education, one which in the course of slow generations will integrate into harmonious coordination our animal inheritance and our distinctively human capacities of intelligence. (Dewey, 1918c).

The final touches to the Bourne-Dewey controversy were revealed by Bourne in the issue of *The New Republic*, dated May 25, 1918. In his letter to the editor entitled "Other Messiahs," he acknowledged Dewey's claim that "if the book is worth reading, the thesis is worth stating," but he added,

But even if I had presented this same analysis which Professor Dewey gives in the first paragraph of his letter of protest, I cannot see that my criticism would have been essentially different. I made straight for what I consider the significant points [...]. These were, whether Mr. Alexander's philosophy is essential to his technique, and whether his philosophy is relevant to the world situation. (Bourne, 1918b).

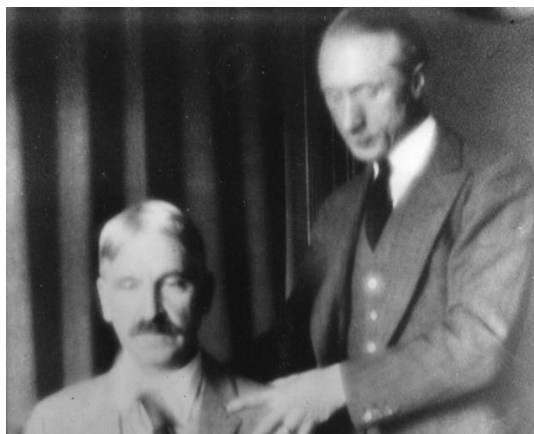


Figure 2: Alexander teaching his 'technique' to Dewey. (Courtesy of Walter Carrington†).

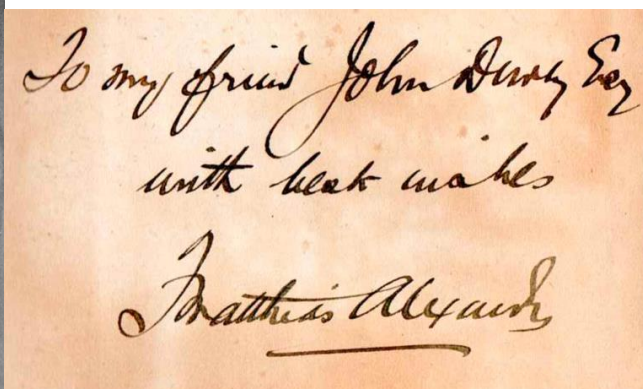


Figure 3: Alexander's inscription in John Dewey's copy of the 1918 American edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. (Jeroen Staring Collection).

Bourne then threw back Dewey's critique:

I may entirely misunderstand Professor Dewey's logic, but he seems to intimate that the success of the technique proves the philosophical thesis:—If Mr. Alexander cures the neuroses of civilized men [...],



his theory of conscious control and guidance as the next step in human evolution is thereby proved. (Bourne, 1918b).

Bourne rejected this kind of ‘logic.’

He then dwelt on the “experimental” character of Alexander’s ‘technique,’ stating that *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* contains no proof, nor had Alexander provided proof by having his ‘technique’ “worked out experimentally.” That is why Bourne went back to his original opinion. “The technique is empirically established by its success in concrete cases. The thesis and philosophy behind it remain brilliant guesses” (Bourne, 1918b).

Bourne also confessed that he was irritated by the tone of Alexander’s book. “He has all the air of a man with a message. He is announcing truth, not presenting plausible scientific hypotheses. It was the tone which caused my scepticism” (Bourne, 1918c), and he advised readers who feared being misled by his review to buy Alexander’s book, and to check it for themselves.

### Albert C. Barnes’ Assessments of the 1918 American Edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*

Around late 1918, early 1919, Alexander’s assistant Irene Tasker sent letters advertising the 1918 British edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, accompanied by extracts from written statements by several influential people, to (unknown) recipients who might be interested in learning more about Alexander’s book and his practical work. She wrote (see *Figure 4*):

Dear Sir,

Professor John Dewey, whose philosophy is widely known both in England and in America, has signified his complete acceptance of the thesis of a work entitled “Man’s Supreme Inheritance” by F. Matthias Alexander, in a foreword to the book and in two other written appreciations.

He has been supported in this connexion by Professors Frank Granger, Janes [*sic*; J.S.] Harvey Robinson, Richard Morse Hodge, H. M. Kallen, Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett, Dr. J. Madison Taylor, Dr. Alebert [*sic*; J.S.] C. Barnes and others, and I enclose herewith extracts from their written statements which I hope will interest you in this time when the attention of all thinking people is being directed to the problems of reconstruction which depend for their solution primarily, of course, upon education.

Professor Dewey writes: “In the larger sense of education this whole book is concerned with education. It is a contribution to a better understanding of every phase of contemporary life.”

On behalf of the author of the book, Mr F. Matthias Alexander, I shall be pleased to give you any further information you may desire concerning the practical side of the work in its relation to education and to the “art of living.”

Yours faithfully, [signed Irene Tasker; J.S.].

B. S. [*sic*; J.S.] The new and enlarged edition of “Man’s Supreme Inheritance” is now being published by Messrs. Methuen and Co. Essex Street Strand W. C. (Tasker, n.d.).

It is fascinating to note right away that Tasker stated that “Professor John Dewey” — in both his “foreword” and “*two other written appreciations*” — had “signified his complete acceptance of the thesis” of Alexander’s *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (Tasker, n.d.; italics J.S.). Those “other” two written appreciations by Dewey are:

- “Professor John Dewey’s Reply to a Reviewer of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* in *The New Republic*,” that is the reprint in the 1918 UK edition of Alexander’s *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* of Dewey’s letter “Reply to a Reviewer,” first published in *The New Republic* of May 11, 1918. It is a reply to Bourne’s review of the 1918 American edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (discussed above);  
and,
- “Another Letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey,” as published in the 1918 British edition of Alexander’s *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (to be discussed below).

16 Ashley Place  
Westminster  
London S.W.1.

Dear Sir,

Professor John Dewey, whose philosophy is widely known both in England and in America, has signified his complete acceptance of the thesis of a work entitled "Man's Supreme Inheritance" by F. Matthias Alexander, in a foreword to the book and in two other written appreciations.

He has been supported in this connexion by Professors Frank Granger, James Harvey Robinson, Richard Morse Hodge, H. M. Kallen, Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett, Dr. J. Madison Taylor, Dr. Albert C. Barnes and others, and I enclose herewith extracts from their written statements which I hope will interest you. This time when the attention of all thinking people is being directed to the problems of reconstruction which depend for their solution primarily, of course, upon education.

Professor Dewey writes: "In the larger sense of education this whole book is concerned with education. It is a contribution to a better understanding of every phase of contemporary life."

On behalf of the author of the book, Mr. F. Matthias Alexander, I shall be pleased to give you any further information you may desire concerning the practical side of the work in its relation to education and to the "art of living."

Yours faithfully,  
*Irene Tasker*

B. S. The new and enlarged edition of "Man's Supreme Inheritance" is now being published by Messrs. Methuen and Co.  
Essex Street  
Strand W.C.

**Figure 4: Irene Tasker letter to prospective clients, circa 1918/1919 (Tasker, n.d.). (Courtesy of Rosslyn McLeod).**

One of the texts to be sent alongside Tasker's advertising letter was entitled "Copy of an appreciation written by Dr. Albert C. Barnes (see *Figure 5*) concerning the work of Mr. F. Matthias Alexander, as set forth in his book, 'Man's Supreme Inheritance'." The text was written by Albert Coombs Barnes (see *Figure 6*), industrialist from Philadelphia (Schack, 1960), art *connoisseur* and collector (Kurriger, 1973; Meyers, 2006; Veder, 2015), and close friend of Dewey (Hart, 1963):

In the regeneration of American institutions which the world war has already started, no more important movement could be carried out than the adoption of Mr. Alexander's system as an integral part of a national educational plan. It should be started as soon as children begin their school life, for in that way only can the establishment of right habits of body and mind be assured at the most impressionable time of life. In the more advanced grades of school a proper application of the Alexander system would produce a better type of individual infinitely more receptive to studies which have for their object the development of body, mind and character. That this early use of the system would result in the practical elimination of the manifold mental and physical ills that have their foundation in plastic childhood and adolescence is a belief founded upon straight thinking and wise experience.

It is because of the lack of a scientific conception in modern educational practice that to-day Mr. Alexander's work concerns itself with adults who are the victims of vicious habits of body and mind. To those who have followed the arguments in "Man's Supreme Inheritance" and who have correlated them with the developments of modern psychology and physiology, there comes a tremendous [*sic*; J.S.] feeling of admiration for the genius of Mr. Alexander in bringing to his practical service such a vast fund of established facts, recognized as scientifically sound, but almost entirely ignored in practice. To strip scientific developments in normal and abnormal psychology of their technical baggage, to make available the valuable features of each of the various controversial contributions in those fields, and to contribute new facts is no small task. But even that achievement is not as important as the technique which Mr. Alexander has developed in the course of twenty years' experimentation, and by means of which established facts of normal and abnormal psychology become real in contributing to the re-education of seriously disorganized human beings.

The technique used by Mr. Alexander is scientifically sound in that it avails itself of known laws of physiology effected by physical means accepted in modern therapeutics. But, like the use of colors in painting, brilliantly successful results are, of course, due to that skill and knowledge which comes from long experience and the native sensitivity of the artist.

Mr. Alexander's announced principle of "conscious guidance and control" is far from being an isolated theory. It is, precisely the keynote [*sic*; J.S.] of all modern psycho-therapy, and that because theory and experience are in accord as to its validity and demonstrability. Where Mr. Alexander has gone beyond even the most renowned of the workers in the field of abnormal psychology is that he puts to use knowledge that the body and mind are not separable as units, but work in co-ordination as one, and he employs the means of a scientific physiological technique to bring about the harmonious co-operation of mind and body which makes the healthy, sane, balanced individual. That the Alexander system will find an important place in the curricula of progressive medical colleges is self-evident. Albert C. Barnes. (Barnes, n.d. 1).

It has all the signs that this text, this so-called "appreciation" from Barnes was intended to be published as one of the "appreciations" in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, alongside those "appreciations" of Dewey, Granger, Jowett, and Kallen (see above). If so, it was not included in the book for an unknown reason.

Barnes' "appreciation" was only published much later, in the 1996 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (Alexander, 1996, pp. 231-232), but lacking any indication by the editor of the 1996 edition as to its source, context, date, and provenance.

The first line, however, had already appeared in a 1919 newspaper advertisement by Alexander's American publisher E. P. Dutton & Co. (see *Figure 12*).

A second text written by Barnes to be sent with Tasker's letter promoting the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* was headed, "Copy of extracts from letters written by Dr. Albert C. Barnes [*sic*; J.S.] to Professor John Dewey concerning the thesis of 'Man's Supreme Inheritance' by F. Matthias Alexander." Below this headline was only a typed copy of a "November 1918" letter from Barnes to Dewey (see *Note 6*).

A third text has the following subheading: "Extract from a letter written by Dr. A. C. Barnes in answer to a reviewer of 'Man's Supreme Inheritance.'" The reviewer in question was "R. B.," that is, Randolph Bourne. Barnes began by referring to Dewey's "Reply to a Reviewer" in *The New Republic* of May 11, 1918 (Dewey, 1918c), before switching to criticize Bourne's reply to Dewey, entitled "Other Messiahs," in *The New Republic* of May 25, 1918 (Bourne, 1918b).

#### R.B. and Messiahs.

Professor Dewey's contention that R.B.'s review of Mr. Alexander's book exhibits "ingenuity in evading perception of the significant points" could be extended beyond the particular instances which Professor Dewey so successfully establishes.

In his reply to Professor Dewey, R.B. defines "intuition" as something not based upon "scientific procedures." In that definition he unconsciously gives the ghost to Professor Dewey and admits that R.B. does not know that the physiological technique used by Mr. Alexander is one made up of known physiological laws effected by accepted physiological means. To clutter the book with details of these laws would impair its [*sic*; J.S.] value; but they are sufficiently indicated even if not explicitly described in the book.

More serious in R.B.'s vision of the significant fact that the essence of all modern psycho-therapy is the general principle of "conscious control", the phrase used by Mr. Alexander as the essential feature of his work. Nothing in Mr. Alexander's theory conflicts with the principle of psycho-analysis. Instead of being, as R.B. contends, a "reversed psychoanalysis", it is a logically developed one, reinforced by a scientific physiological technique. It is a tribute to Mr. Alexander's genius that, at least as far as his book gives evidence, with no reference to the general theory of psycho-analysis, he has arrived, by different means, at essentially the same conclusions as Adler, one of the soundest and most brilliant of the psychoanalytical school. Adler's two books, "Organ Inferiority" and "The Neurotic Constitution", when compared with Alexander's "Man's Supreme Inheritance" give the impression that Alexander's is rather the scunder [*sic*; J.S.] and saner. Adler is the more penetrating in the psychological analyses that build up his theory of the compensation neuroses, while Alexander does not discuss abnormal [*sic*; J.S.] psychology and says nothing of compensation (in the Adler sense), but tacitly acknowledges the abnormal compensations and employs a scientific physiological technique to remove them.

R.B.'s objection to Alexander's building up a "cosmic philosophy" has no bearing upon his central idea. One could equally well object to McDougall's construction of a social psychology upon his analysis of the instincts, or to Graham Wallas' politics based upon his analysis of human nature. If there is anything in Alexander's contention that the individual is most efficient when he has conscious control of his co-ordinated body and mind, it seems a plausible conclusion that a society of such individuals will be free from the striking evils that are due to the participation in its activities of persons without conscious control of their empirical selves, which involves their bodies.

R.B.'s classification of Mr. Alexander with "other Messiahs" has a familiar sound to those acquainted with the history of the early lives of Galileo, Cezanne, Cesar Franck and similar pioneers.

Albert C. Barnes. (Barnes, n.d. 3).

Note that Bourne (1918a, p. 28) had not spoken of a cosmic philosophy but a "cosmic and evolutionary philosophy."

It has every sign that this text, written by Barnes, was intended to be published in *The New Republic* in response to Bourne's May 25, 1918, "Other Messiahs," his second exposé in the magazine on the American 1918 edition of Alexander's *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (Bourne, 1918b). The title "R. B. and Messiahs" unmistakably betrays the meaning of the text — "R. B." indicating Randolph Bourne.

In other words: it appears that in May 1918 there was some sort of behind-the-scenes collaboration between Dewey and Barnes, and probably in collusion with Alexander as well.

Barnes' text entitled "R. B. and Messiahs" has never been published. It did not come to an overt large-scale attack on Bourne in the May 1918 issues of *The New Republic*. And that is why the Bourne-Dewey controversy never became the Bourne-Dewey/Barnes controversy.

Copy of an appreciation written by Dr. Albert C. Barnes concerning the work of Mr. Matthias Alexander, as set forth in his book, "Man's Supreme Inheritance."

In the regeneration of American institutions which the world war has already started, no more important movement could be carried out than the adoption of Mr. Alexander's system as an integral part of a national educational plan. It should be started as soon as children begin their school life, for in that way only can the establishment of right habits of body and mind be assured at the most impressionable time of life. In the more advanced grades of school a proper application of the Alexander system would produce a better type of individual, infinitely more receptive to studies which have for their object the development of body, mind and character. That this early use of the system would result in the practical elimination of the manifold mental and physical ills that have their foundation in plastic childhood and adolescence is a belief founded upon straight thinking and wide experience.

It is because of the lack of a scientific conception in modern educational practice that to-day Mr. Alexander's work concerns itself with adults who are the victims of vicious habits of body and mind. To those who have followed the arguments in "Man's Supreme Inheritance" and who have correlated them with the developments of modern psychology and physiology, there comes a tremendous feeling of admiration for the genius of Mr. Alexander in bringing to his practical service such a vast fund of established facts, recognized as scientifically sound, but almost entirely ignored in practice. To strip scientific developments in normal and abnormal psychology of their technical baggage, to make available the valuable features of each of the various controversial contributions in those fields, and to contribute new facts is no small task. But even that achievement is not as important as the technique which Mr. Alexander has developed in the course of twenty years' experimentation, and by means of which established facts of normal and abnormal psychology become real in contributing to the re-education of seriously disorganized human beings.



**Figure 5:** Excerpt from "an appreciation" by A. C. Barnes (Barnes, n.d. 1); typescript attachment to Irene Tasker (n.d.) letter to potential customers, circa 1918/1919 (see Figure 4, above). (Courtesy of Rosslyn McLeod). **Figure 6:** Albert C. Barnes. (Jeroen Staring Collection).

Later that year, Alexander decided which "appreciations" should be included in the UK version of the expanded edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. Barnes' "appreciation" was not included. It may be that Barnes gave or sent (copies of) the two texts, quoted above, to Dewey who gave or sent them to Alexander; or, he had given or sent (copies of) the texts directly to Alexander (see also Stratil, 2020, p. 390, note 200), to be used by Alexander at his discretion.

Finally, it appears that Barnes and/or Dewey, gave or sent a copy of the text of the "November 1918" letter to Dewey — Barnes' second text mentioned above — to Alexander. And to further unravel the anti-Bourne academic network, it also turns out that Barnes (and/or Dewey, and/or Alexander) also had a copy of the text of that "November 1918" letter given or sent to Joseph Ratner (see Note 6).

Barnes, like Dewey, *seems* to have had no clue whatsoever of Alexander's connections to eugenicist and editor at the London publisher of the first edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, Caleb Williams Saleeby, and of other influences on Alexander and his book — not indicated by him in his book, or by him personally (compare Barnes' "November 1918" letter to Dewey in *Note 6*). Like Dewey, Barnes *seems* to have failed to understand Alexander's Butlerian evolutionism, Alexander's eugenics, and Alexander's racism (Staring, 1996, 1997, 2005). That would be rather strange, to say the least, for such an erudite person, for such erudite persons, since the eugenics and racism in the 1918 American edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* are so blatant, noticeable, plain, and obvious to any average reader of the book.

Barnes probably shared Alexander's views and opinions (see *Note 5*) — as did Dewey. This is also evident according to Alexander's assistant Tasker in her advertising letter, above (Tasker, n.d.).

### The 1918 Controversy over *Man's Supreme Inheritance* Continued by John Dewey

The Bourne-Dewey controversy over Alexander's 1918 edition of his book *Man's Supreme Inheritance* and his 'technique' consisted of three texts. That is, the dispute as it was known by the experts. However, the history needed to be rewritten in 1994 (Staring, 1994ab), because the 1918 British edition of Alexander's book added a chapter to the debate.

The Dewey letter "Another Letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey," as published in the 1918 British edition is clearly a letter addressed to Randolph Bourne. Dewey's intent was to (re-)correct the recipient's perception of the book. He tried to do this under the guise of almost praising Alexander into heaven:

I dwell on this point because before I had lessons myself, although I had talked with him, read his earlier book, and members of my family had had many lessons, I argued against what seemed to me prejudice on his part against psycho-analysis, on the ground that in principle his method was similar. Only after I had had experimental demonstration did I see how completely right he was in saying that their method was negative, and left the patient subject to the same thing in some other form; in fact, their own doctrine of transfer is an unconscious admission of the fact; no 'transfer' is possible with Mr. Alexander's method.

I have written at some length, although I realize that to you this is all probably a matter of argument and opinion, while with Mr. Alexander and with those who have had the good fortune to get inside his principle or method it is matter of sheer fact; he is the only person I have ever known, or known of, who knows what he is talking about in the sense that a competent engineer knows when he is talking about his speciality. (Dewey, 1918a, pp. *xxi-xxii*).

Why is "Another Letter from the Pen of Professor Dewey" a letter Dewey addressed to Bourne? Is it only because it is called "another letter," directly below the reprint of Dewey's "Reply to a Reviewer" in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, and one may therefore conclude that it was also written to Bourne? No, that's not it.

Is it just because Dewey reminded the addressee of his letter that he accepted James's theory of the emotions, and Bourne accepted it?

If you accept James's theory of the emotions, you will be able then to see the extent to which if Mr. Alexander's technique is sound, it is completely impossible that there should be conscious control-in his sense-and the impulses of which you speak remain uncontrolled, or the attitude towards life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness remain unaffected. (Dewey, 1918a, p. *xxi*).

No, that is not it either. Then, is it just because Dewey indicated that he had criticized the addressee before? After all, Dewey wrote,

Pardon me for repeating that only an almost incredible bias could have led you to write as if the thing you are objecting to had anything to do with Mr. Alexander's theory and practice, so completely is his theory as to conscious control the theory *of* his own technique. (Dewey, 1918a, p. *xx*).

No, that is not it either.

It is a letter to Bourne because Dewey replied to specific words and phrases that were *keywords* in Bourne's review of Alexander's book. As shown above, Bourne had used the concept of "reversed psycho-

analysis.” Dewey’s letter contains the phrases “inverted psycho-analysis” and “completed psycho-analysis.” In fact, Dewey criticized Bourne for calling Alexander’s ‘technique’ a “reversed psycho-analysis:”

Another way to get at it is to realize that instead of being inverted psycho-analysis, his method is a *completed* psycho-analysis, completed by having its organic basis placed under a merely floating parallelistic ‘psychic,’ and by being carried from the negative into the positive. (Dewey, 1918a, p. *xxi*).

Remember that Bourne (1918a, p. 29) in his book review spoke of “unwinding the psychic knots by getting control of the physical end-organs.”

Now, Dewey replied, in its entirety, to Bourne’s conception:

All of the ‘psychic’ complexes have their basis in organic dis-co-ordinations and tensions, with compensatory flabbinesses, and his technique is a technique for resolving and unravelling these, reducing the present technique of the psycho-analyst to an incidental accompaniment, and cutting out the elaborate ritualistic mummery with which the present psycho-analysts have been obliged to surround their method. In addition, Mr. Alexander’s technique unravels the kinks and complexes by a process of positive replacement in which sound co-ordinations are built up with their corresponding alterations in habitual sensory and emotional data, while at the best the psycho-analysts merely untie a knot and leave the organic causes which produced it untouched. (Dewey, 1918a, p. *xxi*).

Of course, there are more keywords to comment on, but the examples presented here are enough to prove the case. Along with the facts mentioned above, these lines refer to the philosopher Randolph Bourne. It is thus undeniable that Bourne must have been the addressee of Dewey’s letter of May 22, 1918, published in the 1918 British edition of Alexander’s *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*.

To conclude this part of this case study, the known history of the Bourne-Dewey controversy until 1994 only described the *public* debate of both philosophers. The *public* debate took place in *The New Republic* in May 1918. The *public* disputation consists of three texts: two written by Bourne, one by Dewey.

However, Dewey continued the debate by writing a personal letter to Randolph Bourne. In his letter, Dewey attempted to frame the debate on some of (what he called) Bourne’s ‘misconceptions.’ As for Alexander’s ‘technique,’ Dewey tried to persuade Bourne to gain *sensory* experience, taking lessons from Alexander, to change his mind. But at the same time, he indicated that Bourne probably would not accept his advice: “I have written at some length, although I realize that to you this is all probably a matter of argument and opinion” (Dewey, 1918a, p. *xxi*).

In 1994, therefore, the author of this case study added the following to the history of the Bourne-Dewey controversy. John Dewey continued the debate by writing a letter to Randolph Bourne. The letter was published in the 1918 British edition of F. Matthias Alexander’s *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* — entitled “Another Letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey.”

May 22, 1918	John Dewey wrote a letter to Randolph Bourne, concerning Bourne’s review of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> in <i>The New Republic</i> .
December 1918	Publication of the 1918 British edition of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> by Methuen & CO., LTD, London (Alexander 1918a). This edition of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> contains a reprint of Dewey’s response to Bourne’s review of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> in <i>The New Republic</i> as well as the publication of Dewey’s letter to Randolph Bourne, dated May 22, 1918 (Dewey, 1918a).

### The 1918 Bourne-Dewey Controversy over *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* in Literature

Over the past century, several authors have commented on the Bourne-Dewey controversy over *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* and Alexander’s ‘technique.’ Does this literature provide any indication of the continuation of the debate by Dewey in his May 22, 1918, letter?

**First**, there is the transcription of a conversation between professors that took place on “an informal evening of reminiscences and personal impressions of John Dewey” (Rice, 1993, p. *xvi*) in December 1958: *Dialogue on John Dewey* (Lamont (Ed.), 1959). The transcript was published on Dewey’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday — on October 20, 1959 (Lamont (Ed.), 1981, pp. 82-83). The topic of this conversation was ‘John Dewey as

the participants knew him.’ The participants included well-known philosophers (James Gutmann, Horace Kallen, Corliss Lamont, Ernest Nagel, John Herman Randall, Herbert Schneider, Harold Taylor, and Milton Halsay Thomas), an economist (Alvin Saunders Johnson), a socialist writer and politician (Harry Laidler), and a novelist (James Farrell). But unfortunately, we learn nothing about the above-mentioned continuation of the Bourne-Dewey controversy (see Lamont (Ed.), 1959, pp. 24-30).

**Second**, Paul Grimley Kuntz (1986, p. 28), in an article published in *The Alexander Review*, only mentioned Bourne and Dewey’s exchange of views in *The New Republic* (see Note 7). He did not elaborate on the debate, nor did he refer to Dewey’s letter of May 22, 1918, to Bourne (Dewey, 1918a). In a footnote, Kuntz (1986, p. 28) stated that Bourne had written “Making over the Body” — his review of Alexander’s book — from the perspective of the mind-body dualism, and that he had defended a philosophy-technique dualism in his rejoinder, “Other Messiahs.”

**Third**, Oscar and Lilian Handlin also focused their readers’ attention on the Bourne-Dewey controversy in their “Introduction” to Volume 11 of the *John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899-1924* (Handlin & Handlin, 1982, pp. x-xi), but no new facts were handed over by them. Dewey’s letter to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918, was not mentioned.

**Fourth**, Dewey’s “Another Letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey” (Dewey, 1918a) was not reprinted in the booklet entitled *John Dewey and F. Matthias Alexander II* (Murray (Ed.), 1991). In this booklet, only Bourne’s review of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (Bourne, 1918a) and Dewey’s “Reply to a Reviewer” (Dewey, 1918c) were reprinted together.

**Fifth**, even though Edward Maisel’s (1968, p. xx) *The Resurrection of the Body* covers the public debate, the book provided no references. Twenty years later, in an article in *The Alexander Review*, Maisel (1988, pp. 14-15) discussed the Bourne-Dewey controversy again, also in just one paragraph, but again no references were handed.

**Sixth**, Barbary Levine listed “Another Letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey” (Dewey, 1918a) in *Works about John Dewey •1886 – 1995•* (Levine (Ed.), 1996, p. 42), mentions, however, an erroneous date of publication of Alexander’s book (1928 instead of 1918) in the 1996 and later editions.

**Seventh**, Eric David McCormack’s thesis *Frederick Matthias Alexander and John Dewey: A Neglected Influence* refers to the Bourne-Dewey controversy over *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (McCormack, 1958, p. 245, notes 3-5). The controversy was broadly summarized by McCormack (1958, pp. 122-126). And, and this is a real surprise, McCormack even was aware of the text of Dewey’s response to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918. Portions of the letter, as published in the 1918 British edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* under the title “Another letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey” (Dewey, 1918a) were quoted by McCormack (1958, pp. 127-129, 199, 206-207). But there are strange circumstances associated with the text of Dewey’s letter quoted by McCormack (see Note 8).

What is striking in reading McCormack’s dissertation is the context that although McCormack was aware of the text of Dewey’s letter to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918 — as published in the 1918 British edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* under the title “Another letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey” (Dewey, 1918a) — he did not use a copy of the 1918 British edition of Alexander’s book. He stated that he had used the *fourth* British edition when writing his dissertation (McCormack, 1958, p. 245, note 5).

However, after his summary of the Bourne-Dewey controversy as published in *The New Republic*, he commented on and quoted Dewey’s letter to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918, introducing it as follows:

There is still another document which sheds some light on Dewey’s position with regard to Alexander at this time. It is a letter written to an objector to Alexander’s theory of conscious control. (McCormack, 1958, p. 127).

Apparently, McCormack did not associate this letter from Dewey with the Bourne-Dewey controversy, nor did he attempt a keyword search (see Note 9).

On the other hand, reading some quotes, without knowing the actual context of those quotes in the original text does not facilitate an understanding of those quotes (see Note 10).

Finally, McCormack added a note to his description of the contents of Dewey’s letter, dated May 22, 1918:

Dewey, letter to unidentified critic of Alexander, May 22, 1918. This letter is likewise in the files of The Alexander Foundation, but the name of the addressee has been withheld. (McCormack, 1958, p. 245, *note 10*).

It is likely that McCormack received a copy of Dewey's letter from Beaumont Alexander, the youngest brother of F. Matthias Alexander, because the word "likewise" in *note 10*, just quoted here, refers to *note 9* on the same page in McCormack's dissertation, referring to a letter from Dewey addressed to Alexander, dated November 20, 1917. McCormack quoted the letter:

I am immensely rejoiced that you are satisfied with my words of introduction. I knew that my intentions were good, but I was not confident of my ability to say the things that would be what you would like to have said by way of introduction. I assure you that I have much more reason to be grateful to you than you have to express your thanks to me. (Dewey, quoted in McCormack, 1958, p. 127).

Obviously, Dewey replied to a letter from Alexander thanking him for writing his "Introductory Word" to the 1918 American edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. *Note 9* in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of McCormack's dissertation mentions the name of the person who had sent (or given) him a copy of Dewey's letter to Alexander:

Letter, Dewey to Alexander, November 20, 1917. The original of this letter is in the files of The Alexander Foundation, 16 Ashley Place, London. SW1. Mr. Beaumont Alexander kindly furnished a copy to the writer. (McCormack, 1958, p. 245, *note 9*).

So, we now know that the name of the addressee of Dewey's letter, dated May 22, 1918, was withheld by Beaumont Alexander. What was *implicitly* withheld is information about the publication of the same letter in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. At least that can be deduced from the fact that McCormack did *not* provide such information in his *note 10*.

We can surmise that McCormack would have informed his readers to enable them to trace the full text of Dewey's letter had he himself been informed by Beaumont Alexander that Dewey's letter was published in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*.

McCormack did not; *ergo*, McCormack was *not* informed by Beaumont Alexander (see *Note 12*).

Then, was the information regarding the publication of Dewey's letter in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* intentionally withheld by Beaumont Alexander? In other words, was anything about the letter kept strictly secret? Had McCormack made a (simple) textual analysis of the letter? Had he associated the text of Dewey's letter with the Bourne-Dewey controversy? Did anyone familiar with McCormack's thesis associate Dewey's letter, dated May 22, 1918, with the Bourne-Dewey controversy (see *Note 11*)?

The first question is intriguing. Why was it so important to withhold the name of the addressee of Dewey's May 22, 1918, letter? Perhaps Alexander chose not to publish the recipient's name initially. He could have done so of his own accord, so he could have instructed his brother Beaumont, in turn, to withhold the name of the addressee. To this day, however, there is no evidence to justify this reconstruction of the course of the history of the publication of Dewey's letter (see *Note 12*).

But then it doesn't seem logical to publish "Reply to a Reviewer" in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* and at the same time to not mention the name of the recipient of "Another Letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey." One can — or for that matter, one could — easily discover that the name of the addressee of Dewey's letter is identical to the name of the recipient of Dewey's "Reply to a Reviewer," that is: Randolph Bourne. You can, or should, do that by keyword searches in Dewey's and Bourne's texts. Of course, it could be argued that Dewey could have concluded that printing the name of the addressee in Alexander's book was irrelevant, and only the text really mattered. That would end our investigation here and now. It would stop the 'detective work' at a crucial moment.

**Eighth**, Frank Pierce Jones's (1976, pp. 33-34) *Body Awareness in Action* devotes only one paragraph to the Bourne-Dewey controversy. Jones is known to have been Dewey's confidant regarding Alexander in the years before Dewey's death, so it is surprising that he did not use a copy of the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* when writing his Alexander biographical book. According to the text of his report on the Bourne-Dewey controversy over Alexander's book and 'technique,' it is not too



far-fetched to conclude that Jones was unaware that a letter from Dewey to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918, had been published in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*.

However, interestingly, in *Body Awareness in Action* Jones (1976, p. 99) quoted part of Dewey's letter to Bourne as follows:

Alexander, Dewey said, was the only person he knew or knew of “who knows what he is talking about in the way a competent engineer knows when he is talking about his speciality”.

In fact, Jones *misquoted* Dewey's letter to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918, quoted by McCormack (1958, p. 129). Dewey had not ended his letter by stating “in the way” (as quoted in Jones' book) but “in the sense” (as printed in Alexander's book, as well as quoted by McCormack in page 129 in his dissertation); but this aside.

Note that Jones also knew the text of Lee's *The Ghost in the White House* (Jones, 1976, p.37), but his *Body Awareness in Action* seems to show that he never wondered why Lee wrote that Dewey used the term “completed psycho-analysis” “in his introduction” (=Lee's words) to *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (see Note 5).

By the way, McCormack never quoted or referred to the term.

(And note — again — that the phrase “completed psycho-analysis” was *not* used by Dewey in his “Introductory Word” to the US and UK editions of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. The term was *only* used by Dewey in his letter of May 22, 1918, which was exclusively printed in the 1918 British edition of the book).

In the absence of any evidence against the following supposition, we can state that although Jones was Dewey's confidant for many years, Dewey did not tell him that he had written a private letter to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918. Dewey's correspondence to Bourne appears to be not worth mentioning, or, a secret, hidden deep in Dewey's heart and soul.

Finally, *ninth*, in 2002, eight years after the first edition of the booklet that forms the basis of this case study including the above exposition concerning McCormack and Jones's writing appeared (Staring, 1994a), Thomas C. Dalton arrived at the same theme — albeit through a different line of inquiry.

It concerns the question, “Did McCormack know to whom Dewey's private letter, dated May 22, 1918, was addressed, and/or did Jones perhaps know?”

Here is Dalton's independent reasoning, ignorant of the existence of the author of this case study's previously (1994) published reasoning:

McCormack notified Frank Jones on June 16, 1958, that he had received from Beaumont Alexander a copy of a letter Dewey had sent to an unnamed reviewer of Alexander's book [...]. McCormack asked Jones's opinion as to whom the letter was directed. Jones speculated, correctly in my opinion, in his response to McCormack's query on June 20 that Dewey's letter, which was dated May 22, 1918, was intended for Randolph Bourne. It seems clear from the context of Dewey's remarks that he had additional criticisms of Bourne's review that he preferred to send directly to Bourne. For example, Dewey asks in his letter that he “pardoned for repeating that only an almost incredible bias could have led you to write as if the thing you are objecting to had anything to do with Mr. Alexander's theory and practices.” Dewey also argued that instead of being what Bourne had asserted was “an inverted psychoanalysis,” Dewey protested that “his method [Alexander's technique] is a completed psychoanalysis, completed by having its organic basis placed under a merely floating parallelistic ‘psychic,’ and by being carried from the negative to the positive.” Dewey contended that Alexander's important discovery that “all of the psychic complexes have their basis in organic discoordinations and tensions ... reduces the present technique of the psychoanalyst to an incidental accompaniment, and cuts out the elaborate ritualistic mummery with which the present psychoanalysts have been obliged to surround their method.” (Dalton, 2002, p. 312, Note 62).

Dalton was clearly *unaware* that Dewey's letter to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918, had been printed in the British edition of Alexander's 1918 book; that is, nearly 85 years before he published his *Becoming John Dewey* in 2002!

But now other things have become clear as well. It turns out that McCormack knew to whom Dewey's letter was most likely addressed. Jones had rightly speculated that it might have been Randolph

Bourne, and why he thought so. Therefore: since his correspondence with Jones in June 1958, McCormack knew more than four months before he received his PhD on Friday, October 31, 1958 (McCormack, 1958) that the “unidentified critic” might have been Bourne. But he did *not* disclose this knowledge and he did *not* report his correspondence with Jones regarding the “unidentified critic” in his dissertation (compare *Seventh*, above).

And Jones knew it too when he was writing his paragraph about the Bourne-Dewey controversy over Alexander’s book. But he also did *not* disclose his knowledge in his *Body Awareness in Action*, nor the June 20, 1958, letter of his correspondence with Eric David McCormack (compare *Eighth*, above).

### An Unintended Outcome of Eric David McCormack’s Dissertation and Jones’ Book

Could Dewey himself have been staunchly and firmly against the publication of the name of the recipient of his letter of May 22, 1918 (see *Note 10*)? If Dewey did not want Bourne’s name published, then we must ask *why* he would oppose the publication of the name of the addressee of his letter. And: did he really send the letter to Bourne? Of course, after so many years, the first two of these questions are difficult to answer. No one ever asked Alexander about it, neither did they ask Dewey. Perhaps the questions can then be answered by taking a detour — by trying to answer the third question?

Perhaps Bourne’s correspondence can provide some vital clues? *The Letters of Randolph Bourne*, edited by Eric Sandeen (1981), does not contain a single letter from Bourne to Dewey. However, if we consult Casey Nelson Blake’s *Beloved Community*, we find a reference to a letter written by Bourne, addressed to Dewey, dated May 28, 1918. While Blake (1990, pp. 257-260) discussed Waldo Frank’s praise for Alexander’s book and ‘technique,’ he gave us a few lines devoted to the Bourne-Dewey controversy over Alexander’s book and ‘technique’ in a note:

The Randolph S. Bourne Papers at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, contain a draft of a letter to Dewey, dated 28 May 1918, that continued the debate. Bourne criticized Dewey’s enthusiasm for “a sort of pragmatic demonstration of your philosophy in the field of the human body.” “What I said about the need of a philosophy of conscious desire to supplement a philosophy of conscious control applies to Mr. Alexander’s technique as to instrumentalism,” he wrote. “That is why it seems to me Mr. A’s philosophy-technique strictly needs psycho-analysis or some other philosophy-technique of conscious desire and imagination to work with it.” (Blake, 1990, p. 333, *note 42*).

This is undoubtedly a reply to Dewey’s letter to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918!

Bourne criticized Dewey’s awe of Alexander. Furthermore, he responded to Dewey’s views on “completed psycho-analysis,” a term Dewey had *only* used in his letter to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918. And the letter is a response to the first part of Dewey’s letter of May 22, 1918.

Hence, another chapter should be added to the history of the controversy:

January 1918	Publication of the first printing of the 1918 American edition of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> by E. P. Dutton & Company, New York (Alexander, 1918b).
May 1918	Publication of the second printing of the 1918 American edition of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> by E. P. Dutton & Company, New York (Alexander, 1918c).
May 4, 1918	Publication of Randolph Bourne’s review, “Making over the Body,” in <i>The New Republic</i> (Bourne, 1918a).
May 11, 1918	Publication of John Dewey’s reply to Bourne’s review, “Reply to a Reviewer,” in <i>The New Republic</i> (Dewey, 1918c).
May 22, 1918	John Dewey wrote a letter to Randolph Bourne, concerning Bourne’s review of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> in <i>The New Republic</i> .
May 25, 1918	Publication of Randolph Bourne’s rejoinder, “Other Messiahs,” in <i>The New Republic</i> (Bourne, 1918b).
May 28, 1918	Randolph Bourne wrote a reply to John Dewey’s letter, dated May 22, 1918.
December 1918	Publication of the 1918 British edition of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> by Methuen & CO., LTD, London (Alexander 1918a). This edition of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> contains a reprint of Dewey’s response to Bourne’s review of <i>Man’s Supreme Inheritance</i> in <i>The New Republic</i> as well as the publication of Dewey’s letter to Randolph Bourne, dated May 22, 1918 (Dewey, 1918a).

It is very clear by now that Dewey continued the debate by writing a letter to Bourne on May 22, 1918. The evidence provided by Blake indicates that Bourne received Dewey's letter and again rejected Dewey's philosophical claim; as well as the latter's claim that Alexander's principle was "experimental;" and that Bourne somehow rejected Dewey's instrumentalism by rejecting the claim that Alexander's 'technique' was "a sort of pragmatic demonstration of your [= Dewey's; J.S.] philosophy in the field of the human body."

Fortunately, Bourne's reply to Dewey's private letter of May 22, 1918, quoted by Blake in 1990, has been preserved. The draft copy, or a copy, of Bourne's letter to Dewey is in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library of the Butler Library at Columbia University, New York. After a long search for this message to Dewey, it was found in 1994 in the archives of the Butler Library. The text is reproduced here in print (except for a few words, which could not be deciphered by the author of this case study and two 'helper-translators;' see *Note 13*).

### Randolph Bourne's May 28, 1918, Response to John Dewey's May 22, 1918, Letter

Reply to Dewey 28 May 1918

A certain amount of misunderstanding may have come from the fact that I formed my judgment of Mr. Alexander's work from the American edition, while you got your first impression from the English [= 1910 English edition; J.S.; see *Note 18*]. Certainly if I had read this latter first, I could not taken it as anything but a concise [in a ??? ???? psycho-physical] clear presentation of the "philosophy of his technique" as you put it. I might have been struck by the fact that the only authorities he mentions are Ralph Waldo Trine, author of *In Tune with the Infinite*, and a Dr. Clubbe of Sydney. But the book as a statement of dogma is excellently done. The American Edition, however, is much padded up with additional matter, letters and replies to critics, a chapter of new/dubious comment on the war, a chapter on education with still more dubious references to music and dancing. The book is repetitious and inchoate. With your introduction and the applications to sociology and education, I was naturally interested, as a reviewer "man in the street", in the broader application. This, both you and he, seemed to provide, and my error in confusing conscious control with your instrumentalism was a natural one. Certainly there was more in the American edition than a mere "philosophy of the technique". If Mr. Alexander's philosophy ~~has no~~ does not derive from yours at least it has the strongest intellectual affinity with your instrumentalism. Could you have been as enthusiastic about Mr. A's phi., if it had not been a sort of pragmatic demonstration of your philosophy in the field of the human body? That is why I do not quite understand your own eagerness to dissociate yourself from Mr. Alexander's. You imply perhaps that my mind is carrying over a bias against your philosophy into my judgment of Mr. Alexander's, so that if I can be made to feel that his philosophy is a wholly separate thing. I will be more inclined to an open mind about him. But my "bias" is not a "bias" so much as a feeling of incompleteness, and this feeling I get from the practical implications of your instrumentalism just as I get it from Mr. Alexander's philosophy. In my review, I had no intention of disparaging his work. In fact, I thought I admitted that his results were all that he and his friends claimed for it, in the sense that he could produce the muscular co-ordinations with the resulting amazing improvements in health and vigor. I even believe that he knows the one right way of handling the body, that, as you put it, he knows what he is talking about, in the sense that a competent engineer knows his specialty. Everything that I have heard about his work from people who know him and have taken treatment convinces me that this confidence is wholly justified. I am not a scoffer and a skeptic. But that this belief in his technique requires me to accept every word of his philosophical buttressing, or to believe that his technique is so comprehensive in its effects as to annihilate other techniques such as psycho-analysis, I do not see. You do not claim about your philosophy that it is final inclusive and exclusive truth, and yet when you speak of Mr. Alexander you seem to come pretty near asserting that the future of humanity depends on this one technique and this one set of beliefs alone. I admit that one has to be inside the matter, and have felt the sensations of the effects in one's own body before one can see it as sheer fact. But I had imagined that I was giving proof of an open mind by accepting the technique on the evidence of the book, and of people who had studied with Mr. Alexander, taken treatment and seen his work in experimental schools. In other people I found no tendency to insist that the philosophy was completely a philosophy of the technique and had to be swallowed together with it.

May I discuss these disagreements? 1. As to whether the technique is experimental. Now Mr. Alexander's book is not put in experimental language. It is entirely a priori. It is dogma. Writing on a matter which opens up the whole question of the relation of mind and body, which raises innumerable problems, he is innocent of scientific reference, ~~the only authority~~ except to Ralph Waldo Trine and Dr. Clubbe of Sydney. Even in his first edition, he does not confine

himself to physiology or psycho- physics but ~~goes into~~ touches lightly on extremely complex fields of anthropological evolution, announcing in tones of fact what must be still hypothesis. He has, in fact, a theory of psycho-physical evolution which surely outranges any mere philosophy of his technique. As to his method being experimental, he does not give, in any form which I could understand, any clue as to how he worked it up. I am told that he began by curing serious muscular disco-ordinations in his own body, and by ~~incessant~~ practice and searching gradually discovered the correct co-ordinations for the entire body. I do not see how the term experimentation can be rightly used for this process. It seems more like that of a gifted child learning to play the piano. After you have accepted the whole theory of conscious control and agree that conscious guiding orders may be sent from the brain to the muscles, there still comes the question what orders shall be sent. Mr. Alexander could not possibly have perfected his technique in the way an physical scientist learns his specialty by manipulating material and forces outside himself. Mr. Alexander when he controlled his muscular system must have known he was right, and his knowledge neither his hypothesis—which stops just at the point of the sending of the actual orders—nor any experiment could have told him. Another person, getting his muscles under conscious control, might simply get another faulty co-ordination, and be ignorant of it. ~~The fact that Mr. Alexander~~ What objective standard or test would there be? The fact that Mr. Alexander knew that he was right, and the other would not, seems me to justify the use of the term intuition or gift. Now, of course, the person who is put into the right position by Mr. Alexander gets the sensation of rightness, but Mr. Alexander could not have gotten that original rightness by trial and error. If truly he had, he would have, as a truly experimental mind, shown the process by which he arrived at his conclusion.

But the question whether Mr. Alexander's method is truly experimental or not, is not nearly as important as whether conscious control is a sufficient reliance for the future of humanity. What I said about the need of a philosophy of conscious desire to supplement a philosophy of conscious control applies equally well to Mr. Alexander's technique as to instrumentalism. All you suggest in reply is that the creative desires could not remain unaffected by a process which gave the body conscious control. Well, I should say, in the first place that it is not enough that the life of creative aims are be affected. Conscious desire for these realization of these values in life must completely dominate the system of conscious control if the personality as well as the organism is not given its best expressive health. How little conception Mr. Alexander has of these higher values is shown by his attitude towards music, drawing and dancing in the experimental school. He finds them dangerous if indulged in before the child has gotten its body under conscious control. In other words, he would congeal the whole process of education, even play, until the child had a perfect physical instrument to work with. Now this may be of ideally desirable, but it is clear that life is not like that. The child's imagination and need for activity run straight on and must be provided for. Mr. Alexander does not see that the value of the stimulus to the child's imagination which comes from taking up music or drawing or dancing when they attract him would far outweigh the evil of a faulty co-ordination, which could be corrected with comparative ease later. It is the guiding imagination which is all important, but there is not the least place in his system for that. A combination of creative imagination plus faulty co-ordination is likely to be far more useful to the future of humanity than perfect co-ordination plus a bovine vision. Mr. A's children would be all dressed up with no place to go. ~~Undoubtedly the artist will be a better artist with the possession of conscious control. But conscious~~ The question whether the artist will be a better artist if he is in possession of conscious control is a very complex one. It may be that artistic expression is a projection of the artist's own complexes, so that if he was completely untangled, artistic power would disappear.

How little the attainment of conscious control may affect those higher qualities of taste, imagination, reasonableness, also that sensibility, is shown, I think, in Mr. Alexander's own case. Not only in his attitude towards music, but in what I am told are his general opinions, does he seem other than what we might expect of a colonial bourgeois of the most faulty co-ordinations. His friends say that his mind has is anything but open on social and political questions, not to speak of the theories in his own field: that he lacks artistic sensibility, but freely utters judgments on artistic matters; that his philosophical ambitions give him almost the air of a crank; in other words, that personally he is just an ordinary matter-of-fact human being, with about the full set of prejudices, of artistic complexes and irrational subconscious motivations. If it is true that this most perfectly conscious controlled of human beings cannot be distinguished in personal and spiritual attitudes from types which are unconsciously controlled—however superior his physical functioning may be, it must be that conscious control needs much supplementing both by psychical and cultural techniques to make it an acceptable all-inclusive philosophy and technique. ~~An illustration.~~ Mr. A has devoted considerable attention to acting and elocution, has trained actors, and writes himself. A friend of mine who was taking his treatment, heard him impersonate a Shakespeare play. He said that, however perfectly co-ordinated Mr. A's organism might be, the acting was very bad. This was due, of course, to Mr. A's faulty imagination, and no amount of conscious control could remedy that. He could give orders to his body, but he did not know what orders to give to produce the synthetic artistic effect that he wanted. Neither did he know that he did not know. In spite of his perfectly

controlled body, he was still not only could not conceive the parts, but he was still in the grip of unconscious illusions which ~~still~~ deceived him as to the reality of his powers.

This seems to me an admirable illustration of my point, that without conscious desire, conscious control may be habitually thrown to ends and purposes that are highly unprofitable to, if not destructive of ~~life,~~ <sup>b</sup> the higher values of life. That is why, it seems to me, Mr. A's philosophy-technique strictly needs psycho-analysis or some philosophy-technique of conscious desire and imagination to work with it. One case, for instance, which I heard of baffled Mr. A's treatment because the person was in the grip of a mental conflict which made conscious control impossible. With the best will in the world, the patient ~~could not~~ was prevented from sending the correct orders to the muscles. Only after psycho-analysis had ~~untangled the~~ resolved the mental conflict could Mr. A's treatment take effect. Can Mr. A. cure cases of hysteria which produce bodily symptoms? Even supposing that he secures a bodily balance and co-ordination which makes the particular symptoms disappear, what is to prevent it from appearing somewhere else in another form, as long as the repressed mental conflict which produced it exists? And I don't see how, with his hostility to psycho-analysis, Mr. A. is going to settle these questions or answer these objections. If psychic complexes are merely the result of faulty organic co-ordinations, ~~the~~ <sup>????</sup> how ~~do you a~~ would he account for the fact that savages, to whom Mr. A. ascribes a superior but unconscious co-ordination which has been wracked in the progress to civilized life, have evolved a luxuriance of psychic material in myth and ritual which the Jungeans are identifying with the personal complexes recognizable in the individual? As I understand Mr. A., this unconscious co-ordination is adequate for primitive life. Why then is it somehow accompanied by a greater nervous instability, and a more exuberant fantasy than is characteristic of civilized man, with all his development of the higher centers and the divorce from the lower habit automatisms?

I write you this long essay not because I know the answer to any of these questions. Mr. A's book opens so many problems of the relation of body and mind, and the whole question of the relation of the ethnological content. All I want to show you that my bias is only a feeling of insufficiency, and that the same ~~argument that can be brought~~ <sup>against</sup> difficulties that can be found with instrumentalism can be found with conscious control. (Bourne, 1918c).

<p><del>word</del> = word, or words, crossed out by Randolph Bourne. [.....] = words inserted by Randolph Bourne. ???? = word(s) not deciphered by author of this case study and 'helper-translators' (see <i>Note 13</i>).</p>
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### The 1994 Update of the 1918 Bourne-Dewey Controversy

Remember that Dewey, in his "Reply to a Reviewer" in *The New Republic*, had argued,

Mr. Alexander's [...] principle is experimental; it can be asserted and rendered intelligible in a book; proof lies in doing it. From the book the idea which the reader can get will be but a more or less clear 'intuition.' To say, as 'R. B' [= Randolph Bourne; J.S.] does, that it is an intuition with Mr. Alexander is to intimate that he is either the most self-deluded of mortals or that he is a deliberate faker of the first magnitude. The cleverness which presents a principle which claims to be one of conscious control, as if it were a matter of personal intuition, is not a cleverness which I envy 'R. B' [= Randolph Bourne; J.S.]. (Dewey, 1918c).

Bourne had already criticized that uninformed, misleading claim by Dewey:

Professor Dewey says that Mr. Alexander's principle is "experimental," but there is no evidence in the book that this "education which will integrate the functions now so disastrously divided," has been worked out by experimentation, or that Mr. Alexander has ever made the slightest step in the use of his psychological technique towards experimental establishment of his simple and sweeping claims. (Bourne, 1918b).

Thirteen years later, in the fall of 1931, Alexander finally published a story about (what we might call) his alleged 'experiments on himself,' in the chapter entitled "Evolution of a Technique" in his book *The Use of the Self* (Alexander, n.d. 3, pp. 3-36).

In his "Introduction" to *The Use of the Self*, Dewey stated,

In writing some introductory words to Mr. Alexander's previous book, *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* [= Alexander, 1923; J.S.], I stated that the procedure and conclusions meet

all the requirements of the strictest scientific method, and that he has applied the method in a field in which it had never been used before—that of our judgments and beliefs concerning ourselves and our activities. In so doing, he has, I said in effect, rounded out the results of the sciences in the physical field, accomplishing this end in such a way that they become capable of use for human benefit. [...]. If there can be developed a technique which will enable individuals to secure the right use of themselves, then the factor upon which depends the final use of all other forms of energy will be brought under control. Mr. Alexander has evolved this technique. [...]. Those who do not identify science with a parade of technical vocabulary will find in [Alexander's] account the essentials of scientific method in any field of inquiry. They will find a record of long continued, patient, unwearied experimentation and observation in which every inference is extended, tested, corrected by further more searching experiments; they will find a series of such observations in which the mind is carried from observation of comparatively coarse, gross, superficial connections of causes and effect to those casual conditions which are fundamental and central in the use which we make of ourselves. (Dewey, n.d., pp. *xiii-xiv*).

Jones (1976, p. 45) argued that the first chapter in Alexander's *The Use of the Self* is “an exemplar of all the major steps that, according to Dewey, are characteristic of a scientific inquiry.” Dewey had outlined these steps in his 1910 *How We Think*:

Upon examination, each instance reveals, more or less clearly, five logically distinct steps: (i) a felt difficulty; (ii) its location and definition; (iii) suggestion of possible solution; (iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief. (Dewey, 1910, p. 72).

Alexander's alleged self-observations, experiments, and self-analysis, described in the first chapter of his *The Use of the Self*, are believed by his followers to date from 1892 to sometime in 1893, nearly four decades before his *The Use of the Self* first appeared, and nearly two decades before Dewey's *How We Think* was published (Staring, 2005). Jones (1976, p. 45) suggested that Alexander's story of his self-observations, experiments, and self-analysis in *The Use of the Self* was written in accordance with Dewey's request for such an account (consult Staring, 2005, pp. 485-486, *note 143*).

It is interesting to note here that Alexander's assistants Irene Tasker and Ethel Webb, both students in the First International Montessori Teacher Training Course taught by Maria Montessori in the winter and spring of 1913 in Rome, also helped him edit his 1918, 1923 and 1931 books. (Note that besides Alexander and his brother Albert Redden, by the late 1910s and into the 1920s only both Tasker and Webb and Ruth Mitchell (Smith Alumnae Quarterly, 1926, p. 516) taught Alexander's methods in the US). Webb had studied Dewey's writings, and Tasker had been a postgraduate student with Dewey (Bloch, 2004; *Christian Advocate*, 1918; Dalton, 2002; Fitzgerald, 2014; Murray, 2020; Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014; Stratil, 2020). So, it seems strongly that Alexander's story, or ‘account,’ of his self-examination and self-analysis was written and edited to serve as a *textbook example* of “all the major steps that, according to Dewey, are characteristic of a scientific inquiry” (Jones, 1976, p. 45), especially so because Dewey himself had helped, guided and steered Alexander by actively editing Alexander's *The Use of the Self* (Dalton, 2002, pp. 119-120; 312, *Note 60*).

Note that Alexander certainly did not help alter that impression. For example, in 1948, the British *Leader Magazine* ran an article on Alexander that included a short biography of him, stating that he observed himself and experimented on himself for “hours on end, over weeks and months” (Owen, 1948). This time investment seems plausible.

However, Alexander increased the computation over the years. In 1953 he appears to have told the press that it “took him *ten years* [...] *during which he spent most of the day in front of mirrors* examining and watching every motion he made in the acts of standing, sitting and speaking” (Searle & Webb, 1953; italics J.S.). Self-aggrandizement was not strange to Alexander; it was part of his advertising strategy since 1895 (Staring, 2021, 2022). In this case, however, to say the least, his self-aggrandizing directly detracted from the credibility, plausibility and acceptability of his story in *The Use of the Self*, which was not highly credible at all in the first place since it was published nearly 40 years after it supposedly happened; because Alexander had not made and/or kept any records of his experiments (with date, time, and circumstances and

results of his experiments); and because Alexander had no evidence at all that it happened as he described it; and because Dewey himself had been editing the text of Alexander's *The Use of the Self*; and ..., and ..., and ...

At the time of Dewey's private letter to Bourne, May 22, 1918, Bourne's second appraisal of Alexander's book *Man's Supreme Inheritance* had not yet been published in *The New Republic* (May 25, 1918). Dewey was *probably* unaware of the contents of that rejoinder. On the other hand, he might have known the text of Bourne's response to his "Reply to a Reviewer" before it was published, *if* it had been shown to him (or a copy sent) by Herbert Croly, the editor of *The New Republic*.

Anyway, Dewey had referred to *his own* experience with Alexander's 'technique' in his May 22, 1918, letter to Bourne — published in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. It seems that the "experimental demonstration" — received from Alexander — had completely dispelled Dewey's skepticism. This *extremely naive* part of his letter probably annoyed Bourne when he read it (because he had already rejected this kind of reasoning in his rejoinder in *The New Republic*). Bourne must have thought that Dewey was totally incorrigible (see also Haskell, 1923; Heyward Gibbes, 1925; Holmes, 1919; Jastrow, 1924; Kruijf, 1922; MacCurdy, 1920; Peterson, 1919ab; Shields, 1921; Roeder, 1920; Staring, 2015b; Walsh, 1923, 1925; Zigrosser, 1918).

As late as the "Introduction" to Alexander's 1931 book *The Use of the Self*, wanting to prove his point that Alexander's views were scientifically correct, Dewey referred to the work of pharmacologist Rudolf Magnus in trying to explain that a fantasy theory of Alexander had proven right by Magnus.

Magnus *proved* by means of what may be called external evidence *the existence of a central control in the organism. But Mr. Alexander's technique gave a direct and intimate confirmation in personal experience of the fact of central control long before Magnus carried on his investigations. And one who has had experience of the technique knows it through the series of experiences which he himself has. The genuinely scientific character of Mr. Alexander's teaching and discoveries can be safely rested upon this fact alone.* (Dewey, n.d., pp. *xiii-xiv*; italics J.S.).

Alexander and his followers were in full agreement with Dewey, especially those who had inspired Dewey to make his false claims about Alexander's fantasy theory — foremost, of course, Alexander himself (Staring, 2015a).

Back to 'following-the-evidence.' All things considered, Blake was wrong in stating that Bourne continued the debate with Dewey about Alexander's book and 'technique.' It was Dewey who *continued* the debate. But maybe Bourne *ended* it — rudely, in Dewey's eyes?

Why? Well, we can safely assume that Bourne received Dewey's letter of May 22, 1918, as we know from Blake's reference that Bourne wrote a reply to Dewey on May 28, 1918: the "draft" (or copy) of Bourne's letter ("Reply to Dewey 28 May 1918") as printed above (Bourne, 1918c).

Note: Blake did not examine next stages of the history of Bourne's letter to Dewey.

Did Dewey receive Bourne's reply to his letter of May 22, 1918?

The correspondence may have ended on May 28, 1918. Blake may have indicated that Bourne never completed his reply to Dewey, stating that the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York City contains a "*draft*" of a letter to Dewey.

Therefore, had Dewey received the text of this (draft) letter? In other words, is the letter in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library a *draft* letter, or is it a *copy* of a letter sent to Dewey? Did Bourne make Dewey wait for his answer? Had the exchange of arguments reached a dead end?

We know that both men's correspondence never resumed *after* May 28, 1918. In any case, there is not even evidence that Dewey received a letter, written by Bourne, dated May 28, 1918. And there is no evidence either that any other letters were written by either man in June or July, or later in 1918.

In addition, Dewey was not at home at the time of the possible arrival of Bourne's letter. On the evenings of May 28, 29 and 30, Dewey delivered his Raymond Fred West Lectures on Immortality, Human Conduct, and Human Destiny at Leland Stanford Junior University of California (McCormack, 1958, p. 237, *note 184*).

But then: he might have received Bourne's reply to his letter at home, or in California, but he kept this fact a secret. If this matches true history, then it was Dewey who never resumed correspondence with Bourne. Dewey (then) must have had his reasons for this kind of behavior.

What could be the result? To answer this question, we must consult the literature again, 'following-the-evidence.' Now that we have added a letter from Dewey and a (*draft* or *copy* of a) letter from Bourne to the history of the Bourne-Dewey controversy about Alexander, perhaps we can find clues in the literature about this debate that will enable us to solve our puzzling problem. Perhaps we can find a solution by looking for hints or unexpected inklings in familiar texts?

Let us get back to the controversy for a moment. If we study the beginning of the debate in *The New Republic*, we will see what Bourne meant by his remark about the "need for a philosophy-technique of conscious desire." In his "Making over the Body," he made the following comment about this "need of a philosophy-technique of conscious desire:"

Is an era of world-war, in which statesmen are proving as blind and helpless as the manipulated masses, quite the most convincing time for so far-flung a philosophy of conscious control? Of desire, will, revolt—yes; but not the anticipation that we begin a new era of human intelligence. Mr. Alexander thinks the war is the product of too much reliance on instinctive guidance in human affairs. (Bourne, 1918a, pp. 28-29).

Dewey took the criticism very seriously. His private reply of May 22, 1918, was a response to almost every single word Bourne had used in the two lines quoted here.

And, in a sense, Bourne continued *another* debate he had with Dewey: the debate over the war (see *Note 14*). Dewey responded extensively. This is how Dewey opened his "Another Letter from the Pen of Professor John Dewey," *i.e.*, his private answer to Bourne:

What Mr. Alexander calls conscious control has practically nothing but the name in common with what you associate with conscious control. Do you imagine, for instance, that the Germans or any other nation had actually been employing Mr. Alexander's method before the war? Pardon me for repeating that only an almost incredible could have led you to write as if the thing you are objecting to had anything to do with Mr. Alexander's theory and practice, so completely is his theory as to conscious control the theory of his own technique. If you will put to yourself that what you object to as conscious control is simply one side of what Mr. Alexander is attacking as abnormal, namely the isolation of the higher or 'intellectual' centres. If you will see that to him conscious control integrally involves control by *sensory* appreciations which have been rendered habitually normal, and that in fact what you call conscious control is with him chiefly a part of the agency of getting a re-educated sensory appreciation, you may get in the right attitude for understanding him, provided you are willing to study the book and his work more carefully. 'Sensory' is here used to cover, of course, all immediate data of bodily organs, 'organic sensations,' as well as general kinesthesias. If you accept James's theory of the emotions, you will be able then to see the extent to which if Mr. Alexander's technique is sound, it is completely impossible that there should be conscious control—in his sense—and the impulses of which you speak remain uncontrolled, or the attitude towards life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness remain unaffected. (Dewey, 1918a, pp. xx-xxi).

And what about Bourne's assessment of Dewey's "instrumentalism"? Bourne had already criticized Dewey's instrumentalism in his "Making over the Body:"

Philosophy is a dangerous quicksand. Professor Dewey's instrumentalism has held out to Mr. Alexander a helping hand, but has scarcely saved him from getting at times beyond his depth. He has a physiological technique which is apparently a kind of reversed psycho-analysis, unwinding the psychic knots by getting control of the physical end-organs. (Bourne, 1918a, p. 29).

In his "Reply to Dewey 28 May 1918," that is, his draft letter, or his copy of a letter, to Dewey, Bourne explained to Dewey why he criticized his instrumentalism in relation to his comments on Alexander's philosophy in *Man's Supreme Inheritance*.

The book is repetitious and inchoate. With your introduction and the applications to sociology and education, I was naturally interested, as a reviewer "man in the street", in the broader application. This, both you and he, seemed to provide, and my error in confusing conscious control with your instrumentalism was a natural one. Certainly there was more in the American edition than a mere



“philosophy of the technique”. If Mr. Alexander’s philosophy ~~has not~~ does not derive from yours at least it has the strongest intellectual affinity with your instrumentalism. Could you have been as enthusiastic about Mr. A’s phi., if it had not been a sort of pragmatic demonstration of your philosophy in the field of the human body? That is why I do not quite understand your own eagerness to dissociate yourself from Mr. Alexander’s. You imply perhaps that my mind is carrying over a bias against your philosophy into my judgment of Mr. Alexander’s, so that if I can be made to feel that his philosophy is a wholly separate thing. I will be more inclined to an open mind about him. But my “bias” is not a “bias” so much as a feeling of incompleteness, and this feeling I get from the practical implications of your instrumentalism just as I get it from Mr. Alexander’s philosophy. (Bourne, 1918c, pp. 1-2).

Bourne then responded to Dewey’s comments about his presumed “bias;” about Dewey’s comments whether Alexander’s ‘technique’ was experimental or not; about Alexander’s views regarding progressive education (see *Note 19*); about reports of Alexander’s unconvincing acting performances; and to Dewey’s comments on his own (= Bourne’s) advocacy of the need for a philosophy of conscious desire to complement a philosophy of conscious control. These responses, and a few more, are not discussed here. They were kind, detailed, but firm. They were not hostile, but rather straightforward and to the point. (The text of Bourne’s letter to Dewey, originally eight handwritten pages, is printed above).

During the December 1958 conversation-among-professors, referenced earlier, Farrell ended their discussion about Alexander, Bourne, and Dewey by revealing the following:

Years later, I pressed Dewey on all these questions. I was too brash, I recall that on the train going to Mexico in 1937 I pressed him very hard on Randolph Bourne. John showed no animus, and he said in his calm way that Bourne was extremely clever and gifted, but he did not have depth. It was evident that John was speaking without animus. (Lamont (Ed.), 1959, p. 30).

Now, of course, the term “depth” could refer to Bourne’s intellect, as one can easily conclude from Farrell’s revelation. But it could be a reference to the following in Dewey’s private reply to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918 (for the context of the quote, see the text of the full letter to Bourne, printed above).

If you will see that to him conscious control integrally involves control by *sensory* appreciations which have been rendered habitually normal, and that in fact what you call conscious control is with him chiefly a part of the agency of getting a re-educated sensory appreciation, you may get in the right attitude for understanding him, provided you are willing to study the book and his work more carefully. (Dewey, 1918a, p. xx).

Bourne did not follow Dewey’s advice, as we now know. But in the given context of Farrell’s conversation with Dewey, the term “depth” could mean ‘a lack of perseverance,’ or ‘a kind of lack of using one’s intellect to also satisfactorily end a philosophical debate.’

If the worst had indeed come to the worst, and Dewey’s dispute with Bourne was not ended by Bourne in May 1918 (by sending the text of his “Reply to Dewey 28 May 1918” to Dewey), or later that year, was Dewey then perhaps referring to this exact circumstance when speaking out against Farrell? Or it is conceivable that Dewey merely expressed his displeasure with Bourne’s contribution(s) to their (private) correspondence, rather than qualifying Bourne’s intelligence? It is conceivable, since Farrell never knew that both men had privately continued their dispute at the time in May 1918 (and/or later), that is, after the time the debate was published in *The New Republic* (clearly, Farrell was unaware that Dewey had initiated a private argument exchange). Farrell may therefore have misunderstood Dewey. As a result, Farrell and other Dewey experts may have misinterpreted Dewey’s utterances.

Taken together, we can conclude that all this means that Dewey himself must almost certainly have been *vehemently* opposed to disclosing the name of the addressee/recipient of his letter — in case he had given, or sent, a draft, or copy, of his May 22, 1918, letter to Alexander for publication in the 1918 British edition of his *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*.

But then, it is well-known that Dewey made and kept (virtually?) *no* drafts and/or copies of his letters (see *Note 15*). So,

- either Dewey was dissatisfied with Bourne’s reply;
- or he was deeply ashamed of Bourne’s direct and convincing argument(s), in case he had indeed received Bourne’s letter of May 28, 1918;

- or his disdain for Bourne had grown, especially in case Bourne had ended the debate without showing politeness by not replying to his May 22, 1918, letter (factually meaning: Dewey never received Bourne’s May 28, 1918, letter to him);
- or did Dewey’s disdain for Bourne have other causes? Perhaps Dewey and Bourne exchanged more personal letters in mid-1918 (and/or later)? Peradventure these letters are somehow ‘lost’? There is no evidence to support such a hypothesis, but perhaps some strange circumstances point in that direction (see *Note 13*)?

*Ergo*, we can be almost certain that Dewey must have induced Alexander *not* to reveal the name of the addressee of his letter, dated May 22, 1918. Of course, the possibility we omitted above is relevant — that Dewey could have decided that printing the recipient’s name was irrelevant.

Other questions need to be asked. For example,

- What would have happened if Dewey had not given Alexander permission to publish his letter?
- What would have happened if he had withdrawn a previous consent?

Suppose Dewey thought his own part of the private dispute with Bourne was too personal to publish anywhere. We now know that Dewey was likely very dissatisfied with Bourne, either because he was dissatisfied with Bourne’s letter of May 28, 1918, or because he thought that Bourne had never replied in writing.

This last possibility, for example, in case Bourne never sent his “Reply to Dewey 28 May 1918” text to Dewey (see above) — and that, therefore, he concluded that Bourne never had the slightest intention to bring the (public *as well as* private) debate to a successful conclusion (as said: this may be a possibility if he never received Bourne’s May 28, 1918, letter). This is not as far-fetched as many may think.

Dewey would not have wanted anyone trying to figure out the recipient’s name to get to the bottom of his controversy with Bourne. (As noted above, one can easily deduce addressee’s name from the context of Dewey’s letter by searching for keywords in Dewey and Bourne’s texts. These thoughts may have occurred to Dewey.) In this case, Alexander certainly would not have disclosed the name of the recipient (was Dewey’s hope).

But what would have happened if Alexander, secretly or accidentally, published the received-by-him draft, or copy, of Dewey’s letter to Bourne and Dewey somehow found out about it? Did this hypothetical circumstance really arise in late 1918, or 1919, or early 1920s? Dewey and Alexander could have agreed (after an exchange of letters, or during a personal conversation when Alexander was back in the US, certainly in 1921, or later) to delete all evidence or correspondence relating to withdrawal of Dewey’s consent. Do the letters of Dewey or Alexander from that time or later indicate anything similar? Both men were friends, and they certainly could have put on such an act. Could it be the reason that (almost) no one referred to the 1918 British edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, simply because copies of the book were already rare in 1919 and remained rare in the 1920s and 1930s?

In other words, was the 1918 British edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* withdrawn from the market? Were there only a few copies left at publisher’s storage? There is no evidence to support such a wild guess, but there is all the more evidence against such a supposition. London teacher of the Alexander Technique Walter Carrington who had been trained by Alexander himself in the late 1930s, told the author of this case study in a telephone conversation that at one time in 1936 he had been at the Methuen publishing house to collect several copies of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (see *Note 17*). Carrington made it clear that he was going to Alexander’s publisher on behalf of Alexander. At the time, Methuen and Co. Ltd. kept stacks of printed sheets of the 1918 British edition of the book in their storage rooms. When copies of the book were ordered, employees collected the required number of sheets and took them to the binder. Carrington’s information means that a certain number of copies of the 1918 British edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* were still available at that time.

That time was 1936. A year later, in 1937, a so-called “reprint” appeared, according to its colophon page, of the “First English Edition published October 1916. Reprinted November 1918” (Alexander, 1937, p. *iv*). However, we have seen above that the first English edition had appeared in October 1910 (*not* in

October 1916), and that this 1937 so-called “reprint” was *not* a reprint of the first British edition (1910), *nor* of the second British edition (1918), but a reprint of the 1918 *American* edition of Alexander’s book *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*. An explanation for this anomaly was given in the 1996 edition of the book:

[The 1937 Methuen reprint was an American] Dutton edition with a Methuen title-page. (In those days it was the practice to stock the printed pages unbound and only bind them in small batches as and when they were sold. Instead of doing a reprint, Methuen bought 600 sets of pages from Dutton and had them bound with a Methuen title-page). (In Alexander, 1996, p. 234).

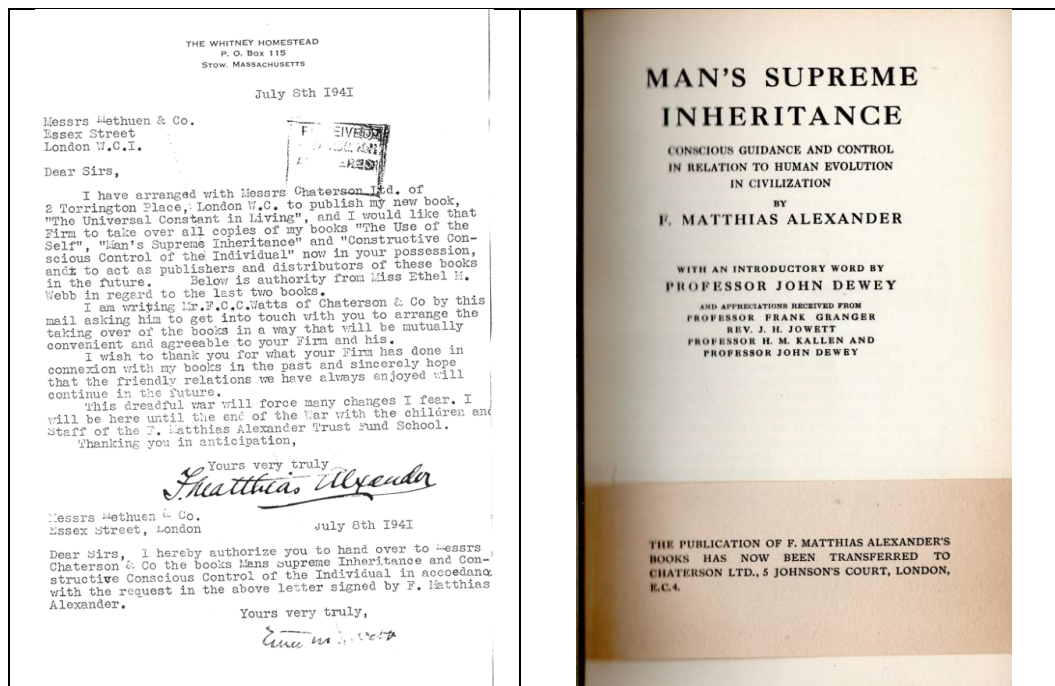
Is this explanation by the editor of the 1996 edition of the book sufficient or even satisfactory?

No! Because there has neither existed an American, nor a British, reprint from “November 1918.” The statement provided does not contain any indication as to the source of the information relating to the “600 sets of pages” purchased by Methuen. And it does not answer conceivable questions like, Why did Methuen buy 600 sets of pages that had to come all the way from America when they themselves were an English publisher and could easily have printed the pages themselves in England, especially since they themselves had the plates of the 1918 British edition — which they must have used not much later — in 1939 (Alexander, 1939a) — to publish their own reprint of the 1918 edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*?

### The First Remaining Question

The first remaining question is, “What is the real reason for the fact that the Chaterson publishing house called ‘its’ so-called ‘1941 edition’ of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* the second edition? After all, if Chaterson had published a new edition of Alexander’s book in 1941, that specific 1941 edition should have been called the third edition. In other words, was the real second edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, published in 1918 by Methuen and Co. Ltd., purposely erased from history?

In fact, it was. In any case, it has been erased from history on paper.



**Figure 7: Letter to Messrs Methuen & Co., dated July 8, 1941, written by F. M. Alexander and E. M. Webb. (Courtesy of the Library of the University of Reading, Reading, England).**

**Figure 8: Second British edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (reprinted 1939) with paper slip (relating to publisher transfer) glued to title page. (Jeroen Staring Collection).**

One way to find out why Chaterson called the 1941 edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* the second edition of the book would be to examine Chaterson’s archives. But the author of this case study has not been able to determine the whereabouts of those archives. Another way to find out is by researching Methuen’s records. Those records, at least those concerning the academic books that Methuen and Co. have published,

have been transferred to another publishing company in the 1980s when the other publisher published the (more or less) academic books by Methuen and Co. Ltd. A small portion of those archives (the archives of *some* authors) had been transferred not long before 1994 to the Archives & Manuscripts Section of the Library of the University of Reading. On request Michael Bott, Keeper of the Archives and Manuscripts at the Library of the University of Reading, researched the ‘Methuen history’ of the second edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (see *Note 16*). He concluded:

The history of Alexander’s *Man’s supreme inheritance* is intriguing. The original contract does not appear to be in the Methuen archive, but there is some correspondence about it from 1941 at the time when Chaterson took it over from Methuen. [...]. Methuen passed to Chaterson 166 copies of *Man’s supreme inheritance* (as well as 17 copies of *Constructive conscious control* and 297 copies of *The use of the self*), no doubt with some relief since the book had been in print since 1918. Chaterson appear to have sold out this rump of the second edition fairly rapidly since a third edition was published by them in 1946. (See *Note 16*).

Alexander had authorized the transfer, which took place on September 1, 1941. Moreover, it appears from the Methuen archives at the University of Reading that 2000 copies of the first edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* of 1910 had been printed. In addition, the archives show that 4000 copies of second edition of 1918 had been printed. Does this mean that in September 1941, only 166 copies of the 1918 edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* produced by Methuen and Co. had not been sold? If so, then of the 4000 copies of the Methuen 1918 edition 3834 copies would have been sold, sent as presentation and review copies, *etc.* between 1918 and 1941. (Note that these figures and calculation do not include the copies Methuen allegedly purchased in 1937 from the New York publisher of the 1918 American edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* — see above; see also *Note 20*)

The story goes that the transfer should be seen considering the publication of Alexander’s book, entitled *The Universal Constant in Living*, published in the US in 1941. This book would also be published in the United Kingdom — by Chaterson Ltd., a publishing house expressly founded by Frederick C. C. Watts to publish Alexander’s books (see *Note 20*). In 1941, Alexander wanted four of his books to be published in London by the same publisher, which meant that the publication and distribution of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* and *The Use of the Self* would also be done by Chaterson Ltd.

In a letter Alexander and his assistant Ethel M. Webb wrote from The Whitney Homestead in Stow, Massachusetts, USA, dated July 8, 1941, and addressed to Messrs. Methuen & Co. (see *Figure 7*), they explained their reasons for the transfer:

I have arranged with Messrs Chaterson Ltd. of 2 Torrington Place, London W.C. to publish my new book, “The Universal Constant in Living”, and I would like that Firm to take over all copies of my books “The Use of the Self”, “Man’s Supreme Inheritance” and “Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual” now in your possession, and to act as publishers and distributors of these books in the future. Below is authority from Miss Ethel M. Webb in regard to the last two books.

I am writing Mr. F. C. C. Watts of Chaterson & Co by this mail asking him to get into touch with you to arrange the taking over of the books in a way that will be mutually convenient and agreeable to your Firm and his.

I wish to thank you for what your Firm has done in connexion with my books in the past and sincerely hope that the friendly relations we have always enjoyed will continue in the future.

This dreadful war will force many changes I fear. I will be here until the end of the War with the children and Staff of the F. Matthias Alexander Trust Fund School.

Thanking you in anticipation, Yours very truly [signed F. Matthias Alexander; J.S.].

[...].

Dear Sirs, I hereby authorize you to hand over to Messrs Chaterson & Co the books Mans [*sic*; J.S.] Supreme Inheritance and Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual in accoedance [*sic*; J.S.] with the request in the above letter signed by F. Matthias Alexander.

Yours very truly, [signed Ethel M. Webb; J.S.]. (Alexander & Webb, 1941).

Alexander and Webb wrote their letter from the US. (Alexander returned to England in June 1943, long before WW II ended).

A possible reason other than, but additional to the 1941 American publication of Alexander's *The Universal Constant in Living* is that Methuen's London premises had been bombed by Nazi German airplanes early in 1941. In the winter of 1941, several London binders working for Methuen and Co. were "blitzed" (Duffy, 1989, p. 118). And in March of that year the Methuen and Co. "premises were hit by incendiary bombs with the loss of 30.000 educational books by fire" (*Ibid.*, p. 121). Authors on the Alexander Technique seem confused about these events, largely because their sources have not been thoroughly, that is, rigorously, researched, but also because there are certain contradictory statements in the Alexander Technique literature (see *Note 21*).

Some letters written by Alexander in the first half of 1941 have been preserved and have now appeared in the first volume of *F. Matthias Alexander: Letters* (Vineyard & Fischer (Eds.), 2020). It appears from these letters that Alexander repeatedly paid attention to Nazi German air raids and bombings, but he never explicitly mentioned the bombings of Methuen's bookbinders, or the bombing of March 1941 of the site of Methuen and Co. On June 3, 1941, he wrote to Irene Tasker, "Good news that 250 copies of C.C.C. [= *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual*; J.S.] thought burned are in good order after all the trouble (see *Note 22*). This figure (= 250) does not match the number of copies (= 17) of the same book that Methuen passed on to Chaterson a few months later in September 1941. It seems that Methuen had sold some 220 copies in the meantime. All this means that exact circumstances are not known to Alexander Technique historians.

Concluding: there has been no 1941 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. Since there are no copies in any library with a year designation of 1941, there factually never has been such an edition. It can be deduced from the above indications that the 166 copies of the 1939 reprint of the 1918 British edition of the book which passed from Methuen to Chaterson in September 1941, and since then bear a paper slip relating to the publisher transfer glued by Chaterson to the title page of those copies (see *Figure 8*), should in fact represent this alleged 1941 edition.

*Nota bene.* The undated version of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, published by Chaterson during World War II (Alexander, n.d. 2) — which is actually a reprint of a slightly enlarged 1918 American edition of the book, and corresponds to the "Sixth printing ... March, 1941" (Alexander, 1941, p. *iv*) and the "Seventh printing, January 1943" (Alexander, 1942, p. *iv*), published in the US by E. P. Dutton & Company — and bears the year designation "First published 1918. Reprinted 1943" (Alexander, n.d. 2, p. *ii*) cannot be a 1941 edition as it does not year designate 1941 (see *Note 23*).

### Maybe This Is All Due to a Very Strange Incident?

It is strange that Alexander apparently needed his assistant Webb to legally facilitate the transfer of books from Methuen to Chaterson (Alexander & Webb, 1941. See text of their joint letter, above; see *Figure 7*). If so, what would have been the reason for this?

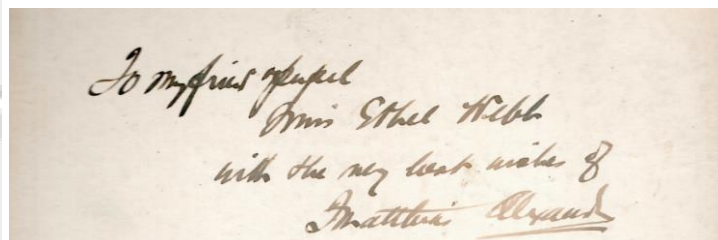
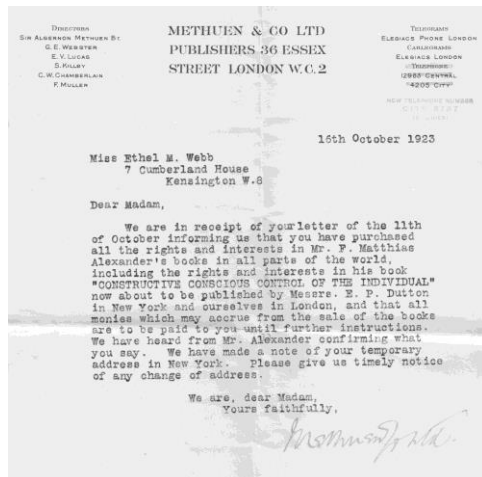
A cash of correspondence addressed to Alexander and Webb, purchased by the author of this case study in 2016, contains a typed letter dated October 16, 1923, signed by Sir Algernon Methuen Br., founder, and owner of Methuen & CO., LTD publishing house in London (Staring, 2020a, pp. 122-123; see *Figure 9*). Sir Algernon Methuen Br. (1923) stated in his letter to Miss Ethel M. Webb — Alexander's assistant at the time:

We are in receipt of your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> of October informing us that you have purchased all the rights and interests in Mr. F. Matthias Alexander's books in all parts of the world, including the rights and interests in his book "CONSTRUCTIVE CONSCIOUS CONTROL OF THE INDIVIDUAL" now about to be published by Messrs. E. P. Dutton in New York and ourselves in London, and that all monies which may accrue from the sale of the books are to be paid to you until further instructions. We have heard from Mr. Alexander confirming what you say. We have made a note of your temporary address in New York. Please give us timely notice of any change of address.

Before 1923, Methuen published several books written by Alexander: *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, in 1910; *Man's Supreme Inheritance (Addenda)* in 1911; *Conscious Control in Relation to Human Evolution in*

*Civilization* in 1912; *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (second edition) in 1918 and was about to publish his book *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* in late 1923 when evidently Alexander's assistant Ethel M. Webb bought the copyrights of his writings. Allegedly, a car dealer sued Alexander for a debt earlier in 1923. According to Alexander biographer Michael Bloch (2004, p. 127), Alexander then

[...] promptly transferred all his assets [...] into the names of trusted friends [...]; he then left for America in October as planned. As a result, he was declared bankrupt in his absence. Subsequently, his friends 'bought' and cancelled the debt, whereupon the main legal restrictions attaching to [Alexander], such as an inability to pledge credit or run a bank account, were lifted.



**Figure 9:** Typed letter, Sir Algernon Methuen Br., to Miss Ethel M. Webb (Methuen Br., 1923). (Jeroen Staring Collection). **Figure 10:** Alexander's inscription in Ethel M. Webb's copy of the 1918 American edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. (Jeroen Staring Collection).

A probing question should be asked and answered: "Have the copyrights ever been 'bought back' by Alexander?" (Staring, 2020a, p. 123). Perhaps the juggling with the history of editions and printings of Alexander's books, analysed here (see also *Note 23*), is related to the circumstance that copyrights of his books were not in Alexander's own hands, but most probably still in Webb's hands since 1923.

This would explain why Alexander apparently needed his assistant Webb to legally facilitate the transfer of books from Methuen to Chaterson in 1941 (Alexander & Webb, 1941. See text of their joint letter, above; see *Figure 7*). Webb still possessed the copyrights to Alexander's books, and he had to get her to sign transactions related to his publications.

### The Final Question: Where is the Original Letter from Dewey to Bourne, May 22, 1918?

Fortunately, Bourne's reply to Dewey's May 22, 1918, private letter, quoted by Blake in 1990, has survived. The contents of the draft copy, or copy, of the May 28, 1918, letter to Dewey — in Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library (quoted in full above) — clearly prove that it is a response to Dewey's letter, as printed in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. And we may conclude that it is also fortunate that Dewey's letter to Bourne, to which Bourne responded, has been preserved. It provides a wonderful insight into the thinking and reasoning of the two men; their disputes; their relationship in 1918; and into the flaws in Alexander's writings that are still not fully recognized by Alexander's followers.

Since 1918 rumors circulate that a trunkload of letters from Bourne disappeared in the summer of that year. More background information can be found in the final chapter of Bruce Clayton's *Forgotten Prophet: The Life of Randolph Bourne*. Clayton argues that in 1918 Bourne felt he was under the scrutiny of government officials:

[Bourne] was convinced that government officials had been hanging around the *New Republic* asking about his loyalty—on a tip from John Dewey, Dorothy Teall [= a friend of Bourne; J.S.] remembers him saying. (Clayton, 1984, p. 256).

Was Dewey indeed one of the practicing “efficient instruments of the war-technique, accepting with little question the ends as announced from above,” as indicated by Bourne in his 1917 article “Twilight of Idols” (Bourne, 1917, p. 697)? In other words: Did Dewey have close relationships with government officials in 1917 and 1918? Clayton states:

Speaking for many of Bourne’s friends, Chamberlain contended the government was the culprit in the mysterious disappearance in 1918 of a trunkload of Bourne’s letters. Could it be that he was on some “enemies list” that has long since disappeared, like Bourne’s trunk. Back in the 1960s, some years before Watergate, John Moreau made official inquiries and checked the available records but found nothing. (Clayton, 1984, p. 256).

Clayton refers to *Randolph Bourne: Legend and Reality* by John Adam Moreau who wrote:

According to another friend of his [another friend than James Oppenheim; J.S.], he [= Bourne; J.S.] insisted that Dewey had put the Justice Department on his trail—an incredible idea. [...]. “You don’t know Dewey,” Randolph allegedly said. “He is terribly vain. He was offended by my article and would do anything to injure me.” [...]. Today the matter perhaps would not need attention, except of course that a story has been handed down and repeated for four decades about how—as John Chamberlain put it—Randolph was “hounded” by the Justice Department, and how a trunk of manuscripts and letters lost in the summer of 1918 most probably was taken by the government. It may have been that he was watched by the government and that indeed officials did take the trunk—although it is not unreasonable to presume it might have been returned, once inspected. The story of how the government at the time checked the mails is of course well known. (Moreau, 1996, pp. 193-194).

Well, that’s interesting. Was Dewey’s letter of May 22, 1918, one of those letters in that “trunk of manuscripts and letters”? Did Dewey have any connection to this “mysterious disappearance in 1918 of a trunkload of Bourne’s letters,” this virtually unspoken mystery in Bourne and Dewey literature? Was Dewey involved in any way, as Bourne claimed?

Dewey’s letter addressed to Bourne dated 22 May 1918, is *not* in Bourne’s estate (and gifts related to Bourne), *i.e.*, in the *Randolph Silliman Bourne Papers, 1910-1988* in Columbia University’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Butler Library. How then did Alexander obtain a letter written by Dewey, addressed to Bourne, and answered by Bourne?

Did Dewey give, or send, him a copy of the letter?

Dewey almost never made or kept copies of his letters — sent by him.

Did Dewey keep a copy of the letter, or did he perhaps obtain the original letter?

Was that letter in Alexander’s possession, the contents of which were printed in the 1918 British edition of his *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, a copy of the letter sent to Bourne in May 1918 or was it perhaps the *original* letter?

Why was the addressee’s name withheld from Father McCormack when he asked (Beaumont Alexander of) The Alexander Foundation about it in 1958 (see *Note 12*)?

Why didn’t McCormack disclose in his dissertation that he had corresponded with Frank P. Jones, who concluded that the addressee’s name must have been Randolph Bourne, and immediately notified McCormack by return?

Was that copy of, or original, letter burned around 1970 in a fire in the home of Beaumont Alexander (see *Note 12*)?

Who knows?

## Notes.

1. This case study is a rewrite of a booklet entitled *F. Matthias Alexander, Randolph Bourne and John Dewey: Playing Detective with Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, self-published February 1994, second edition July 1994 (Staring, 1994ab). Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to Loes Bredius and Frank Meulendijks for our conversations about John Dewey and F. Matthias Alexander. And again, I would like to thank Michael Bott (University of Reading Library, Reading, UK) and Bernard Crystal (Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, USA) for their research.

Thanks to Alexander Technique teachers Walter Carrington†, Jean M. O. Fischer, Alexander Murray, and Robert Rickover for their help and for the information they have provided.

2. Dewey’s “Introductory Word,” printed in all editions of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* from the American edition of 1918 to the last edition (1957), was also printed in the 1918 British edition of the book (Dewey, 1918b). The *Christian Century Press* (1920) advertised that they had published an edition of Alexander’s *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (see *Figure 11*).

Every man, woman and child holds the possibility of physical perfection; it rests with each of us to attain it by personal understanding and effort.—From the Author’s Preface.

## Man’s Supreme Inheritance

By F. Matthias Alexander

With an introductory word by Professor John Dewey.

### ESTIMATES OF THE BOOK.

Rev. J. H. Jowett: “Mr. Alexander has given us a work of rare and original value. His philosophy unveils a deliverance from the untutored and unintelligent sub-consciousness in which we are all more or less enslaved, and he opens out the prospect of an enlightened sub-consciousness, through the ministry of conscious guidance and control.”

The Dial: “To the fellowship of Wagner, Tolstoy and Carpenter may be added F. Matthias Alexander. To the diversities of preacher, pietist and prophet may be added that of scientist. But where his predecessors see a cure for civilization in an abandonment of it, Mr. Alexander sees the cure in a growing control of the human organism at work in it.”

Price \$2.50, plus 12 cents postage.

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY PRESS  
1408 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago

HOW MANY MEN OF ABILITY are haunted by the sense that the full use of their powers suffers from some physical or mental maladjustment comparatively simple and remediable, if only one could hit upon the right way of dealing with it!

Dr. JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON  
in the *Astorian Monthly* discussed fully, and after a personal test of its value, this “right way” as set forth in the book

## Man’s Supreme Inheritance

CONSCIOUS GUIDANCE AND CONTROL IN RELATION TO HUMAN EVOLUTION IN CIVILIZATION  
By F. MATTHIAS ALEXANDER Introduction by JOHN DEWEY

Dr. ROBINSON says:—“I think Mr. Alexander’s ability to straighten out adults and give them new energy and courage is very important, but by no means so important as the possible application of his theories in the field of education, by which it seems as if it might be possible to raise the whole race to a far higher plane than it now occupies.”

Dr. ALBERT C. BARNES writes:—“In the regeneration of American institutions which the war has already started, no more important movement could be carried out than the adoption of Mr. Alexander’s system as an integral part of a national educational plan.”

Professor RICHARD MORSE HODGE, D.D., calls it a “book of basic significance to . . . every sphere of contemporary life.”

Dr. J. H. JOWETT endorses it as “a work of rare and original value.”

“No one interested in human improvement can afford to pass by this plan without carefully considering its nature and bearings.”

\$2.50 net wherever E. P. DUTTON & CO., 681 Fifth Avenue, New York, books are sold.

Figure 11: *Christian Century Press* (1920) advertisement in the July 29, 1920, *Christian Century*.

Figure 12: Advertisement in the November 8, 1919, *Evening Public Ledger* (Dutton, 1919).

3. Only a few copies of this 1946 edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* survived.

4. “Making over the Body” was reprinted in Boydston (1982, pp. 359-36, appendix 1). However, Bourne’s “Other Messiahs” was not.

5. See Staring, 1990, 1992, 1993, 2005, 2021, 2022; Staring & Aldridge, 2014; Staring & Bouchard, 2002; Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014. Note that the *Christian Century Press* wrote in several of their 1921 and 1922 advertisements for Alexander’s book: “The Single chapter on “Race Culture and the Training of Children” is well worth the price of the book” (e.g., *Christian Century Press*, 1922).

One of the American writers who was inspired by Alexander’s barefaced Butlerian evolutionism and his Butlerian eugenics was Waldo Frank (Blake, 1990, pp. 258-260). Another exponent of those writers, Gerald Stanley Lee, likened “Alexandering” to “pulling a nation together:”

Professor John Dewey in his introduction to Mr. Alexander’s book speaks of what Mr. Alexander stands for, as Completed Psycho-analysis.

As Alexander’s technique for pulling one particular man, soul and body, together, is precisely the technique I have in mind for pulling a nation together, I want to dwell on it a moment longer before applying it. (Lee, 1920, p 273).

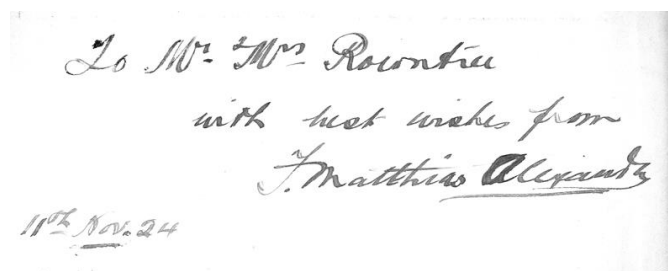
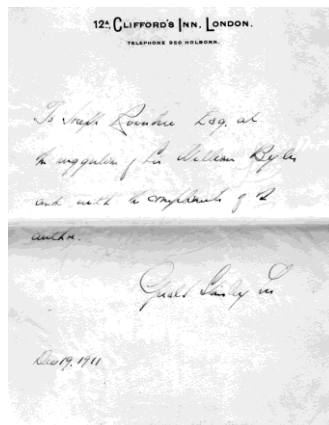
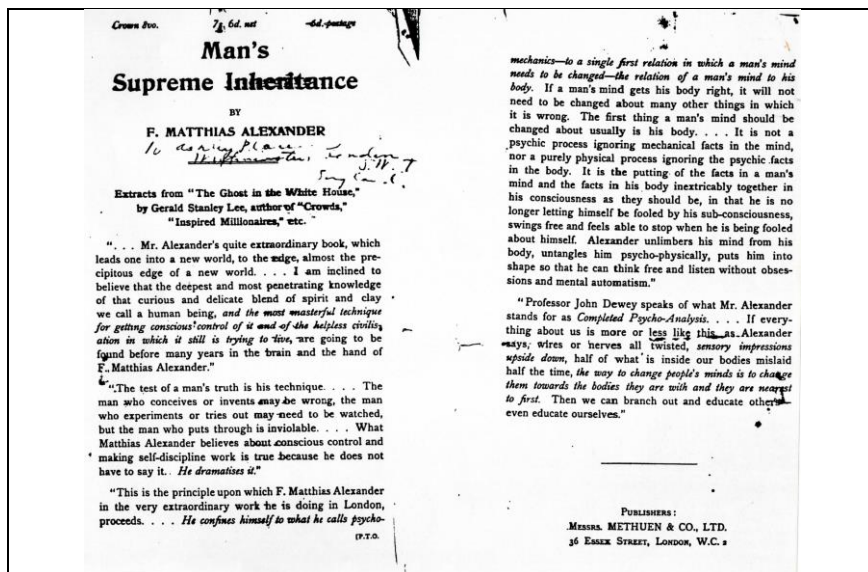


Figure 13: Inscription in Joseph Rowntree’s copy of the 1911 edition of G. S. Lee’s *Inspired Millionaires*. (Jeroen Staring Collection). Figure 14: Inscription in Mr. and Mrs. Rowntree’s copy of the second printing of the 1923 U.S. edition of F. M. Alexander’s *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual*. (Jeroen Staring Collection).



Note that the phrase “completed psycho-analysis” (see also *Figure 15*) was *not* used by Dewey in his “Introductory Word” to the US and UK editions of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*. The term was *only* used by Dewey in his letter to Bourne of May 22, 1918, which was printed exclusively in the 1918 British edition of the book. Lee probably bought a copy of this British edition of Alexander’s book while he was in London in 1919. Lee wrote that he too the book home “from a bookshop” *after* a review by James Harvey Robinson was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* (Lee, 1920, p. 161), which happened in 1919. (In 1911, Lee had published his *Inspired Millionaires* in England with the Grand Richard publishing house and sent a signed copy to businessman and philanthropist Joseph Rowntree (see *Figure 13*). Two years later, in 1913, Lee published his *Crowds* with the Methuen publishing house, which also published Alexander’s books. In 1923, Alexander signed a copy of his *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* for Joseph Rowntree and his wife (see *Figure 14*). Were there any connections?).

It is very confusing when Robin Veder (2015, p. 295) notes in her book *The Living Line* that Alexander “vociferously critiqued American and English neo-Lamarckians and eugenicists.” Her words give the impression Alexander opposed neo-Lamarckism and eugenics; but he was not! He only criticized them because he promoted *his own kind* of neo-Lamarckism and eugenics (that is, Butlerian evolutionism and Butlerian eugenics). Only recently a draft of letter was published in a new edition of *Articles and Lectures: Articles, Published Letters and Lectures on the F. M. Alexander Technique*, written at Alexander’s London address (“16, Ashley Place, S.W.1”), dated “4th Sept 18” (4 September 1918), and attributed to F. M. Alexander. In it, Alexander (2022, pp. 330-333; *Appendix E*) outlined his ideas about (Butlerian) eugenics through “education based on conscious guidance and control” (Alexander, 2022, p. 333). And Carrington (1996, p. x) wrote in his “Foreword” to the 1996 British edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, “Sadly, as time has passed, these illustrations of his argument have come to be seen dated and to some readers even offensive. He has been accused of bigotry and racism.” Carrington forgot to mention Alexander’s eugenics, as if eugenics had never been criticized and rejected in the late 1910s, early 1920s and later (compare, for example: Sidis, 1916, 1922), and as if that core aspect of Alexander’s theories could (and should?) in 1996 still remain unnamed, uncriticized, and unrejected.



**Figure 15:** Both pages of a 2-page pamphlet advertising the British 1918 edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* citing Gerald Stanley Lee’s opinions. (Methuen, n.d.). (Courtesy of Rosslyn McLeod).

6.

November 1918

Dear Mr. Dewey,

I have read “Man’s Supreme Inheritance” six times in the light of free association. I find in it many of the best things which have been stated scientifically in the following books:

Influence of the mind upon the Body	Tuke
Varieties of Religious Experience	James
Life of Reason	Santayana
Theory of Psychoanalysis	Jung
Physiology	Stewart
Neurotic Constitution	Adler

Organ Inferiority	Adler
Creative Intelligence	Essays by Bode, Dewey, Kallen
Schools of Tomorrow	Dewey
Psychology of Insanity	Hart
Several Chapters in James' Principles of Psychology, Stout's Manual,	

[= *Manual of Psychology*; J.S.], McDougall's Social Psychology.

The mass of wisdom, sound psychology and the common sense of abnormal psychology in Alexander's boom [*sic*; J.S.] is simply astounding. (Sgd) A. C. Barnes. (Barnes, n.d. 2).

Note that Dalton (2002, p. 119) discusses this letter in his *Becoming John Dewey*, even quoting most of the concluding line, stating in a note that his source is, "Barnes to Dewey, November 19, 1918. Joseph Ratner Papers, Collection 142, Box 7, Folder 5" (*Ibid.*, p. 312, Note 57), at Special Collections, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

7. Kuntz' article was reprinted in 1992 in *John Dewey and F. Matthias Alexander III* (see Kuntz, 1992).

8. In 1992, McCormack's dissertation has been published commercially by the North American Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique. See McCormack, 1992.

9. By the way, the same goes for Alexander Murray who referred to Dewey's letter, quoted by McCormack, in his 1992 F. Matthias Alexander Memorial Lecture (Murray, 1983).

10. In 1994, I made the following arguments:

Jones never indicated that he associated Dewey's letter in McCormack's dissertation with Dewey's controversy with Bourne. In fact, he never indicated that he wanted to ask Dewey the name of the addressee of the letter. And from Dewey's perspective, while Jones was certainly Dewey's confidant for many years, Dewey kept the existence of his letter to Bourne a secret. Or, if Dewey and Jones were discussing the existence, publication, content, name of the addressee, cause, context, and implications of Dewey's letter of May 22, 1918, to Bourne, Dewey must have urged Jones to keep all these circumstances secret. In that case, both men managed to keep Dewey's secret a secret. Of course, Dewey could have completely forgotten about his letter to Bourne. He may not have remembered that Alexander had a copy of this letter. And/or the publication of the letter in the 1918 British edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* could have escaped Dewey's memory. But all this seems highly unlikely.

11. In 1994 I made the following arguments: McCormack even wrote:

Dewey did not answer this rejoinder [= Bourne's rejoinder in *The New Republic* of May 25, 1918; J.S.], or at any rate no reply appeared in the *New Republic*. This may be explained in part by the fact that less than a week later he was in California delivering the lectures which were to be *Human Nature and Conduct*. If there is a reply that he could have made, it is not found in this latter work. It seems more likely, however, that Dewey, having thus brusquely been challenged to commit himself on the scientific character of Alexander's work, felt that he was not yet in a position to do so. (McCormack, 1958, p. 126).

McCormack didn't know how close he was, for he had the text (of a copy?) of Dewey's letter to Bourne, dated May 22, 1918, on his desk when he wrote these lines, for on the next page of his dissertation he begins to quote Dewey's letter to Bourne! It is a real shame that McCormack immediately concluded that Dewey "felt that he was not yet in a position" to answer Bourne. How could this have happened?

12. The author of this case study has learned from more than one side that Beaumont Alexander was probably unaware that Dewey's letter was published in the 1918 Methuen edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. Beaumont Alexander was not much interested in matters pertaining to the history of his brother's 'technique.' So this could mean that his brother had not instructed him not to reveal the name of the addressee of Dewey's letter.

After F. Matthias Alexander's death in October 1955, Beaumont Alexander became co-executor as well as trustee of Alexander's will and of his estate. It appears Beaumont invited Alexander Technique teacher Patrick Macdonald to teach his brother's 'technique' at F. M. Alexander's former London headquarters at 16 Ashley Place. This collaboration seems to have continued under the name of The Alexander Foundation (compare Macdonald, n.d.1, n.d. 2), but it did not last long — until 1969. See:

<https://mouritz.org/companion/article/ashley-place>

<https://mouritz.org/companion/article/patrick-macdonald>

<https://mouritz.org/companion/article/beaumont-alexander-vs-margaret-goldie>

The history of The Alexander Institute has not yet been written, but some surviving letters from Walter Carrington to Frank P. Jones suggest that The Alexander Foundation's archives may have come to a bad end, possibly including the (copy of or original) letter written by Dewey to Bourne on May 22, 1918.

On December 1, 1969, Carrington wrote to Jones, “As you probably know, Ashley Place is now shut and so far as I can make out the Alexander Foundation is now defunct.” (Letter kept in the F. Matthias Alexander & Frank Pierce Jones Special Collection; Special Collections, Wessell Library, Tufts University, Medford, USA; this special collection may now be at The Ted Dimon Institute, 356 West 123<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, USA).

Almost 2 months later, on January 25, 1970, Carrington wrote to Jones, “I was alarmed to hear from [Patrick Macdonald] some little while ago that Monty [= Beaumont Alexander; J.S.] had a fire at Maidenhead and a lot of the papers from Ashley Place were destroyed in it.” (Letter kept in the F. Matthias Alexander & Frank Pierce Jones Special Collection; Special Collections, Wessell Library, Tufts University, Medford, USA; this special collection may now be at The Ted Dimon Institute, 356 West 123<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, USA).

**13.** I am very grateful to Alexander Technique teacher Jean M. O. Fischer, who in a letter dated November 9, 1993, informed me that he owned a photocopy of a copy of the 1939 British reprint of the 1918 British edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, including Dewey’s dual appreciation. On November 24, 1993, he sent me a photocopy of the colophon page of the book, mentioning it was a reprint of the “2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Revised and Enlarged)” from 1918, and that that 1918 edition had already been reprinted in 1937. (I used this information in the list “Frederick Matthias Alexander’s Publication” in my 2005 book, where, based on the — false — information provided by the colophon-page, I stated that the 1937 reprint was a reprint of the 1918 British edition (compare Staring, 2005, p. 297). Not long after my 2005 book was published, I was able to purchase a copy of the 1937 reprinted *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* and noticed that it was not a reprint of the British edition of 1918, but a reprint of an American edition. It is likely that very few copies of this 1937 reprint were sold and there are now even less in circulation. In 1993/1994 it appeared that Dewey was not opposed to the publication of his letter, dated May 22, 1918, in the 1939 reprint of the 1918 British edition of the book. *Ergo*, Dewey wasn’t afraid that anyone would name the addressee? *Ergo*, can the rarity of the book only be explained by the fact that very few copies have survived to this day? Or was there a snake in the grass for reconstructing the history of the Bourne-Dewey controversy after so many years? Perhaps Dewey had very serious reasons for not naming the recipient of his letter, dated May 22, 1918, published in the 1918 British edition of Alexander’s *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*? Perhaps those reasons were not very orthodox indeed? Maybe the detective story, which almost turned a molehill into a mountain, was really about a mole? In other words, was anything or much being concealed, and why and by whom?

I would also like to express my gratitude to Alexander Technique instructor Alexander Murray who informed me of Casey Nelson Blake’s *Beloved Community* during a telephone conversation on November 3, 1993. During this telephone conversation, he told me that he had asked the Library of Columbia University to send him a photocopy of Bourne’s letter to Dewey, dated May 28, 1918. However, he had never received a copy of Bourne’s letter. I have also written several letters asking the Butler Library’s Curator of Manuscripts to send me a photocopy of Bourne’s letter to Dewey.

On January 24, 1994, Mr. B. R. Crystal, Curator of Manuscripts at the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at the Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, wrote me:

We have made a most thorough search of our Randolph Bourne Papers and we have not found a draft of his letter to John Dewey dated 28 May 1918 [...]. I am sorry that we can be of no assistance to you in your researches.

Did something go wrong here? Did Bourne’s letter to Dewey mysteriously disappear between the date Blake saw the letter, the subsequent publication of note 42 on page 333 in his *Beloved Community* in 1990, and the date Mr. Crystal wrote to me in 1994? Had Blake somehow been given information that should have been kept secret?

Or was Bourne’s letter deliberately ‘moved’ or ‘stolen’ or systematically ‘relocated’ after or because of the publication of Blake’s book?

The answer is: “No.”

Shortly after the first edition of my 1994 booklet (Staring, 1994a) was printed, Professor Murray called Casey N. Blake to find out the whereabouts of Bourne’s draft letter to Dewey, dated May 28, 1918. Blake told Murray the box in which Bourne’s letter to Dewey is stored in the Rare Books and Manuscript Library at Columbia University’s Butler Library. In the second week of March 1994, Murray left a voicemail message on the message recorder of the Curator of Manuscripts at Columbia University, stating that Blake had told him that the draft of Bourne’s letter to Dewey was in box 9. After three examinations of this box, Mr. Bernard R. Crystal finally found the draft of the letter. It was not a letter among other letters. After the third examination of Box 9, Bourne’s letter to Dewey turned out to look like a manuscript among other manuscripts and essays. “Before giving up I decided to search the Bourne manuscripts arranged by title in the same box. It was among these essays and other manuscripts that I discovered the text you require. [...] decades ago when one of our catalogers processed this collection, it clearly looked like a manuscript,” Mr. Crystal wrote to me on March 14, 1994. Mystery solved!

I would like to express my thanks to Alexander Murray and to Bernard R. Crystal. I greatly appreciate their help. I would also like to thank Nancy Crego and my wife Corry for helping me to decipher almost the entire text of Bourne's letter.

Note that on September 21, 2016, the website [onthecourse.wordpress.com](http://onthecourse.wordpress.com) published the text entitled "A Critical Perspective: Dewey & Randolph Bourne," including an excerpt from Bourne's letter to Dewey, dated May 28, 1918. The text of Bourne's letter was forwarded to the author of that article by Alexander Murray, who seems not to have referred to the above history of the discovery of Bourne's letter. The text of the article on the website ends as follows: "[...] if we get lucky, maybe Alex [Murray; J.S.] will contribute some insights to what [the author of the article on the website] has given here."

Perhaps one day Murray would like to refer to history as laid out in this case study?

**14.** By 1917, Dewey had published several articles on the war in Europe in *The New Republic*: "Conscience & Compulsion" (July 14); "The Future of Pacifism" (July 28); "What America Will Fight For" (August 18); and "Conscription of Thought" (September 1). Those papers aroused Bourne's anger, because before that time he had already published several texts warning the US not to get involved in the war. In October 1917, he had an attack on Dewey published in *The Seven Arts*, entitled "Twilight of Idols" (Bourne, 1917).

In his "Introductory Word" to the 1918 American edition of Alexander's *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, Dewey had written:

Mr. Alexander exposes the fundamental error in the empirical and palliative methods. When the organs through which any structure, be it physiological, mental, or social, are out of balance, when they are unco-ordinated, specific and limited attempts at a cure only exercise the already disordered mechanism. [...]. The ingeniously inclined will have little difficulty in paralleling Mr. Alexander's criticism of 'physical culture methods' within any field of our economic and political life. (Dewey, 1918b, pp. xv-xvi).

The fact that Dewey twined "political life" and "Mr. Alexander's criticism of physical culture methods" must have awakened Bourne's feelings dating from October 1917 and before.

In his review of Robert B. Westbrook's *John Dewey and American Democracy*, Louis Menand (1992) drew attention to the 'war-controversy' between Dewey and Bourne, and to Bourne's criticism of Dewey's pragmatism. See also Thomas Bender's (1989) *New York Intellect*. Consult also: Dalton, 2002; Dykhuizen, 1973; Martin, 2002; Ryan, 1995; Schilpp (Ed.), 1951.

Consult also (Bourne's side): Abrahams, 1987; Clayton, 1984; Moreau, 1966. Consult also (Dewey's side): Coughlan, 1975; Shusterman, 1997, 2008. A revision of the view on Alexander's influence on Dewey is in Wilshire, 1990, 1993. Even more background can be drawn from Steven C. Rockefeller's (1991, p. 313), who drew attention to Dewey's "sense of burnout" and the crisis in his life "that seems to have been most severe during the years 1915 to 1918 when he was in his late fifties." Rockefeller paid attention to Alexander's teaching and its influence on Dewey; to the influence of Barnes on Dewey; and to Dewey's meeting and infatuation with Anzia Yezierska, and his poetry resulting from this romance. More on Barnes in Beaucar, 2012; Greenfeld, 1987; Heinz, 2011, 2017.

'Accounts' of Dewey and Yezierska's one-year relationship (lasting from mid-1917 to the fall of 1918) can be found in Boydston (Ed.), 1977; Dearborn, 1988; Ginsberg, 2016; Henriksen, 1988; Meyers, 2006; Rosen, 1989.

Note that Rosen's novel situates Dewey's urge to reply to Randolph Bourne later in 1918 than it happened. She describes Dewey's desire to answer Bourne's attacks sometime in July or August 1918. In the chapter "A Philosopher and His Wife" she depicts Dewey's urge to answer Bourne just as his wife Alice had started her journey to California to spend the summer there. This vacation lasted until September 1918, when John and Alice Dewey were back together: "In September 1918, Dewey traveled again to the West Coast where he joined Alice, who had spent the summer in California" (Rockefeller, 1991, p. 352). Rosen described Dewey's decision to answer Bourne because of some sort of domestic argument between Alice and John, *after* an article by Bourne appeared in "a magazine." When Alice mentioned Bourne's attack ("Attacks in the press to be answered, John"), the following dialogue of Alice and John is painted (from life? I doubt it!):

She tapped a finger on a magazine article John had already seen in the weekly *Seven Arts*.

"Here is Randolph Bourne, John." Alice's voice was rising. "He's still a pacifist in spite of everything he knows, and now he's going after you because you had the courage to change your position on the war. [...] And *then*," she went on, "he invokes the spirit of the dead and says William James would not have allowed Pragmatism to fall into such abuse! So you are shamed and told that older brother William would have done better than you, nearly sixty-year-old upstart that you are!"). John raised distracted eyes.

"For God's sake!" Alice called him sharply back. "Don't let it all roll over you.

He roused himself for her sake. Answered that he'd answer. On Alexander too. "That misguided article! I know it, all right! It's of a piece with Bourne's attack on Alexander's book and my own introduction to it. For all I

care, Bourne can call me stupid or evil. But not use me for attacks on Pragmatism. Or on Alexander.” (Rosen, 1989, pp. 134-136).

But we now know that Dewey had already replied to Bourne’s attack on Alexander in his letter to Bourne of May 22, 1918. By the way, the “magazine article” Rosen introduced in her novel probably never existed in real life. Rosen (1989, p. 135) quoted from Bourne’s paper “Twilight of Idols,” published in the October 1917 *Seven Arts* (Bourne, 1917; see also Hansen (Ed.), 1977, pp 337-347). In the context of Rosen’s portrayal of Alice Dewey in her novel, it is highly unlikely that Alice Dewey was unaware of Bourne’s “Twilight of Idols,” published in the October 1917 *Seven Arts*, while John Dewey knew exactly that “Twilight of Idols” was published in 1917.

(I would like to express my gratitude to Alexander Murray who sent me information on several of the above publications in the last two months of 1993, and who also sent me a copy of Rosen’s novel.)

**15.** Consult the electronic edition of *The Correspondence of John Dewey 1871-1951* (third edition, 2005), edited by Barbara Levine, Anne S. Sharpe, and Harriet Furst Simon; general editor Larry Hickman. Carbondale: Center for Dewey Studies at Southern Illinois University. Published on CD-ROM by IntelLex Corporation, Charlottesville, VA.

Consult also: <https://deweycenter.siu.edu/center-information/letters/index.php>

**16.** Michael Bott, letter to author, November 5, 1993. I am much obliged to Mr. Bott for his research and for sending a photocopy of Alexander and Webb’s joint letter to Methuen and Co., dated July 8, 1941 (Alexander & Webb, 1941; see Staring, 2005, p. 211; see *Figure 7*, above).

Note that this letter written by Alexander and Webb is also included in the first volume of *F. Matthias Alexander: Letters* (Vineyard & Fischer (Eds.), 2020, pp. 157-158). However, Ethel M. Webb’s signed “authority”-text (mentioned above) is *not* included in the first volume of *F. Matthias Alexander: Letters*. Both editors of that book failed to explain the omission.

**17.** Telephone conversation, Walter Carrington with the author of this case study, November 3, 1993.

**18.** Bourne wrote that Dewey got his “first impression from the English” edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, that is the 1910 British edition of the book published by the London-based Methuen publishing house (Alexander, 1910a). It is clear that Bourne was not aware that a 1910 American edition of the book (Alexander, 1910b) had appeared and that therefore the (expanded) 1918 book should be called the second American edition.

**19.** Editor of the *Modern School* magazine of the (progressive education) Modern School in Stelton, New Jersey, Carl Zigrosser (1918), made a similar critique as Bourne of Alexander’s ideas about progressive education. See also Staring, 2013, 2015b.

**20.** It is not clear when exactly it was decided to set up Chaterson Ltd. In letters from mid-1939 and 1940, Alexander already wrote about plans to have a book published through Watts (consult Vineyard & Fischer (Eds.), 2020). In this context it is interesting to know that in the late summer of 1940 the American publisher of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* had no copies left of (reprints of) their 1918 edition of the book. This problem was discussed in September 1940 by Alexander in a letter sent to Walter Carrington:

Regarding M.S.I. [= *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*; J.S.] (binding). Evidently they have run out of these here and want some so please ask Watts to use his judgment of how many he has bound taking into consideration that sheets will be wanted here. Say I will write Macrae [head of E. P. Dutton & Company; J.S.] at once and tell him your intentions about the sheets and hear what he has to say and have a cable sent to you how many sheets Macrae will need. (Cited by Walter Carrington in a letter to the author of this case study, dated May 18, 1994; compare Vineyard & Fischer (eds.), 2020, p. 110).

In 1939 a reprint of the 1918 British edition of Alexander’s book had been published by Methuen in London (Alexander, 1939a). This *must* mean that none of the “600 sets of pages” of the American edition of the book, which were sent to England in 1937 (Alexander, 1996, p. 234) to be transformed in a so-called 1937 “First English Edition, Reprinted” printing of the 1918 British edition, were returned to America sometime in the fall of 1940, or winter of 1941, because they had already been sold by 1939. And since there are no known copies of the book that were published in America, *but printed in England*, it is very conceivable that no printed sheets of the 1939 printing of the 1918 British edition of the book — the so-called “2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Revised and Enlarged); Reprinted” from 1939 (Alexander, 1939a) — have been sent to America in the fall of 1940, or winter of 1941.

In March 1941, then, the American sixth printing appeared in New York, with the colophon page marked “Printed in the United States of America” (Alexander, 1941, p. *iv*). Sheets of this sixth printing or the seventh printing from 1942 were later used to publish the undated reprint of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, published by Chaterson during World War II (Alexander, n.d. 2) — most probably in 1943 (see above).

During Alexander’s life, the American printing history of his 1918 book is as follows: the first printing of the American edition appeared in January 1918, and the second printing in May 1918 (Alexander, 1918c, p. *iv*). The book’s third printing appeared in April 1919 (Alexander, 1919a, p. *iv*); the fourth printing was published in August

1919 (Alexander, 1919b, p. iv); the fifth in September 1920 (Alexander, 1920, p. iv); the sixth in March 1941 (Alexander, 1941, p. iv); and the final, seventh, in January 1942 (Alexander, 1942, p. iv).

21. Alexander biographer Michael Bloch (2004, pp. 178-179) wrote, “A bomb also fell on the warehouse of Fred Watts — a publisher pupil of [Alexander] who had taken over the publication of his books from Methuen during the 1930s — destroying much of the stock of [Alexander’s] previous three titles just as the fourth was nearing completion.” However, this cannot be right. It was the warehouse of Methuen and Co., Ltd. that had been bombed, and Watts took over publishing of Alexander’s books in 1941, not the 1930s.

22. These letters are: (1). letter to Irene Tasker, Feb. 17, 1941 (Vineyard & Fischer (Eds.), 2020, pp. 141-143), about damage to windows at No. 16 Ashley Place, address of Alexander’s practice rooms in London; (2). letter to Joan Mechin, March 22, 1941 (*Ibid.*, pp. 147-148), about news of bombings; (3). letter to Gertrude Aspden, Apr. 11, 1941 (*Ibid.*, pp. 149-150), concerning the repair of earlier bombings at No. 16 Ashley Place; (4). a letter to Irene Tasker, May 22, 1941 (*Ibid.*, pp. 151-152), about the damage from another bombing of No. 16 Ashley Place; (5). and finally, a letter to Irene Tasker, June 3, 1941 (*Ibid.*, pp. 152-153), concerning damage from a further bombing at No. 16 Ashley Place and at Alexander’s country house in Penhill, as well as a reference to a number (“250”) of copies of his 1923 book *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* not burned in a previous bombing, place unspecified. (See also Barlow, 1997).

In a letter dated November 24, 1993, Walter Carrington indicated to me that Alexander had referred in a letter to the bombing of the Methuen and Co. property and to “the loss of unbound sheets” of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*; he probably referred to Alexander’s letter to Irene Tasker, dated June 3, 1941, listed above. Earlier he had stated by telephone that many of the already printed sheets of books published by Methuen and Co., including sheets of the 1918 edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, had been burned at the time of the bombing (see *Note 17*). Carrington referred me to American Alexander Technique teacher Missy Vineyard who in a letter dated February 5, 1994 wrote to me that Alexander had written in a letter dated June 3, 1941: “Good news that 250 copies of C.C.C. [= *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual*; J.S.] thought burned are in good order after all the trouble.” As stated, this letter from Alexander to Irene Tasker (3 June 1941) is included in the first volume of *F. Matthias Alexander: Letters* (Vineyard & Fischer (Eds.), 2020, pp. 252-253; see number (5), above). Note that in his surviving letters Alexander paid no attention to printed sheets that were said to have been burned in a fire.

23. Note that copies of *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (Methuen, seventh edition) of 1938 were sold with paper slip (relating to publisher transfer) pasted on the title page (Alexander, 1938), as were copies of *The Use of the Self* (Methuen reprinted) from 1939 with paper slip (relating to publisher transfer) pasted on the title page (Alexander, 1939d). This would mean these copies date from the transfer of copies from Methuen to Chaterson in September 1941. Further, undated copies of *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual*, published by Chaterson LTD, printed in the United States of America (Alexander, n.d. 1), were sold too! And remarkably, copies of 1939’s *The Use of the Self* were sold which according to the title page had been published by Chaterson (Alexander, 1939c). Other historical anomalies that beg for explanations? Or just more signs of ‘creatively rewritten’ editions, or printings, or publishers?

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