

## NEW EDUCATION AND DEWEY'S PRAGMATISM

Aleš Prázný

University of Pardubice

[ales.prazny@upce.cz](mailto:ales.prazny@upce.cz)

**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the concept of education in John Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism. Dewey addressed education as it related to the development of American democracy. He considered democracy to be the fundamental pillar of democratic society, and not only understood democracy as a political system, but as a way of life. Dewey's concept of education is based on the epistemology of pragmatism: he rejects the traditional division of theory and practice; truth is not something given in advance but is the result of experimental science. The barrier isolating doing from knowledge should be eliminated. Dewey emphasizes doing and social interaction, and therefore tends towards operationalism and experimentalism. This leads to a reassessment and rejection of the existing philosophical tradition represented primarily by Plato, Aristotle and Kant. Pragmatism rejects metaphysics, Christianity, and embraces biological evolutionism with all of its implications for education. Dewey's revolution in American education is intended to be entirely in the service of democracy and its values. Unlike traditional concepts of education, which were primarily concerned with educating the elite, Dewey desires a social and political transformation of the world strongly shaped by social policy. Dewey develops his concept based on the historical optimism stemming from the Enlightenment, many aspects of which he himself criticized. The present study recapitulates the basic thoughts of Dewey's concept of education and shows its limits.

**Keywords:** education, philosophy of education, Dewey, pragmatism, democracy, progressivism, school system

The nineteenth century was a time of extensive social changes in the western world. At that time, North America became aware of its dependence on European heritage in many areas. Scientific, technological and socio-political development resulted in a great many stimuli to which America in particular responded with a newly emerging philosophical direction - pragmatism.<sup>1</sup> The greatest proponent of classical pragmatism in upbringing, education and schooling was John Dewey. His efforts opposed traditional education, which in his opinion was inadequate for the new age. His concept of education is

tied to the democratization of all areas of social life. In his time, Dewey was a leading social reformer who helped found the New School for Social Research, American Civil Liberties Union, American Federation of Teachers and more.

Dewey not only understood democracy in the narrow political sense as a form of government, but also as a way of life, a way of solving problems. (Višňovský 2001, 25.) Dewey himself was a completely committed public intellectual; he was able to reach the broader non-academic public and ordinary people. He knew that democracy is fragile and requires a strong democratic culture; its primary constituent is a democratic *ethos*. If this *ethos* dissipates, democracy becomes false and meaningless. Dewey knew that he could only help defeat the enemies of democracy by shaping the personal attitudes of individuals. Based on this broader conception of democracy, one can understand Dewey's lifelong interest in education. The problem, however, turns out to be the epistemological positions from which he does so.

Among his most influential writings with regard to education is his work from 1916 *Democracy and Education*, along with the books: *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*, *Schools of Tomorrow* (1915) and *Experience and Education* (1925). *Democracy and Education* represents Dewey's main interest: to prepare students for democratic citizenship. Dewey realized that to have civic character one requires "mental equipment" and moral character. Dewey developed "scientific thinking", which as a "mental habit" is characterized by free research, mutual tolerance of diverse opinions, and open communication. (Jenlink 2009, ix)

*Democracy and Education* was for many just as important as Plato's *Republic* or Rousseau's *Emil*. Everything is summarized here into one coherent concept. In it, Dewey presented a number of topics that he did not think through in sufficient depth, but he congenially linked the development of democracy and educational reform. The great theme is the vision that American democracy is based on a revolution in education. The democratization of society should instigate a move away from the elitist concept of education.

---

<sup>1</sup> "The term 'pragmatic', contrary to the opinion of those who regard pragmatism as an exclusively American conception, was suggested (...) by the study of Kant. In the *Metaphysic of Morals* Kant established a distinction between *pragmatic* and *practical*" - writes Dewey in his article *The Development of American Pragmatism (1925)*. (Dewey 1998, 3)

To this day, Dewey and pragmatism continue to have exceptional influence on American education and intellectual life. This influence can be well understood through the lens of an evolutionary interpretation of the American experience. American self-confidence was formed through the experience of moving from the Old World to the New World, an opportunity to begin again. This process was also imbued with the optimism that one could learn from past mistakes and thus break free from the consequences of the past. The realization that the future can be actively shaped had a strong effect. Belief in change and the formation of customs and conditions not only affected American reality but also intellectual life. "Society itself is a process of interactive changes among people and their various institutions, institutions that over time become outdated and must be changed." (Campbell 1995, 2)

Dewey's democratic spirit is influenced by two seminal figures. The first is Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1892), whom Dewey counts among the New World citizens who have broken free from inherited doctrines. The second is Charles Darwin (1809–1882), who brought attention to the variability of life and emphasized its ability to adapt. However, Dewey did not only understand the American experience from these two perspectives. (Campbell 1995, 2) This experience goes hand in hand with the possibility of a new beginning. It was the Protestants who wanted to break with the Roman tradition in America, which they were not permitted to do in England. America (the New World) thus embodied the chance to cut relationships encumbered with social traditions. A troubled life is here given a chance to start anew. It is an opportunity to build a new life, not be limited by the customs and obstacles of old Europe.

Building the new face of America above all concerned the manner of upbringing and education; this area became Dewey's passion. Upbringing and education – more than politics – were to promote things that were practical, not abstract and theoretical. Achieving this through politics would be slow and ineffective. That is why Dewey wanted to change the world through school-

ing. His goal was the political and social transformation or reconstruction of the world. In several ways Dewey tends more towards a concept of instrumentalism than pragmatism. (Edmondson 2006, 7) Under the influence of his or "instrumentalism" or "experimentalism", Dewey claimed that philosophy is a waste of time if it is not useful. Upbringing and education – more than politics – should promote things that are practical, not abstract

Dewey's America was characterized by a sharp increase in population, which grew mainly due to the influx of immigrants. It was a time of social protests and *laissez-faire* capitalism. Dewey became convinced that a changing society needed a new school system that would be more influenced by science than ever before. Students would no longer just sit on benches and memorize, but would solve problems and learn to work together. Scientific habits should be formed in elementary school. Science shouldn't just be something esoteric for students, but should help to develop proper attitudes. It is precisely "the development of scientific attitudes of thought, observation, and inquiry that is the chief business of study and learning." (Dewey 1981, 394) Manual training should also come to the fore. In addition to science, students need to be led to experiment. For Dewey, education is a laboratory in which philosophical concepts are to be tested and presented. The reconstruction of education should result in the reconstruction of personal and social life. (Višňovský 2001, 26)

With this emphasis, Dewey turned against the authority in education held by the thinkers of ancient Greece. He believed that their age had ended. The modern revolt began with an appeal to experience and turned away from the purely rational concepts that needed to be practically verified by experience, or were merely an expression of prejudice and institutionalized class interest. (Dewey 1916, 338) Dewey was very much in favor of eliminating mere book learning (bookishness), as it would not achieve a consistent reorganization of education. What he welcomed, on the other hand, were advances in psychology, industrial methods, and experimental science. This was proof to him that experience is

primarily practical, not cognitive. Dewey emphasized that the problem with education lay in the separation of knowing from doing. (Dewey 1916, 306) Learning should be achieved by doing, based on evolutionary conceptions of mental development.

#### Epistemological prerequisites for new education

Dewey's educational reforms are tied to a new epistemology, which consists of overcoming the traditional concepts of theory and practice, which have been valid in philosophy since the time of Plato. Dewey believed that this problem would be resolved by replacing the traditional spectator theory of knowledge, the truth of which was immutable, with a theory where truth is the result of experimental sciences. This new theory would be built on action and would abolish the mutual isolation of knowledge and action. The classical philosophical tradition overlooked experience as such and posited the real goal and ideal to be knowledge of reality, which cannot be known by experimental methods. According to Dewey, traditional philosophical idealism carries the pathos of nobility, as it sees its highest duty in providing "an intellectual or cognitive certification to the ontological reality of the highest values." (Dewey 1981, 378) In this classical tradition, true knowledge is only accessible through reason. In the seventeenth century this was changed by the scientific revolution, which introduced a new epistemological paradigm. Mathematical knowledge of nature formulated by mechanical concepts declared itself to be the only voice of natural philosophy. (Dewey 1981, 373) Older philosophy became untethered from natural science at that time, lost its support and ceased being the superior form of knowledge. Dewey believed that knowledge now requires action, and that scientific methods are also about the formation of values. For Dewey, doing is therefore the heart of knowing. Instead of intellectualism, Dewey emphasizes empiricism.

The task of philosophy should be to facilitate fruitful interaction: "our cognitive beliefs, our practical beliefs about the values, the ends and purposes, that should

control human action in the things of large and liberal human import." (Dewey 1981, 379) Although Dewey considers it necessary to abandon the traditional view, which considered action to be significantly inferior to knowledge, he is far from claiming that "action is higher and better than knowledge, and practice inherently superior to thought." (Dewey 1981, 380)

Dewey accepted the spirit of the age and its intoxication with the scientific method, which he advocated in education. He emphasized his belief in science as a guide to life by announcing the "Copernican revolution." Dewey understood science as knowledge itself. While many thinkers have distinguished between knowledge and action, Dewey abolished this distinction, stating that knowledge is nothing but doing. He was an advocate of the theory of operationalism, which states that knowledge is only the scientific method in action.

In general, pragmatism desires to be scientifically oriented; the gains of modern science are to balance out Christian fundamentalism. Pragmatism is directed against metaphysics, against natural law, so it does not believe in the idea of its own truth, which would be a purpose in itself. The purpose of research is not to attain the truth about oneself, but to seek consensus on what needs to be done. Investigation that does not coordinate action is mere wordplay; it is a matter of making technological or political progress – that is why pragmatism does not see a sharp line between the natural and social sciences, between social sciences and politics, or even between politics, philosophy and literature. There is no profound gulf between theory and practice; theory must have an effect on practice, otherwise it remains mere wordplay. Indeed, the whole of culture is part of the same effort to improve society. (Rorty 1999, xxv)

#### School as community: "New education" as an introduction to social life

Dewey characterized his time as the "twilight of intellectual transition" (Dewey 1998, 41), which requires a new philosophy. While within the ivory towers of academia the scholastic-conservative concept still survives, beyond

them philosophy is heading in a new direction. Social progress demands new goals for education. Especially with regard to the democratization of society; philosophy and education can no longer be just for the elites, but should touch broad swathes of society. This effectively abandons the concept of education and begins the machinery of training, where education appears only as an exception.

Education for Dewey is a social process, school for him is a form of community life. After all, the entirety of American society is to be transformed from "The Great Society" into "The Great Community". According to Dewey, schools should transform society democratically and socially. A school represents society in a small microcosm of social life – the education of students here replaces the process of their socialization. It is important for a progressive educational system to have a strategy of creating small groups: in classrooms, in schools. (Schutz 2020, 124) Instead of competing with one another, students are encouraged to learn to cooperate. Academic priorities in education should give way to social goals.

For Dewey, belief in objective truth or an authoritarian determination of good and evil is detrimental to students. Dewey himself considered his work to be experimental. He is more committed to breaking down traditions and conventional religions than exploring how students can learn more effectively. He wants to establish a new political and social reality. He understands education in the broadest sense as the continuity of social life. Learning and education, transmission and communication. These are necessary for the continued existence of society. (Dewey 1916, 4)

The new transformation of society and its new needs requires new schooling. "A new system of education" must be built in response to the changing world. It must be rid of its isolation from society. "I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race." (Dewey 1981, 443) Education and upbringing is a social process, meaning that it must consist primarily of social experience. It is a process of life taking place now, not a preparation

for future life. (Dewey 1981, 445) School must represent, in simplified form, current social life. Dewey believes schools fail because they too often neglect this community life. It appears crucial to Dewey's thesis that teachers are not in school to represent an idea or to form certain habits in the students, but are here to be members of the community; their task is to encourage influences that will nurture students. The point is to help students respond properly to such stimuli. It is not the immediate task of the teacher to discipline. Discipline should pass to the student from the overall life of the school. (Dewey 1981, 447) Students in school should not be exposed to a sudden amount of special studies, reading, writing geography etc. without these being related to social life.

Rather than just science, literature, history or geography, it is important for Dewey that the core of a school be the student's own social activity. (Dewey 1981, 448) Science only has a role to play in education if it helps social life; language *is not* to serve primarily to express thoughts but rather to communicate – is is a social instrument. "Education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and the goal of education are one and the same thing." (Dewey 1981, 450) It is necessary to rebel against traditional schooling; progressive schools cannot rely on traditional customs. New education should be simpler than the old, it should be at one with the principle of growth. (Dewey 1981, 510) Here, Dewey is already strongly at odds with the tradition of formulating ideas and expressing them in language.

Dewey devoted great attention to Rousseau, who had considerable influence on his thinking about progressive education (regardless of how critical Dewey was of the way Rousseau treated his own children). Dewey and Rousseau both shared a belief in the inherent goodness of people.

His book *Democracy and Education* (1916) represents the true spirit of an America that is fascinated by the departure from theory and ultimately from philosophy. After all, Richard Rorty reminds us that for sixty

years his teacher Dewey tried to wean his students off of Plato and Kant. Like other pragmatist philosophers, Dewey was labeled a relativist. In general, however, the pragmatists themselves describe themselves negatively, such as anti-Platonists, or anti-metaphysicians, or anti-fundamentalists. (Rorty 1999, xvii) Pragmatic philosophers criticize old philosophical dogma, what their opponents call *common sense*, while the opponents of pragmatism consider clinging to these dogmas to be sensible. It is precisely from the position of traditional sensibility that Dewey's efforts appear in their main aspects to be an attempt to destroy all philosophy. He thus helped strip America of a perspective that represented intellectual potential. His pedagogical considerations are closely related to his ethical considerations. He turns against abstraction, ethical and philosophical problems which in his view have been wrongly posed. In a sense, he can be considered an "anti-philosophical philosopher": he believed traditional philosophers to be people unable to live in the real world, who therefore construct their perfect and unchanging worlds of ideas or science. (Višňovský 2001, 23)

### The limits of pragmatism and education

Dewey did more work in the field of education than on his own philosophy. Although his importance for the level of education and organization of the American school system is often emphasized, there are also critical voices who point out the negative influence of pragmatism and Dewey on philosophy and education.

According to Hannah Arendt, pragmatism and modern psychology influenced pedagogy and teaching faculties so much that they have become a scourge for education.<sup>2</sup> (Arendt 1961, 182) Arendt made this state-

ment about American education in her essay *The Crisis in Education* in 1954. She gave the following reasons: Teaching today emphasizes didactics, which brought general principles of how to teach regardless of the specific subject. The teacher has become a mere manager of knowledge that he may not know in depth; such a teacher can teach anything. This attitude brings with it a new understanding of what it means to teach. The personality of the teacher, which has traditionally played a major role in upbringing and education, recedes into the background. On the contrary, the mere ability to teach is overemphasized. However, a teacher should know his subject inside out. Arendt showed that this predominantly didactic relationship to teaching leads to a weakening of the authority of the teacher, who is often only a few lessons ahead of the students. This modern theory of learning, criticized by Arendt, found its basic systematic and conceptual expression precisely in pragmatism, which has had a fundamental formative influence on modern education in America.

In 1955, Paul Crosser published a book called *The Nihilism of John Dewey*, where he shows Dewey's attempt to destroy all philosophy, and in 2006 Henry T. Edmondson published *John Dewey and the Decline of American Education*. Both authors point out the weaknesses of Dewey's concept of education and state that education with an emphasis on social experience tends to disrupt, which is evident in its relationship to classical education. Arendt characterizes Dewey's philosophy with the words: "But hard as it is to agree with Dewey, it seems even harder to disagree with him, for such disagreement is to disagree with common sense personified. And who would dare or like to do that?" (Arendt 1994, 195) What is so complicated about his philosophy is that it is just as difficult to agree with it as it is to disagree. Arendt pointed out that, according to Dewey, the source of all the social and political evil of our time lies in *laissez-faire*. However, in light of recent history, Arendt knows that true hell can only be established by thoroughly opposing *laissez-faire* through scientific planning. (Arendt 1994, 195) She emphasized this in her essay *Social Science and Concentration*

<sup>2</sup> "The ... basic assumption which has come into question in the present crisis has to do with teaching. Under the influence of modern psychology and the tenets of pragmatism, pedagogy has developed into a science of teaching in general in such a way as to be wholly emancipated from the actual material to be taught. (...) But this pernicious role that pedagogy and the teachers' colleges are playing in the present crisis was only possible because of a modern theory about learning." (Arendt 1961, 182)

*Camps* (1950), where she writes about the involvement of science during the extermination of people. She reminds us that Dewey's central concept is not a concept of man but of science. "Dewey's main effort aims at applying to the social sciences scientific concepts of truth as a working hypothesis. This is supposed to put the social sciences on a sound epistemological basis from which they and we will progress until the supposed gap between natural and social science is closed." (Arendt 1994, 195) Arendt's critique of social sciences is well known, along with Strauss' critical view of Max Weber (Strauss 1953, 42), whose concept of non-evaluating social sciences he considers a manifestation of nihilism.

It is no coincidence that Rorty wrote about Dewey trying for sixty years to free students from the domination of Plato and Kant. Dewey's main achievements were rather negative: he showed how to break free from the shackles of intellectual burden we inherited from the Platonic tradition. (Rorty 1999, xiii) It is precisely the attempt to break free from the Platonic tradition that brings the post-Nietzsche tradition of European philosophy together with the pragmatic tradition of American philosophy. (Rorty 1999, xvi) The critique of Plato and Aristotle lies in the fact that man is characterized by the ability to penetrate beyond the curtain of phenomena. Pragmatic philosophy is not concerned with knowledge that is self serving – this sets pragmatism apart from the philosophical tradition. On the contrary, it wants to cultivate knowledge that contributes to human happiness. Rorty emphasizes that a specific and necessary ability is to trust and cooperate with other people, and to be able to cooperate to improve the future. He cites three Utopian projects as examples: Plato's ideal state, the Christian attempt to realize the kingdom of God, and Marx's vision of the victorious proletariat. (Rorty 1999, xiii) These attempts were aimed at improving our institutions by having more and more people work together to attain happiness.

Dewey was often accused of being a relativist. Pragmatic philosophers, however, never call themselves relativist. Rather, they define themselves negatively as anti-Platonic, anti-metaphysical or anti-fundamentalist. Prag-

matic philosophers don't even want to be labeled subjectivists. They want to abandon the vocabulary of their opponents and not have it imposed on them. Pragmatism is about avoiding Platonism and metaphysics in the broad sense as expressed by Heidegger – metaphysics is Platonism; the central concern of pragmatism is the usefulness of terms we have inherited from Plato and Aristotle. Opponents of pragmatism believe that getting rid of these terms means abandoning rationality; rationality according to them consists of respecting the difference between absolutism and what is relative, between the discovered and the made, the object and the subject, nature and convention, reality and phenomenon. Pragmatists respond, according to Rorty, that if this is rationality, then they are undoubtedly irrationalists. They completely refuse to speak in a Platonic way and therefore are gradually looking for new forms of speech. The pragmatic philosophers call themselves anti-dualists – which is again directed against Plato. (Rorty 1999, xix)

Rorty notices that the distinctions between philosophy, science and politics is disappearing in American pragmatism. Pragmatists are often consider themselves naturalists, although they deny being reductionalists or empiricists; they object to both British empiricism and the Vienna Circle, which are not even sufficiently naturalist. The Americans went down a different path than the Europeans. European philosophy according to Rorty is full of proclamations (phenomenological ontology, hermeneutics, archeology of knowledge, genealogy). While Dewey spoke of the scientific method, he never explained exactly what it meant. James occasionally spoke of the pragmatic method, but this meant nothing more than his words about anti-Platonism. None of this, according to Rorty, became a prerequisite for a skeptical stance against traditional philosophical questions and concepts. Quine, Putnam and Davidson may have been labeled analytical philosophers, but none considered themselves to be thinkers who carried out conceptual analysis. (Rorty 1999, xxi) "Philosophers in the English-speaking world usually do not take the work of philosophers in the non-English-speaking world very seriously,

and conversely. The gap between so-called ‚analytic‘ and so-called ‚Continental‘ Philosophy shows no signs of being bridged.“ (Rorty 1999, 47)

Here, pragmatism rejects the philosophical tradition based on the discovery of natural laws, on the contrary, it is inclined to believe that philosophical problems are artificial by nature. Pragmatism criticizes traditional philosophy for dealing with virtually absent pseudo-problems; instead it wants to only deal with what is actually present and unleash capacity to address real problems of the present day. That is why pragmatists would like to break with the Cartesian-Locke image of the mind, which seeks contact with a reality outside itself.

Pragmatism is based on an evolutionary/biological perspective, which rejects miracles and is characterized by an aversion to metaphysics (it considers faith to be a habit of action and questions the usefulness of faith). Pragmatism is close to Darwin's conception of man as an animal that adaptively overcomes itself to cope with the environment; man strengthens his abilities that bring him more pleasure and less pain. In his article *The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy* (1909), Dewey notes that Darwin's *Origin of Species* not only represents a watershed moment for natural science, but is also an intellectual revolt, a new way of thinking. This in turn leads to a transformation of the logic of knowledge, which affects morality, politics, and religion (Dewey 1998, 39). The influence of Darwin on philosophy is so significant that it has taken control of the phenomenon of life, which is characterized by constant transition. The principle of transition brings with it a new logic for the interpretation of mind, morality and life.

The human body is in contact with reality just like any other organism. The very idea of being out of contact with reality presupposes a non-Darwinian, Cartesian notion of the mind, which is independent of the causal reality of the body. If pragmatism wants to accommodate Darwinian thinking, it must abandon traces of Cartesianism and stop thinking of words as a representation of reality; words should only be taken as nodes in a causal reality connecting an organism with its environ-

ment. In pragmatism, language is understood through a biological perspective (Rorty 1999, xxiii). After all, we know that Dewey developed his view of mind, thought, and language in constant dialogue with the biology and psychology of his time (Johnson 2010, 123).

### Conclusion

Even if pragmatism rejects the Enlightenment, which refers to the supernatural light that leads a person to the truth, in the end it is clear that Dewey himself trusted science too much. His concept of developing society through the Enlightenment ideals of science and education is indicative. It fails to evaluate the assumptions of the modern idea of progress, and certainly not the fact that pragmatism shares progress itself with the Enlightenment; there is also no consideration of the "dark side" of human life, while at the same time the formation of habits driven by planning and reason (or science) is overvalued and considered a non-problematic positive phenomenon. Although Dewey talks about modern psychology and its place in education, he understands it in its positivist reductionism. Pragmatism is certainly not mistaken in the fact that the Enlightenment replaced the supernatural idea of God with a quasi-divine authority - reason, but pragmatism itself could not break free from the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment's emphasis on science, despite the limited scope of its methodology, is characteristic for pragmatism. Morality is more a matter of compromise between competing versions of good than between absolute good and absolute evil. (Rorty 1999, xxix) The question remains, to what extent it is possible to renounce the category of absolute evil, or to what extent can the dehumanization of man (e.g. the Holocaust) be considered the result of competing versions of good.

Pragmatism desires to reduce human suffering and strengthen human equality. In its view, this goal cannot be secured by any supernatural power, but rather by purely technocratic and excessive – almost revolutionary – optimism. Pragmatism thus represents one form of modern earthliness. It confidently anticipates a great

scientific revolution which will occur as a result of the collective cooperative organization of knowledge and safeguarding of social values. Interpersonal relations are to be scientifically controlled. Unlike Arendt or others, Dewey is unconcerned with the impact this will have on a person's life. He emphasizes collectivism at the expense of the individual. While the emphasis on interaction, collectivism and the practical aspects of education enables better technical management of many social tasks, it leads to the neglect of the importance of classical literature, philosophy and history for education. The disappearance of these areas from education and from life leads to what Arendt has already pointed out: the understanding of the importance of authority disappears, and not only in education. Pragmatism rejects the universally valid truth that is called reason, or human nature, considering it only as an idea that can serve as a starting point for debate. Paradoxically, however, Dewey and pragmatism do so from a position of reason, while undermining belief in its universality.

#### References

- Arendt, Hannah. 1961. "The Crisis in Education". In Arendt, H. *Between Past and Future. Six Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: The Viking Press, 173–196.
- Arendt, Hannah. 1994. "The Ivory Tower of Common Sense". In *Essays in Understanding 1930–1954, Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, edited by Jerome Kohn. New York: Schocken Books, 194–196.
- Dewey, John. 1916. *Democracy and Education*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Dewey, John. 1981. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, edited by John J. McDermott. Chicago – London: The University Chicago Press.
- Dewey, John. 1998. "The Development of American Pragmatism". In *The Essential Dewey, Volume 1, Pragmatism, Education, Democracy*, edited by L. A. Hickman, Th. M. Alexander. Bloomington – Indianapolis: Indiana University, 3–13.
- Edmondson, Henry T. 2006. *John Dewey and the Decline of American Education*. Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute.
- Jenlink, M., Patrick (ed.). 2009. *Dewey's Democracy and Education Revisited. Contemporary Discourses for Democratic Education and Leadership*. Lanham – New York – Toronto – Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Education.
- Johnson, Mark. 2010. "Cognitive science and Dewey's theory of mind, thought, and language". In *The Cambridge Companion to Dewey*, edited by Molly Cochran. New York: Cambridge University Press, 123–144.
- Campbell, James. 1995. *Understanding John Dewey. Nature and Cooperative Intelligence*. Chicago and La Salle: Open Court.
- Rorty, Richard. 1999. *Philosophy and Social Hope*. London: Penguin Books.
- Schutz, Aaron. 2020. "Can you Learn Democracy in a Classroom? John Dewey and Hannah Arendt on the 'Paradox of the Size'". In *Hannah Arendt on Educational Thinking and Practice in Dark Times*, edited by Wayne Veck and Helen M. Gunter. London – New York – Oxford – New Delhi – Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 123–135.
- Strauss, Leo. 1953. *Natural Right and History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Višňovský, Emil. 2001. "John Dewey ako pragmatiký filozof a liberál" [John Dewey as Pragmatic Philosopher and Liberal]. In Dewey, J., *Rekonštrukcia liberalismu* [Reconstruction of Liberalism]. Bratislava: Kalligram, 9–36.