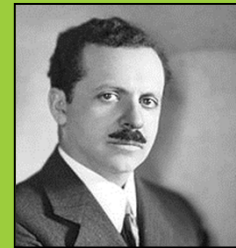
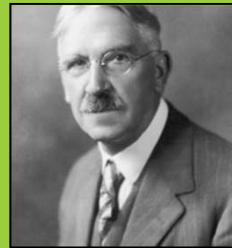


Interaction Design, Society and the Public Sector

Ethics and Responsibility: *Manipulation*

Jon Kolko

1A



Manipulation

[1A] John Dewey



"If I ask these questions, it is not for the sake of whole sale condemnation of the old education. It is for quite another purpose. It is to emphasize the fact, first, that young people in traditional schools do have experiences; and, secondly, that the trouble is not the absence of experiences, but their defective and wrong character-- wrong and defective from the standpoint of connection with further experience."

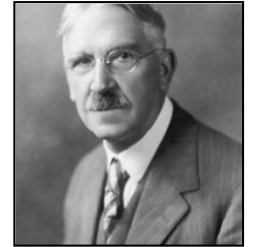
Dewey is establishing a criteria upon which to judge experiences:

"Any experience is miseducative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience."

How do you feel about this criteria to judge experiences?

Why?

[1A] John Dewey

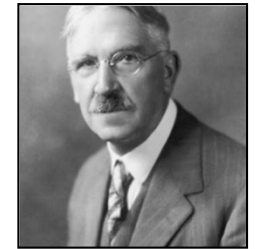


“Can we find any reason that does not ultimately come down to the belief that democratic social arrangements promote a better quality of human experience, one which is more widely accessible and enjoyed, than do non-democratic and anti-democratic forms of social life?”

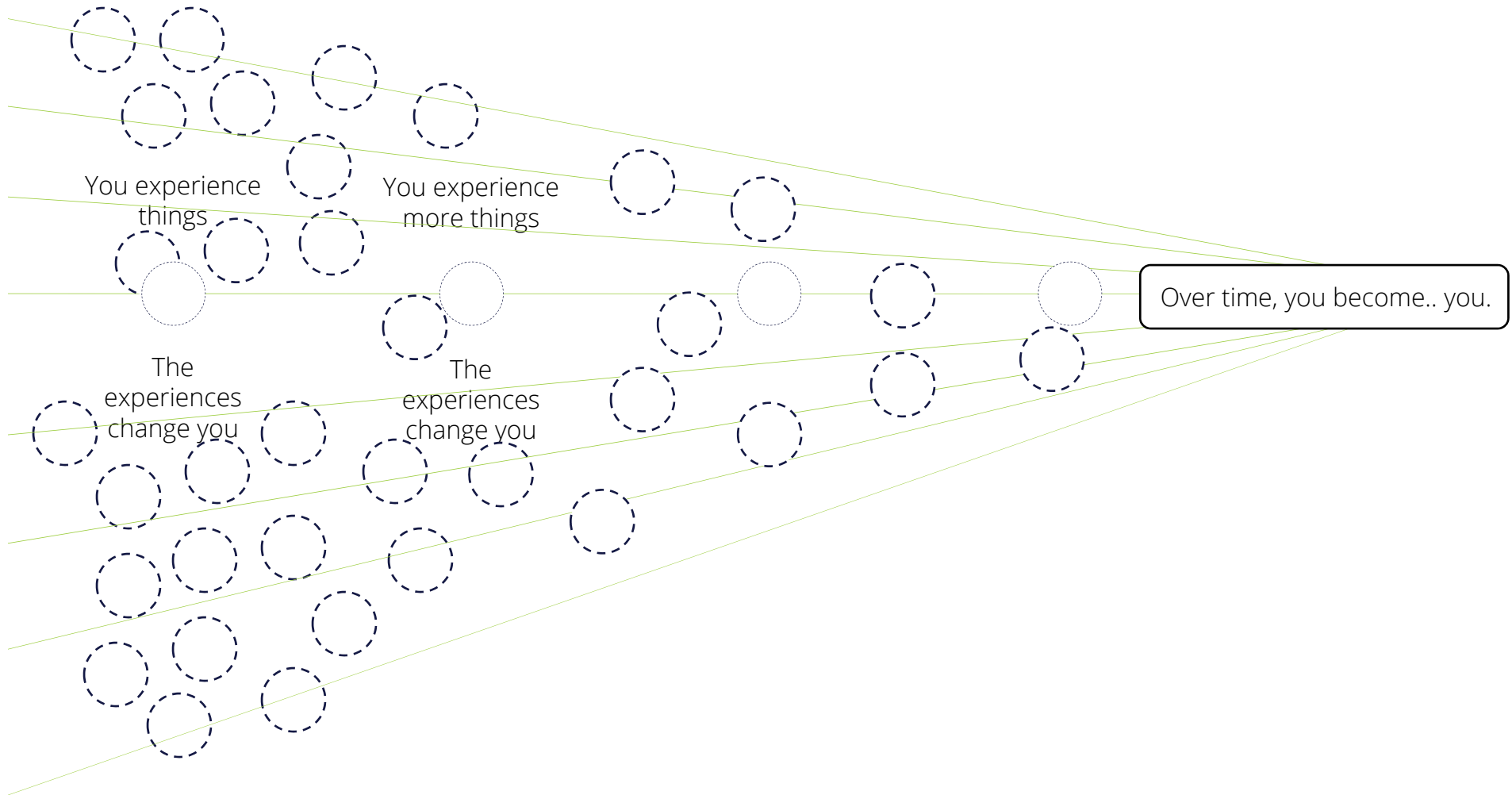
Does not the principle of regard for individual freedom and for decency and kindness of human relations come back in the end to the conviction that these things are tributary to a higher quality of experience on the part of a greater number than are methods of repression and coercion or force?”

Why does Dewey bring this up in the middle of his argument, particularly when he’s establishing a criteria upon which to judge educational experiences?

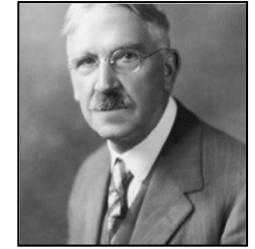
[1A] John Dewey



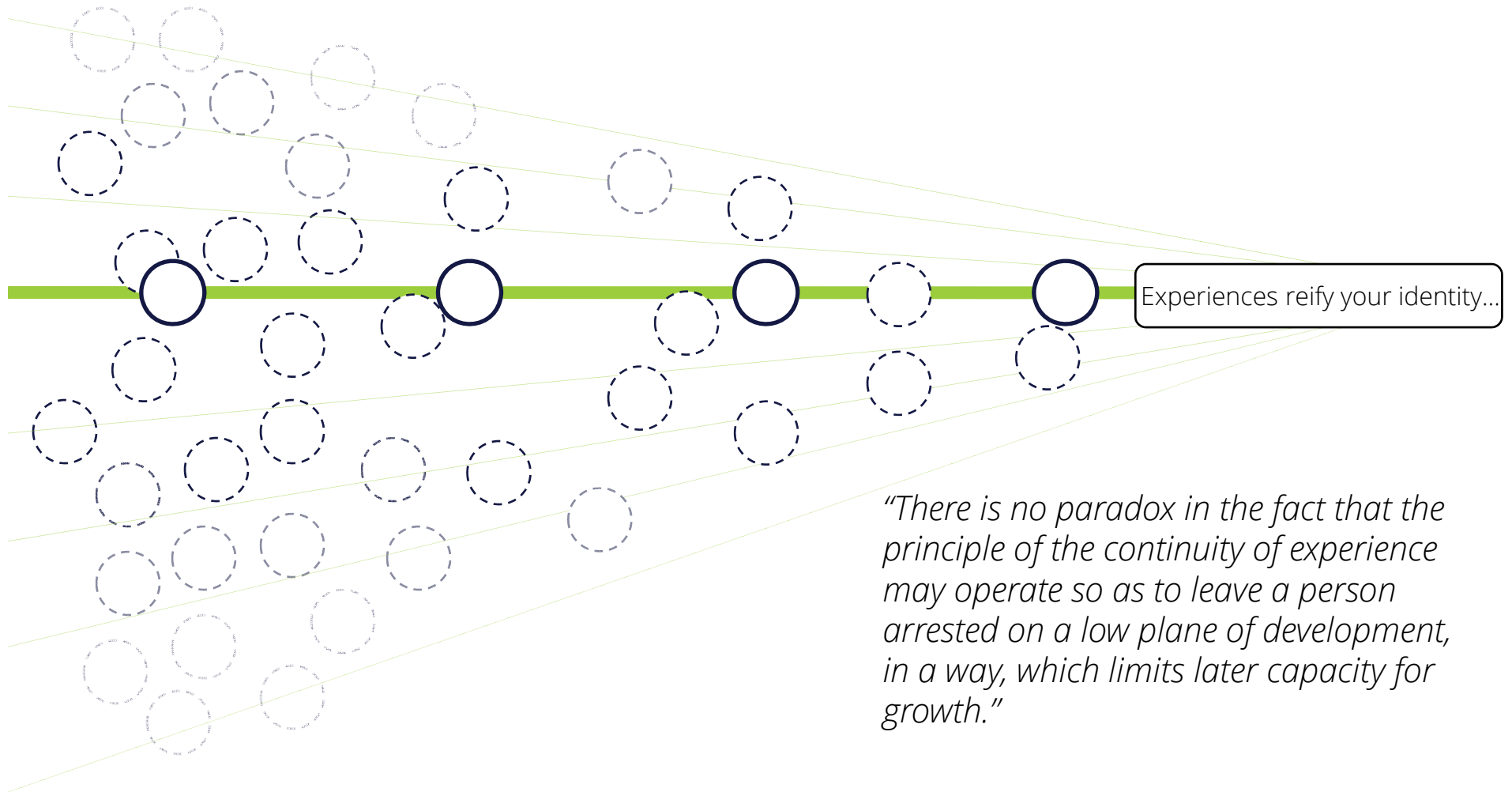
Dewey speaks of continuity of experiences:



[1A] John Dewey



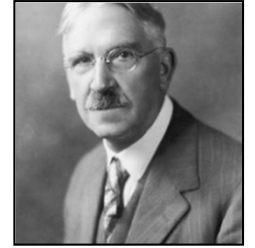
But that continuity can be limiting.



Experiences reify your identity...

"There is no paradox in the fact that the principle of the continuity of experience may operate so as to leave a person arrested on a low plane of development, in a way, which limits later capacity for growth."

[1A] John Dewey



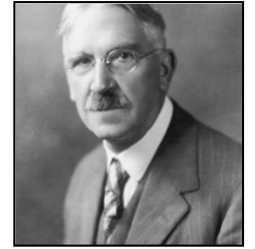
And lest we forget that we exist in culture and society:

"It ought not to be necessary to say that experience does not occur in a vacuum. There are sources outside an individual which give rise to experience. It is constantly fed from these springs.

No one would question that a child in a slum tenement has a different experience from that of a child in a cultured home; that the country lad has a different kind of experience from the city boy, or a boy on the seashore one different from the lad who is brought up on inland prairies.

Ordinarily we take such facts for granted as too commonplace to record. But when their educational import is recognized, they indicate the second way in which the educator can direct the experience of the young without engaging in imposition."

[1A] John Dewey



"The word "interaction," which has just been used, expresses the second chief principle for interpreting an experience in its educational function and force. It assigns equal rights to both factors in experience-objective and internal conditions. Any normal experience is an interplay of these two sets of conditions. Taken together, or in their interaction, they form what we call a situation."

Why is this distinction important?

What's the point of Dewey's argument?

[1A] Maurizio Vitta



- There are cultural expectations placed on designers—what is expected of us, and how those expectations are defined
- The culture of objects is directly related to the culture of design; the objects themselves become central

Social need for relationships with others



The urge to work



Consumption of goods



Products become communication objects, or signs



All goods are therefore embodied with a deep cultural significance.



Because objects are signs, the act of consumption is really the process of signification and communication

[1A] Maurizio Vitta



- As more and more objects are created, each one loses its functional identity; objects become only communication vehicles.
- The object transfers, communicates, its image to the person using it, who becomes completely identified by it
- Form & Function are replaced by social value, defined by capitalism, marketing, a mass consumption society
- The result: *the individual is overwhelmingly surrounded by goods, constrained to use them only as a way to portray themselves to others*

[1A] Maurizio Vitta



On the one hand, indeed, in a reflected manner, they enjoy the same central role as that of the objects they design; on the other hand, their cultural character, although endowed with great prestige today, runs the risk of taking on the fragility and flimsiness of designed objects themselves.

[1A] Maurizio Vitta

Thus, at the very moment when the sphere of the designer's intervention is taking shape, and is delineated in all of its complexity, his or her role runs the danger of fading into an ambiguous mist in which it may even be reduced to a mere signature placed on the products.



[1A] Edward Bernays



Today the privilege of attempting to sway public opinion is everyone's. It is one of the manifestations of democracy that anyone may try to convince others and to assume leadership on behalf of his own thesis.

Narrowly defined, public opinion represents the thought of any given group of society at any given time towards a given object. Looked at from the broadest standpoint, it is the power of the group to sway the larger public in its attitude towards ideas.

[1A] Edward Bernays



The innovator, the leader, the special pleader for new ideas, has through necessity developed a new technique – the psychology of public persuasion... the manipulation of the public mind... serves a social purpose.

It is a species of education in that it presents new problems for study and consideration to the public, and leaves it free to approve or reject them. Never before was so broad a section of the general public so subjected to facts on both sides of so many problems of life. Honest education and honest propaganda have much in common.

[1A] Edward Bernays



Where shall we end, they say, in this welter of conflicting ideas? What will come from this chaos? And cannot the man who has manipulated his public opinion and won it to his side misuse it for his own purpose? Possibly he can. There are Ku Klux Klans, there are Mussolinis, there are tyrannies of every sort; but a public that learns more and more how to express itself will learn more and more how to overthrow tyranny of every sort.

[1A] Edward Bernays



As a matter of technique they decided to dramatize the year's campaign in an annual convention which would center attention at one time and at one place upon the ideas they stood for...

The next step was to decide how to make it most effective...

The third step was to surround the conference with people who were stereotypes for ideas that carried weight all over the country...

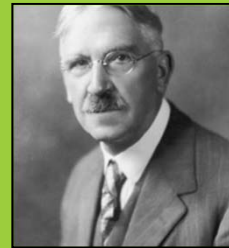
Further expansion of these thoughts was attained by mailing reports, letters, and other documents to selected groups of the public.

[1A] Edward Bernays



This is an age of mass production. In the mass production of materials a broad technique has been developed and applied to their distribution. In this age, too, there must be a technique for the mass distribution of ideas.

1A



Manipulation

In groups of two or three, synthesize these three readings into a single cogent argument of no more than five sentences. [Fifteen Minutes]