

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION TO
DEWEY STUDIES

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Welcome to *Dewey Studies*, a new online journal of the John Dewey Society. *Dewey Studies* is the first scholarly journal devoted to John Dewey's life, work, and legacy. The William James Society publishes *James Studies* and the Charles S. Peirce Society publishes *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*; much of the most important work on John Dewey has been published in the latter journal. Because of the importance of Dewey's contribution to topics in metaphysics, logic, ethics, political theory, and education, and because of a growing interest in Dewey's distinct contributions to philosophical thought, Dewey's corpus deserves a dedicated journal. *Dewey Studies* provides it.

The John Dewey Society has three interlocking aims: (i) critical inquiry into pressing educational and cultural issues, (ii) educational theory and research of a progressive nature, and (iii) studies of the Dewey corpus and its influence. Throughout the course of our society's history, more emphasis has been placed on the first two. The reasons for this can be made clear given the origins of our society.

Founded in 1935, The Dewey Society was the first organization dedicated to an American philosopher. It was not, however, intended as a vehicle to advance the ideas of Dewey. Like the Thoreau Society (founded in 1941), the Dewey Society was founded to advance a cause, not a system of ideas. The Thoreau Society aimed to advance the idea of wilderness and to preserve wild spaces. Thoreau was a model, not a 'great figure' on a pedestal. The Dewey Society's stated mission is "keeping alive John Dewey's commitment to the use of critical and reflective intelligence in the search for solutions to crucial problems in education and culture." The founders were responding to right-wing attacks against progressive developments in American life. They saw Dewey as a model in progressive social thought and action, not primarily as a model for professional philosophy.

Because many of the problems addressed by the Society's founders involved attacks against public education, and because the Society subsequently held its meetings in conjunction with professional societies devoted to education, a second unstated

mission, encouraging educational research studies with a progressive slant, emerged.

For the last several decades the Society has held its meetings in conjunction with the American Educational Research Association. Until 2011, the Society sponsored a Special Interest Group in Dewey Studies at AERA. That group in turn sponsored an annual Dewey Lecture and Dewey Symposium as well as panels of peer-reviewed conference papers. The Society no longer controls that Interest Group, because new AERA rules prohibit control of its internal groups by an outside organization. But the Dewey Society remains an affiliate member of AERA and cooperates informally with the AERA Dewey Studies Group. These activities strongly reinforce the Society's mission in the fields of educational theory and research.

The Society has published the journal *Education and Culture*, now in its thirty-second volume, as a home for research and scholarship on Dewey's educational works and activities. It also publishes an online journal, *The Journal of School and Society*, to address pressing issues in educational policy.

Dewey's corpus, however, extends far beyond educational theory and policy. Many of his most important works, including *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, *Ethics, Experience and Nature*, *The Public and its Problems*, and *Art as Experience*, address other topics. The John Dewey Society has organized many lectures and panels on these works, but until now has had no vehicle for publishing scholarship on such works and the issues radiating from them beyond the field of education. These issues have been taken up not only by philosophers but also by political theorists, psychologists, and scholars in many other disciplines. The *Dewey Studies* journal aims to fill that need. To avoid competition with the Society's other journals *Dewey Studies* will generally not publish articles narrowly focused on education.

We are undergoing a 'renaissance' in Dewey scholarship. The Dewey Society, the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, and other societies and scholars are now organizing symposia and conferences on topics associated with John Dewey. *Dewey Studies* seeks to publish the best current work on Dewey, including work arising from such meetings, and to review new

books on Dewey. We aim to become the preeminent journal globally for Dewey Studies. Please submit manuscripts and query the editors about ideas for publishing special issues or conference panels.