



(How) Is Deweyan Pragmatism Critical?

*Remembering the Past,
Acknowledging the Present,
and Forging the Future of Pragmatism
in Philosophy, Education, and the Arts*

A Conference of the **John Dewey Society**,
hosted by Universidade de Évora
(Centro de Investigação em Educação e Psicologia),
and held in collaboration with
the Central European Pragmatist Forum
Évora, Portugal
June 5-7, 2024

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Due: January 1, 2024

The John Dewey Society aims to foster intelligent inquiry into the pressing social problems of our time, especially pertaining to the place and function of education in resolving such problems, as well as to share, discuss, and disseminate the results of such inquiries.

The John Dewey Society invites paper and alternative session proposals for its annual meeting, to be held at the Universidade de Évora, Évora, Portugal. Come join us for scholarship, community, and experiential learning in a European location!

To acknowledge the wide impact of Dewey's work across philosophical scholarship, community organizing, education, and more, we issue a broad and open call. We seek submissions that take up the ideas and spirit of Dewey in new and creative ways. We welcome papers and session proposals that apply Deweyan approaches to engage philosophical issues and analyze social, political, and educational situations. We request papers and session proposals that use a Deweyan lens to provide direction in challenging times and environments. We invite papers and session proposals that continue the Deweyan legacy by opening new conversations about the continued relevance of the American Pragmatist tradition and its iterations throughout the world.

At the same time, we are acutely aware of pragmatism's responsibility to itself to grow and shift in response to the social conditions of injustice and to the individual challenges and opportunities it encounters (and may have helped to generate), as well as to theoretical developments current in those circumstances. To explore that responsibility, we ask:

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That is, to what extent and in what ways did Dewey -- and those who place themselves in the tradition of Deweyan pragmatism -- promote modes of thought, feeling, and action that allow and/or demand rich criticism of the social status quo and the power relations implicated by those social circumstances.

"Critical pragmatism" has become a term of art as we move through the 21st century. If the 20th century gave root to classical pragmatism (most will think of Peirce, James, and Dewey), then the advent of critical theory and praxis with respect to class, legal status, race, gender, colonialization and other forms of discrimination and oppression has figured as a potential challenge to pragmatist positions and methods.

In reality, the challenge -- and attendant opportunity -- can be found in the writing and lived experience of W.E.B. DuBois and Alain Locke, of Anna Julia Cooper and Zora Neale Hurston, all Dewey's contemporaries, all pragmatists of a sort. When Leonard Harris edited "The Critical Pragmatism of Alain Locke" in 1999, the gauntlet was thrown. Could pragmatism as articulated and practiced by Peirce, James and Dewey take full account of the experience of Locke and the others? Could pragmatism as Dewey theorized it address the experience of workers struggling to organize in the early decades of the 20th century? Did Dewey's apparent ethnocentrism limit his capacity to understand the Chinese experience around the May 4th Revolution? Is Leonard Harris right that "Locke's critical pragmatism arguably avoids the pitfalls of critical theory, anticipates its tremendous contribution to human liberation, and offers an alternative to the limitations of classical pragmatism"?

Today, the pragmatist temper is readily evident in a range of critical literatures, sometimes acknowledged and sometimes not. Cornel West and Eddie Glaude, for example, claim pragmatism as a tool for analyzing issues of race and democracy. Charlotte Haddock-Siegfried and Patricia Hill Collins inspired a whole generation of feminist pragmatists in philosophy and the social sciences (standing on the shoulders of Audre Lorde, bell hooks and others who followed the Anna Julia Cooper lead). Contemporary academic philosophers like Jose Medina and Denise James center diversity and resistance in their epistemological musings. Educators from Jane Addams to today have practiced social criticism side by side with pragmatist modes of thought. Not all follow Alison Kadlec's 2007 lead in naming what they are doing "critical pragmatism" but the ideas -- and the practices -- are out there.

We encourage submissions that bring these ideas and practices home to the John Dewey Society members for both growth and critique. Specifically, we look to the phrasing of the

conference sub-title: *Remembering the Past, Acknowledging the Present and Forging the Future of Pragmatism in Philosophy, Education, and the Arts.*

And we are delighted to announce that affect theorist Carolyn Pedwell, Professor of Cultural Studies and Media at University of Kent and the co-editor of *The Affect Theory Reader II: Worldings, Tensions, Futures* (Duke UP, 2023), will be our 2024 John Dewey Lecturer. In her 2021 book *Revolutionary Routines: The Habits of Social Transformation*, Dr. Pedwell leans heavily on Deweyan theory to explore the logic of habits and the ways seemingly modest habits of action can reshape social environments in substantive and lasting ways. Her work exemplifies critical pragmatism in the service of social justice.

Submissions

Accepted submissions can be considered for publication in one of the journals sponsored by the John Dewey Society, including *Education & Culture*, the *Journal of School & Society*, and *Dewey Studies*. Authors are encouraged to submit completed papers to the respective journal editor. In addition, presented papers will be eligible for consideration for the JDS/Educational Theory Outstanding Paper Award. That Award carries with it a \$500 prize, with publication (after review) of the paper in *Educational Theory*. Details re publication and prizes are available on the [JDS website](#).

How to Submit

We will employ EasyChair for proposal review (EasyChair.org). The system will open for proposals on November 1, 2024 and all proposals are due by midnight EST, January 1, 2024, via the EasyChair system. Questions about submissions may be directed to Barbara Stengel, John Dewey Society President (Professor Emerita, Vanderbilt University, barbara.stengel@vanderbilt.edu). Proposals accepted for presentation will be notified no later than February 15, 2024. Full papers should be completed by May 1, 2024 so that discussants can prepare remarks.

Please create an account in EasyChair and link your account to the John Dewey Society 2024 using the link provided after November 1st.

Proposal Guidelines

For papers:

The following information should be provided in EasyChair.

- (1.) The title of your paper
- (2.) Your name, title, and institutional affiliation (if any)
- (3.) Your address, phone, and email address
- (4.) An abstract of up to 100 words

- (5.) The status of your JDS membership (current member, interested in joining, needs more information, etc.)
- (6.) Are you a graduate student who is interested in being considered for the John Dewey Society Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award?
- (7.) *Upload a document in Word or pdf.* That document should have all identifying information removed for anonymous review. In that Word document, please provide the following:
 - (1.) The title of your paper
 - (2.) A descriptive summary of your paper (maximum length 1000 words), explaining your paper and its significance. List several references to place your contribution in the broader scholarly conversation.

For alternate sessions of all kinds:

The following information should be provided in EasyChair.

- (1.) The title of your session
- (2.) Organizer's name, title, and institutional affiliation (if any)
- (3.) Organizer's address, phone, and email address
- (4.) An abstract of up to 100 words
- (5.) Names and affiliations of all other participants, including the status of their JDS membership (current member, interested in joining, needs more information, etc.)
- (6.) *Upload a document in Word or pdf.* That document should have all identifying information removed for anonymous review. In that Word document, please provide the following:
 - (1.) The title of your session
 - (2.) A descriptive summary of your paper (maximum length 1500 words), explaining the type of session, the activities involved, and the role each participant plays in the session. List several references to place your contribution in the broader scholarly and practice-based conversation.

Please note: *The John Dewey Society is striving to make this conference an inclusive and accessible environment. If you would like to request accommodations or have questions about accessibility features of the facility, please contact Barbara Stengel, JDS President-Elect, at barbara.stengel@vanderbilt.edu, in advance of your participation. Requests for Sign Language interpreters and/or CART providers should be made at least one month in advance, if possible.*

Thank you for your interest in progressive education, social amelioration, and the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey!