

The Pedagogy of John Dewey in Spain: Between Educational Innovation and Theoretical Challenge

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the reception and influence of John Dewey (Burlington, 1859 – New York, 1952) in Spain from a mainly educational perspective. Dewey was translated into Spanish at the beginning of the 20th century. Progressive groups used his educational approaches during the first three decades to support the modernising, secular and democratic vision of education to overcome the historic delay Spanish people had suffered from, especially its popular classes. Dewey had a significant influence on the Free Teaching Institute (ILE), an innovative pedagogical movement founded in 1876 by the charismatic professor Francisco Giner de los Ríos. These ideas decisively influenced the progressive education of the Spanish Second Republic (1931-1936). The Civil War (1936-1939) and the dictatorship of General Franco (1939-1975) prevented the development of progressive pedagogies, which were criticised and even silenced. After the democratic constitution in 1978, different educational and philosophical groups have vindicated the figure of Dewey. Currently, Dewey's work is an important reference in theoretical debates and also, though to a lesser extent, in innovative educational proposals.

Although there are numerous historical works of great scientific and critical value in relation to Deweyan scholarship, our contribution has the novelty of providing a global view, inviting an understanding of Dewey from a historical and educational perspective. In recent years, and mainly on the occasion of the celebration in 2016 of the centenary of the first edition of *Democracy and Education*, different publications have appeared focusing on the presence and influence of Dewey in different countries. In Spain, the journal *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* devoted a special issue to him, which included twelve articles with contributions on the national cases of Italy, Turkey, the former Soviet Union, Macedonia, Hungary, Spain, Mexico, Chile and Brazil. It is also important to mention other recent research, of a thematic and transversal nature, which focuses on the figure of Dewey through reviews of different historical periods (Pozo Andrés & Jover, 2013; Bruno-Jofré & Jover, 2009a; Jover, 2010; Martínez Valle, 2016 and 2019), feminism (Vaamonde Gamo & Nubiola, 2016) or the revitalisation of democracy, following the rise of new social movements over the last few years, including in the period following the economic crisis of 2008 (Luzón-Trujillo & González Faraco, 2019).

Initial Reception of Dewey in Spain

The initial reception and influence of John Dewey in Spain took place over the first three decades of the 20th century. The ways in which his thought was introduced were the trips of Spanish educators and intellectuals to the United States, translations, as well as texts by Spanish authors who explained or commented on Dewey's teachings in the initial and ongoing training of teachers (Pozo Andrés & Jover, 2013). This reception was furthered by progressive groups to support the modernising, secular and democratic view of a new educational model, applicable in infant schools, in primary and secondary education, and in the university (Molero-Pintado, 2004). Among these progressive groups the Free

Teaching Institute (ILE – *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*) particularly stood out. The ILE was founded in 1876 by a group of university professors – including Gumersindo de Azcárate, Teodoro Sainz Rueda and Nicolás Salmerón, under the direction of Francisco Giner de los Ríos – who had been expelled from the University for defending academic freedom and refusing to submit their teachings to official dogmas in religious, political and moral matters (on the ILE: Gómez Molleda, 1981; Otero Urtaza, 2003; Díaz, 2003; Jiménez-Landi, 1973).

The Institution was born as a private educational institution, formally detached from political and religious interests, keen to defend the principles of freedom and scientific investigation. However, its connection with Spanish politics becomes evident when the motives of its very foundation are analysed. These were in conflict with the demands of the first government of the Restoration, which stipulated allegiance to the monarchy and to official Catholicism. In the face of these conservative positions, this group of university professors defended academic and conscientious freedom, inviting all sorts of retributions, personal and professional. Despite such set-backs, the political dimension would remain present during the ILE's sixty years of existence (on the ILE: Gómez Molleda, 1981; Otero Urtaza, 2003; Jiménez-Landi, 1973), with the Institute's work outliving its founders and continued by the so-called 'sons of Giner', among whom Manuel Bartolomé Cossío stood out.

The pedagogical ideas and principles of Dewey were a source of inspiration for the social transformation sought by both the ILE and other progressive groups, especially from the 1920s on. In any case, it should be noted that the early interest of Giner de los Ríos in the work of the North American pedagogue and philosopher John Dewey was seen in his educational writing in the last decades of the 19th century. From then on, Giner de los Ríos would increase his interest in the Deweyan educational model, combining it with the pedagogical ideas of Froebel and with the philosophy of Krause as a fundamental part of his educational proposal (Díaz, 1973). This enthusiasm was shared with other outstanding institutions when Dewey's work began to be translated, known and read by a large number of Spanish educators. Such intellectual connections would, over time, facilitate an exchange of information and a greater knowledge in Spain of his pedagogical ideas. According to Donoso (2001, p. 357):

“Dewey attracted, in Latin America as in Spain, those educators who were anti-traditional in their educational practices, generally liberal in terms of political-social reforms, and defenders of secular traditions (which in many cases meant anti-clerical)”.

Between 1915 and 1936, two of the most important publications of the time – the *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (BILE) and the *Revista de Educación* – published texts of and about Dewey in Spanish (Jover, Ruiz-Valdepeñas and Thoilliez, 2010, 31-41). Dewey in fact became the fourth most translated author in the BILE – one of the most Europeanist, multidisciplinary and cosmopolitan intellectual history journals of that time. The Madrid newspaper *El Sol* also picked up on Dewey, publishing various texts which commented on the ideas of the American thinker in intellectual and reformist sectors.

Among the initial translators of Dewey, Lorenzo Luzuriaga and the philosopher José Gaos should be mentioned. It is curious that the first translation into Spanish of a

work of Dewey (*My pedagogic creed*) was published in Chile, in 1908. Works by Dewey were published in Spain from 1915 (*The school and society*). Between that year and 1926, *How we think*, *Schools of tomorrow*, *The child and the curriculum* and *Democracy and education* were all published in Spanish, with further titles appearing in the following decade. It is to be pointed out that thanks to the influence of the philosopher Eugenio D'Ors, Dewey also began to be translated into Catalan. This dissemination of Dewey's writings was however interrupted at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, which took place in July 1936 (Nubiola & Sierra, 2001).

After the national disaster of the Spanish-American War (1898), with the loss of the last American colonies, Spain entered a profound political and moral crisis. The task of modernising education became increasingly high on the agenda. Dewey, as with other progressive and innovative pedagogues, contributed to legitimising this fascination for what was new and for progress towards a better future. From this perspective, some would argue that the influence of Dewey was above all rhetorical and testimonial (Jover, 2012).

Furthermore, the psychological interpretation of Dewey in Spain highlighted the applied and practical dimensions of his thought – even if, prior to the Civil War, he had a marginal influence on educational practice and innovative educational projects (Jover, 2010, 2012). It is important to highlight the profound originality of Dewey's psychology, based on a pragmatist and holistic perspective, which overcomes the traditional dualisms between body and mind, organism and environment, theory and practice, individual and society. Pragmatist psychology is characterised by a dynamic conception of mind and knowledge. Dewey's pragmatism is associated with the ideas of change, relativism and instability. In this way, Dewey anticipated influential psychological approaches in the second half of the 20th century, such as social constructivism, critical social psychology and narrative psychology.

However, it must be acknowledged that the innovative Spanish educators of the ILE and other pedagogical currents ignored these contributions, missing the richness of Dewey's proposals in this field. Jover (2012) goes so far as to speak of a 'depragmatisation' of Dewey. Such a restrictive and limited interpretation shaped Dewey's reception in Spain, with Dewey's proposals being considered as identical to Claparède's functional school. Psycho-pedagogical questions took precedence, leading to ignoring Dewey's philosophical and political dimensions. The originality of the American thinker compared to many of the European activist educators – such as the Belgian Ovide Decroly, the Italian Maria Montessori and the Frenchman Célestin Freinet (Pozo-Andrés, 2004, 2007) – was therefore lost.

Among those who were responsible for promoting Dewey in Spain from 1916 onwards we find the educationalists Domingo Barnés and Lorenzo Luzuriaga. Barnés (Seville, 1879 – Mexico, 1943) was a member of the ILE, within the group of the so-called 'sons of Giner' referred to earlier, and oriented his efforts towards the modernisation of school policy, which was dramatically behind the times in Spain. Barnés became Minister of Public Education and Fine Arts during the Second Republic (1931-1936) and Director of the Pedagogical Museum. He took active part in the *Pedagogical Missions*, an initiative of popular education which developed a great variety of activities for people who were usually alienated from culture. He was forced into exile and died in Mexico (Jover, 2010, 87-94)

On his part, Lorenzo Luzuriaga was a socialist ideologue who belonged to the League for Political Education, founded by José Ortega y Gasset and by Manuel Azaña in 1914, and the New School of Núñez de Arenas. Luzuriaga also stood out for his pedagogical production in exile, translating *Experience and education*, *My pedagogical creed* and other works by Dewey. This enabled him to disseminate the innovative pedagogy not only in Spain but also in Mexico, Argentina and other Spanish-speaking countries. Luzuriaga was also very dynamic in disseminating educational ideas and approaches. During the Second Republic he took active part in educational politics, defending a model of unique, active, public and secular schools (Jover, 2010, 94-103).

The Spanish ideologues and educators who disseminated Dewey's ideas underscored their secular perspective. This element is fundamental, as the influence of the Catholic Church in politics, culture and education in Spain was pervasive. Both before and after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Catholic educators criticised Dewey for his secular conception, at the same time as they defended a limited educational innovation based on a pedagogical activism consistent with Catholic principles. In the first half of the 20th century, the innovative proposal of the Escuelas del Ave María of Father Andrés Manjón in Granada, region of Andalusia, contributed to legitimising a conservative, ideological alternative to progressive activism, although we cannot negate the successes of Manjón in the field of active school practice, particularly in regard to the Roma population, subjected as this was to a strong process of social exclusion. The radical rejection of Dewey by Catholics and neo-Catholics has been a general feature of different national contexts, as evidenced, among others, by historical studies on the case of Brazil, where Catholic authors criticised Dewey's secularism, relativism and scepticism, which would lead, according to these authors, to the denial of absolute truth, to Masonic liberalism and even to a totalitarian and communist society (Costa, 2007; Cunha & Costa, 2002).

The Influence of Dewey in the Proposals of Giner de los Ríos and the ILE

Dewey was in Madrid for a short time in 1925, when his books had begun to be translated, including by Giner de los Ríos. Despite this, the two educationists did not meet, with Dewey limiting himself to getting to know the city and visiting the Prado Museum. Despite this lack of direct contact, Dewey's pedagogical progressivism resonated with the educational proposals of Giner de los Ríos (Pereyra-García, 1979), to the extent that the former became a significant reference for the latter, and consequently to Spanish innovative pedagogues in the period between the ILE's foundation (1876) and the end of the Spanish Civil War (1939).

Progressivism in pedagogical thought and practice was closely associated with Dewey, with the concept of experience seen as a formative resource in continuous reconstruction, with the purpose of deepening its social content. In this sense, progressivism links the concepts of education, communication and social life to the concept of experience. From this perspective, education involves a process of communication with a social sense, oriented towards sharing experiences that help renew social life in line with democratic ideals (Dewey, 1960). Giner was very much on the same wavelength as Dewey in this regard, claiming that educational projects had to have an important social dimension and in which the school becomes an agent of transformation and social reform and not one of social reproduction. The school, as an

educational institution, represents one of the ways of life in a community and must simplify the existing social life.

For Giner de los Ríos and his Krausist contemporaries – adherents to a major intellectual movement of 19th century Spain dedicated to an ideal of universal brotherhood and a philosophy that combined rationalism and idealism with social reform – democracy had a more social and projective character than a strictly political one. There is thus a recognition of the fact that an atmosphere which favours the individual's integral development is important. Dewey went so far as to say that: “we never educate directly but indirectly through the environment” (Dewey, 1960, 28). Giner also highlighted the need for an appropriate atmosphere in which activity and play are an essential part of a method which eliminates exams and the system of prizes and punishments as a regulator of school life. The latter should rather be open to its environment, with the classroom frequently shifting its location to other educational places, such as the country, factories, museums and community areas. In other words, places where life takes place and where experience is situated in the very process of life (Delgado-Granados, 2018).

The methodology developed by the ILE can be situated within the project of the New School, where the stress is on the combination of activities carried out inside and outside the school area. Trips, outings and excursions with the students were common in the Centre; that is to say, they served as an essential tool in the learning of different fields. Thus, for example, in the secondary school subjects of ‘History of Art’, ‘Natural History’ and ‘Introduction to Technical Culture and visits to factories’, the conceptual elements were accompanied by others which were procedural, attitudinal and evaluative via visiting museums, towns, monuments and nature spots. Here the students could observe, understand and love the environment from a more personal and active perspective (Molero-Pintado, 2000).

Following Dewey, Giner proposed, for the first time in Spain, that the work to be carried out was more akin to ‘education’ than to ‘teaching’. The pedagogical system should thus be based on the unity of the educational process during the different stages of life and in life itself. In this spirit of integral training, education should have the aim of creating responsible and independent citizens, with a capacity for critical thinking and self-government. In line with such an approach, the ILE conceived the autonomy and responsibility of the students as fundamental principles of child development, starting from the very early years. Discipline is here understood as self-regulation: it should emerge from within each student, and should be exempt from punitive measures such as directives, laws and punishments. Rather, the value of critical thought, creativity and empathetic capacity are essential in the formation of the individual.

In this sense, the ILE did not think of educational objectives in the restricted sense of intellectual development, but rather also emphasised the principle of activity. Education, in its broadest sense, was to do more than impart knowledge; it was to form people worthy of the name. The aim of education was to enable the individual to grow and develop based on his or her needs, interests and experiences. We are, therefore, very close to the Deweyan conception of growth, understood as the possibility of individual and social development. Thus, Dewey appeals to the educational dimension as a dynamic, experiential and social process when he affirms that: “Newly born beings are not only ignorant of, but completely indifferent to, the aims and habits of the social group, which must make them known and inspire them with an active interest in them. Education, and

education alone, fills this gap” (Dewey, 1960, p. 14). For Dewey therefore, education is a continuous reconstruction of experience, which also involves other key features such as autonomy, freedom, critical reflection and responsibility.

The ILE, the Second Republic and the Civil War (1931-1939): The Influences of Dewey and other Progressive Educators

The brief period marking the Second Republic (1931-1936) saw the ILE putting into practice its reformist proposals. Many experiments in pedagogical innovation were carried out, among them the Institute-Schools, the Pedagogical Missions and different cultural activities aimed at the whole population. Special attention was paid to the rural areas, as social change here had been very slow due to the secular neglect of the political and the interests of economic élites (Viñao, 2007).

Until the Civil War of 1936, the ILE was characterised by its independence and by its rejection of official aid. The fundamental principle which articulated the Institute’s liberal-democratic political project was based on the so-called ‘centrality of education’ (Gómez Molleda, 1981, 65), founded on the idea that human, individual and collective progress depends on the education of free people. This principle was transposed to the ILE’s educational task, giving pride of place to active and holistic teaching, thanks to which intelligence would be reformed. Such ideals are clearly set out in the foundational documents of the Institute:

“This Institution is completely foreign to any spirit and interest of religious communion, philosophical schools or political parties, uniquely proclaiming the principal of freedom and inviolability of science and, consequently, its inquiry and exposition with respect to any authority which is not that of science (Article 15 of the Statutes of the ILE)”.

When the ILE was founded, the cultural and educational situation in Spain was bleak. Suffice it to note that 40% of the population was totally illiterate. Progress in this regard was slow and limited, and one has to wait till the Second Republic (1936) before we see a first serious attempt – at an institutional level – to modernise the different socio-educational areas, embodying the aspirations for social transformation and regeneration of a good segment of the Spanish population (Escolano Benito, 1992; Viñao, 2007).

In spite of the international economic crisis of that time, the new Republican government proposed to meet the urgent educational necessities of the popular classes and consolidate the bases of a new organisation of the State. That is to say, a State which, as was characterised by Aragón (1974, p. 340), was above all an “educator State”. This commitment to a change in political orientation was transposed at the educational level in the implementation of a programme openly linked to the ILE’s principles, based on a free, secular and unified state school model, especially in primary education, with measures of genuine institutionalist characteristics, such as compulsory education, co-education and the elimination of official textbooks (Giner de los Ríos, 1922, 1925). Nevertheless, the Fascist coup of 1936, which ended with the defeat of the democratic camp, brutally dashed the Second Republic’s project of social and educational reform. The work of the ILE was declared illegal and all its goods were seized and its branches – such as libraries and laboratories – closed down or destroyed.

The work of the Institution, which had represented the most outstanding innovative educational project of Spanish contemporary history, was interrupted as of 1936. The Civil War, which came to an end on April 1st 1939, gave rise to the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, and this put an end to the progressive initiatives which had been developed since 1876. The ILE was outlawed and all its goods seized under the Decree of May 17th 1940. The justification of its immediate closure was that its work was contrary to the ideals of the new State. As Jiménez-Landi pointed out (1996, p. 419), when Madrid was occupied by the coup's forces, one of the orders of the Phalange was to break into all the premises abandoned by the Republicans and by the enemies of those who had won the war. This also applied to the ILE's properties.

In a letter published in the *Christian Century* on March 3rd 1937, Dewey publicly supported the Spanish Republican government in the war that it waged against the coup perpetrators led by Franco. Two years later, Dewey also criticised the repression of cultural freedom in Spain (Nubiola & Sierra, 2001, 113-115).

The General Franco's Dictatorship and Exile (1939-1977): The Deweyan Dream and Franco's Repression

General Franco's Fascist uprising against the Second Republic in 1936 marked the beginning of a Civil War which concluded in 1939 with a victory of the forces of the coup. The dictatorship lasted until the death of Franco in November 1975 (on Francoism, see, *inter alia*, Fontana, 1986; Payne, 1987; Preston, 2015). During this period, education in Spain suffered a significant setback, and was characterised by a lack of freedom, censorship, the purging of the pro-Republic progressive educators, authoritarianism, National-Catholicism and patriarchy (Viñao, 2014). Professors most committed to socialist, communist and anarchist associations, as well as the most innovative and committed educators, were shot, although some of them had the good fortune to flee into exile. Political exile grew exponentially (Fernández Soria, 2019; Cruz Orozco, 2005). This explains why research concerning the influence of Dewey in Spain necessarily involves a reference to the innovative panorama in education in countries such as Mexico, Cuba, Argentina and Chile, which, united to Spain by a common language, welcomed the Spanish exiles.

After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the victory of General Franco, and the consequent defeat of the Republican side, meant the disappearance of the progressive initiatives that had developed during the Second Republic (1931-1936). The political and ideological repression had no limits, particularly during the first two decades of the dictatorship. The new Regime implemented a Fascist educational system, separated boys from girls, and promoted political-ideological indoctrination and educational curricula centred on the unfettered defence of the so-called patriotic and religious core values.

School practices became resolutely ideological. Progressive initiatives disappeared during the first period of Franco's regime, and it was only in the 1960s that some innovative experiments were implemented, always in a very prudent and limited manner. From the intellectual point of view, a reactionary and spiritualist pedagogy flourished, proclaiming the usefulness of blind obedience to leaders and the dangers of democracy, sex and secularism.

In this context of political, ideological and scientific censorship, the dissemination of the writings of progressive educators was prohibited, whereas pedagogy was developed that was consistent with the regime's authoritarian and reactionary ideal. The fate of Dewey in this gloomy scenario was parallel to that of other innovators of the active and progressive school. The initial responses of the regime's pedagogues were silence and ideological criticism.

In the case of Dewey there was a special interest in disqualifying the progressive, democratic and social dimensions of his educational model. Dewey provoked a strong rejection in the regime's pedagogues and ideologues due to the air of scientism, progress and internationalism in his works. All this was in itself suspect, but the two most rejected issues were the defence of co-education and religious neutrality (Pozo-Andrés & Braster, 2012). An influential role in these criticisms was played by pedagogues and members of the Catholic Church who were completely free to propose an educational system adapted to the Catholic dogma, interpreted in accord with the Spanish context, and hence fully in line with fascism and authoritarianism. In this situation, the references were the Spanish classics of the 16th century and the experiences of Father Manjón in the Escuelas del Ave María in Granada. In the final phase of Franco's dictatorship, between 1963 and 1976, there was a connection again with the ideals of the active school, but under the label of Christian pedagogical activism (Pozo-Andrés & Braster, 2012). Jesuits and neo-scholastic pedagogues played a significant role in incorporating some of Dewey's ideas, taken out of their original context and put at the service of an active method in social pastoralism (Martínez Valle, 2016). Beyond the specific historic context of Franco's dictatorship, we must highlight the importance of institutional Catholicism in Spain throughout all the 20th century, and the role which it has played in criticising and attacking progressive educational proposals (for a specific study referring to Dewey, see Bruno-Jofré & Jover, 2009b).

During the period of the dictatorship, the work of Dewey published in Spanish was especially disseminated in Latin American countries. The activity developed in Argentina and Mexico stands out, where the publishing houses Losada (Buenos Aires) and Fondo de Cultura Económica (Mexico DF) published various works of his. Bruno-Jofré (2010) has studied the presence of Dewey in Latin America, comparing it to popular education and the contributions of Paulo Freire.

The Democratic Stage: From 1978 Onwards and Consequences for Today

The Spanish democratic constitution of 1978 opened a new period of political and cultural renovation which actually was started during the final years of the dictatorship by progressive groups in trade union, political, university and school sectors. To portray the Spanish social and educational context of the last forty years, it is necessary to point out that there has been a social modernisation which other European countries lived in the previous decades of the 20th century. Thus, this period has entailed the assimilation of the traditions of Western Europe, joining the European Economic Community, the legalisation of divorce and abortion, the progressive incorporation of women in the work force, the decrease of the rural and agricultural sectors of the economy (hitherto deeply rooted in the country), as well as the accelerated growth of all the sectors of the educational system, from infants right up to universities (Viñao, 2007).

In the democratic period there was a reclamation of the educational activism of the New School. The case of Maria Montessori and, especially of Célestin Freinet, are a good illustration of this development. Indeed, the Spanish Freinet movement, which had its origins during the Second Republic in the 1930s, resurfaced in the final years of the dictatorship and during the democratic transition through the ‘Movimiento Cooperativo de Escuela Popular’ (MCEP). The influence of the work of Freinet was decisive in the last two decades of the 20th century. On the one hand, the MCEP itself showed a very advanced and coherent way of educational and didactic work, particularly thanks to the direct contact with teachers and visits to ‘Freinet classes.’ On the other hand, the MCEP disseminated Freinet’s pedagogical approach through its magazine *Colaboración*, as well as through professional development sessions. Freinet’s influence was in fact more widespread, because beyond the efforts of the MCEP, the publishing of his main works made many teachers aware of his didactic approach and also how to apply them in classrooms (González-Monteagudo, 2013).

This same historic context also led to an increase in interest in Dewey’s work. Evidence of this during the last 30 years include new translations, publications, research and pedagogical adaptations of Dewey’s legacy. However, it is fair to say that Dewey has not had a significant influence in the improvement of actual educational practice in schools and classrooms: his influence has been more pronounced in the academic arena, thanks to his books and the enquiry carried out in universities, and by historians and philosophers especially so.

In recent years, various works have dealt with some educational topics from Dewey’s point of view, often linked to their application to pedagogical intervention. Indeed, Deweyan perspectives have been deployed in research on teachers (Beltrán, 2006), on competences (Jover & García Fernández, 2015), on the development of reflexivity (Guichot-Reina, 2013), on the critical pedagogy proposed by Paulo Freire (Feinberg & Torres, 2014), on novelty in Arendt (Bárcena and Jover, 2006), and on the limitations of liberalism in educational contexts (Santos-Gómez, 2011). In this context it is also worth highlighting Thoilliez’ doctoral thesis, which offers an informative compilation of the educational works on Dewey published in Spain from 1990 to 2012 (Thoilliez, 2013).

We also highlight the creation in October 2012 of the *Centro de Estudios Dewey en España* (<http://www.deweycenterspain.com>), whose headquarters are in the Instituto Franklin of the University of Alcalá de Henares (in the region of Madrid), which functions as a centre of resources and consultations in collaboration with the Center of Illinois (USA). The centre, under the directorship of professors Ramón del Castillo and Julio Seoane, also coordinates information on Dewey in Spain and fosters the organisation of seminars and workshops dedicated to the history and the present of thought and culture in the United States. The Centre also sets out to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue and intercultural debate.

The *Centro de Estudios Dewey en España* is the result of intense work carried out by a group of Spanish professors, led by Ángel Faerna and Ramón del Castillo, who from the 1990s onwards developed research projects dedicated to Dewey and his thought in the United States, with the support of the Castile La Mancha region, leading to several research and development projects financed by the central government. Other contributors and collaborators include José Miguel Esteban from the University of

Morelos in México, Carlos Mougán from the University of Cadiz, and Serafín Vegas and Julio Seoane from the University of Alcalá de Henares. A first for the Centre was the *Seminarios Dewey*, organised in 2009 at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (Open University), to dedicated to the relation between Dewey, Darwin and Hegel.

It is important to mention that it is only in recent years that we have seen the start of specific research on the reception and influence of Dewey in Latin American countries. Some works have a general and transnational perspective, referring to the complete Latin American area (Bruno-Jofré, 2010; Bruno-Jofré & Jover, 2009a). Other studies have a national focus. Among the countries studied are Argentina (Caruso and Dosel, 2009), Mexico (Bruno-Jofré & Martínez Valle, 2009; Romo-López, 2006), and Brazil (Costa, 2007).

Concluding Remarks

John Dewey was probably the first ‘global’ philosopher and pedagogue. We know that Dewey travelled a lot, that he taught in different parts of the world, and that in addition to educational initiatives in the United States, he also made promoted his educational approach in Europe, Mexico, the Soviet Union, China and Japan. Dewey also had a great influence on the development of pedagogical progressivism, being a protagonist in the period which spanned from the end of the 19th century to the Second World War. Due to all of this, Dewey provides us with an ideal opportunity to investigate educational matters from a transnational and comparative perspective, across time and space. Such an approach can be seen in the outstanding work coordinated by Bruno-Jofré & Schriewer (2011), an edited volume with interdisciplinary contributions from different parts of the world.

With his ability for synthetic exposition, Dewey wrote in the Preface to *Democracy and education* that the philosophy articulated in his book “connects the growth of democracy with the development of the experimental method in the sciences, evolutionary ideas in the biological sciences and the industrial reorganisation” (Dewey, 1960, p. 11). Indeed, this is the atmosphere in which Dewey lived and which he consummately expressed in his works. Without being a Marxist or a revolutionary, he became a social reformer dissatisfied with the democracy of his time. Without being a fully-fledged positivist, he became a tireless defender of the virtues of contemporary science. Without being a social Darwinist, he defended the idea of change and progress, as well as the need to adapt to the social transformation stemming from the development of industry, commerce and communications (Guichot-Reina, 2003; González-Montegudo, 2002).

Dewey invites us to redefine our goals and our educational procedures, putting them at the service of social and democratic purposes. In our current Spanish and European context of the commodification of culture and education, the voice of Dewey can be useful to remind us of the contradictions which we have to face if we wish to be faithful to a progressive and innovative ideal. As a Spanish philosopher has written: “The fact is that the dominance of the culture of competitiveness implies destroying the human capacities for a culture of collaboration and cooperation that is, according to Dewey's conception, what democracy consists of. Therefore, the contrast between market requirements and the demands of democracy implies the difficulty of reconciling an

education guided by economic interests and an education for democratic citizenship” (Mougan, 2013, p. 90).

This is the challenge facing us today: Dewey’s legacy can serve as an inspiration and stimulus, constituting a useful reference, capable of generating knowledge and a practice of social and educational transformation (Thoilliez, 2016). In order to do so, a careful and attentive re-reading of his works is necessary, which must begin with a respectful interpretation of his proposals. Too often, as Martínez Valle (2019) has pointed out, Dewey’s ideas have mainly served to justify or legitimise existing educational ideas and practices in Spain, with his name used in an effort to gain public credibility and prestige without having a genuine interest in or appreciation of his contributions. Dewey’s democratic, social, naturalistic and pragmatist conception of education has all too often been reduced to superficial slogans, when it has not been directly stripped of its significance or ignored, ending up mobilising it to buttress proposals that are completely alien to his approach (Pozo Andrés & Jover, 2013).

This of course does not mean that his work cannot be interpreted in different cultural and national contexts, in response to the specificity of the local. Rogacheva (2016) points out that it is precisely these national and cultural contexts that account for the extent of Dewey’s influence, where his approach has been placed at the service of specific traditions and models. Thus, we can speak of the ‘Turkish Dewey’, the ‘English Dewey’ or the ‘Japanese Dewey’, all of which are cultural interpretations of Dewey’s ideas and practices (Rogacheva, 2016). This invites us to highlight the importance of social and cultural history, in order to understand, in a situated way, the influence of foreign educational discourses, considering the national actors who read, translate, disseminate, teach, legitimise and apply these discourses, within specific political, social and cultural contexts (Martínez Valle, 2019).

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