

## **Access to the Thought of John Dewey in Brazil Between 1930 and 1960**

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**Abstract** *It is a little over 160 years since the birth of the philosopher John Dewey and there is interest in knowing how his philosophy has been explored in school reflections in Brazil. Faced with this, the question is: What was the receptivity of John Dewey's thought during the period of 1930 to 1960 and the current dissemination of those ideas? The task is arduous, albeit necessary, given the readings and interpretations made in Brazil about Dewey's thinking and work. The main objective of this essay is to understand how and to what extent John Dewey's philosophical thought was disseminated in Brazil, as well as considering what the current challenges might be for the dissemination of his ideas to continue. We dare not scrutinize all the writings on Dewey in Brazil, as this would be an impossible task. The methodology is limited to bibliographical research relevant to the research question. The hypothesis is that, considering the great contribution of Dewey's philosophy to Brazilian education, there is still a long way to go regarding what we might explore and research, despite the vast relevant Brazilian literature already produced. This is pointed out as a challenge for contemporary issues of integral and critical human formation. The results demonstrate that democracy and freedom of expression, based on John Dewey's revolutionary philosophy, gain weight and relevance by allowing enhanced development of individuals – an issue important to Brazil's political landscape. It is argued that, in Brazil, the more his philosophy is present in school activities, the more it will provide instruments for the emotional and intellectual maintenance of students and, consequently, be a significant contribution to education in the country. (Note: A Portuguese language version of this article was published in 2020 in Revista Espaço Pedagógicoas (7(1), as "A receptividade e a difusão do pensamento de John Dewey no Brasil entre 1930 e 1960" <https://doi.org/10.5335/rep.v27i1.10584>)*

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### **Introduction**

On October 20, 1859, in the city of Burlington, Vermont, USA, John Dewey was born. He became one of the greatest American educators and philosophers. After an impressive and vast academic, intellectual trajectory, he died on June 1, 1952, in New York, USA. In the educational environment, his boldness in defending democratic values is undeniable. His concern was focused on the formation of the individual in society.

This research question here is: What was the receptivity of John Dewey's thought in Brazil during the period of 1930 to 1960 and what is the current diffusion of those ideas? The task is arduous, however, necessary, given the readings and interpretations made in Brazil about the thought of John Dewey. The main objective of the essay is to understand how and to what extent John Dewey's philosophical thought was assimilated in Brazil, as well as the current challenges for the dissemination of his ideas to continue. We dare not scrutinize all the writings about Dewey in Brazil, as this would result in an impossible task. The methodology is limited to bibliographical research relevant to the research question. The hypothesis is that, considering the great contribution of Dewey's philosophy to Brazilian education, there remains a lot to be explored and researched, despite the vast literature already produced about his work in Brazil. This is pointed out as a challenge for human formation, the leitmotiv of research in the field of philosophy of education in Brazil, whether developed by the Philosophy of Education of ANPEd work group, National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education or even of the Brazilian Society of Philosophy of Education.

The originality of this article is in a literature review carried out in the Scielo and Scopus databases, through the CAPES Journal Portal, in January 2020, using the descriptors "receptivity," "John Dewey" and "Brazil," refining the search to the area of education and human formation. No specific studies were found that can help us understand how the work of John Dewey arrived in Brazil, although we can see below the influence of certain individuals in its arrival.

When looking at the scope of Dewey's theory applied in Brazil, perhaps it might be possible to give new visibility and prominence to the abundant literature of Dewey as an eminent figure of education in Brazilian school curricula. Despite all the literature which already exists on John Dewey in Brazil, it is noteworthy that it is still necessary to develop reflection and analysis of John Dewey's philosophy in the Brazilian educational field. Lins (2015), Mendonça and Gotierra (2019) argue, for example, that Dewey always appears in the curriculum of university teacher training "Pedagogy" courses, either because there is reference to the Education Pioneers Movement, or in subjects such as History of Education or even Philosophy of Education. However, more systematic treatment of Dewey focusing on the

classroom or even the administration of education in Pedagogy courses needs to be encouraged. Dewey is present in discussions around educational policy and even educational evaluation, but it is necessary to encourage ongoing study of his contribution in the area of Education more generally, as well as in those areas in which an interdisciplinary approach for realization of human development is necessary. In the United States of America, many studies have been carried out using John Dewey, whether through the John Dewey Society (JDS, 2021) or even the Philosophy of Education Society (PES, 2021).

In a humanitarian crisis context on a global scale such that it affects several levels—moral, political, religious, economic and environmental—it is understood as necessary to constantly revisit literature such as that of John Dewey. In the specific case of Brazil, which is going through a moment of crisis in politics, with the suppression of resources for universities, this need continues to be urgent and redoubled in the form of using it as resistance, against for example, the divisive “School without a Party” (see, Capaverde, Lessa, Lopes, 2019; also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escola\\_sem\\_Partido](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escola_sem_Partido)) whose climate of fear and creation of confusion compromise the quality of learning.

Lins’ (2015) argument is that the change of focus in Pedagogy (teacher training programs), which starts to value student autonomy, rather than maintaining the figure of the teacher as an authority, is due to understanding of the thought of Dewey as seen, for example, in his book *Experience and Education* (1997). The school, in John Dewey’s philosophy, is understood as an instrument of transformation. With the three-fold aspects of experience, investigation and discovery, Dewey’s philosophy makes it possible for actors in the educational process to realize that, in a school, ideas only matter when they serve as an instrument for solving real problems.

### **How Did John Dewey’s Philosophy Come to Brazil?**

To place the arrival of Dewey’s philosophy in Brazil in history, it is necessary to base this event in the initiative of the Bahian educator, Anísio Teixeira, who visited the United States after serving, from 1924 to 1928, as Director of Public Instruction in Bahia state. Teixeira, faced with the harshness of public life characterised by an excess of bureaucracy and intransigent opposition, at the same time recognised the basic raw status of education in the Bahian hinterland. Faced with this, he played a political game, establishing a close affinity with the precariousness of public schools at that time. Affected by what he encountered in the field, rather than as intellectual supposition, he found that “[...] he would come into contact with a public education that he did not know, a teaching very different from the Jesuit schools in which he had studied” (Nunes, 2000, p. 90). Teixeira learned about the problems of Brazilian education, which, then undergoing reforms in several states in Brazil and in the Federal District, gave the Bahian educator—while he held a high position in the

state of Bahia—the responsibility of promoting reform in his state. He ended up promoting innovations garnered from a wider perspective: “His interest in education took him to the United States of America, where he became acquainted with American social life and educational institutions, obtained the title of Master of Arts at the Teachers College of Columbia University and met the ideas of John Dewey and William H. Kilpatrick (Bortoloti & Cunha, 2010, p. 2). Upon encountering the range of challenges dealt with in Brazilian public education, and “[...] concerned with constantly improving his vision of education, he left the General Directorate of Public Instruction in Bahia to visit some schools of the United States” (Nobre & Mendonça, 2016, p. 55). Until that moment in his life, Teixeira knew only the dictates of a European derived educational conservatism learned in Jesuit colleges. He had been dealing thus harshly—via such authoritarianism—with the problems he encountered in schools. However, his attitude changed when he encountered North American education. The result of his passage through the United States is recorded as follows: “[...] if there is any lesson America has to give the world, if some great ideal sustains its civilization and gives vigour and meaning to its work—this lesson and this ideal are embodied in democracy” (Teixeira, 2006, p. 49). Utilizing the concepts of Deweyan pragmatism, Anísio Teixeira adopted, upon returning in 1931, an absolutely new educational position in Brazil.

It was in this context that Teixeira, already a disciple of John Dewey, assumed the position of Director of Public Education in the Federal District, promoting a new reform in public education and creating a new university in the federal capital, the University of Brasília. It is exactly during this period that John Dewey’s philosophy comes to Brazil—brought by Teixeira as we are showing. A dearth of other data about its arrival is where this article contributes to new knowledge by elucidating the matter. As an active participant in the Brazilian Education Society, together with a group called the “liberal educators,” Teixeira integrates and articulates the famous *Pioneers Manifesto of New Education* (Manifesto of the Pioneiros da Educação Nova) of 1932, which is taught in all teacher training programs in Brazil as a part of understanding Brazilian education history.

From this initiative, he and many other intellectuals suffered strong political pressure pushing against their actions, seeking as they were, in the face of its opposite (a varied picture of dubious quality, strongly favouring the elites), a quality education accessible to all. It is worth noting the eventual death of Teixeira, found dead in a lift, was due to unclear circumstances—about which some suggest government action against him. About Anísio Teixeira, it is stated that:

[...] all his actions as an educator and as a public administrator in the field of education were inspired by Deweyan pragmatism....Teixeira held a high administrative position in the educational area and suffered constant attacks from intellectuals of a conservative political line, especially those

linked to the Catholic Church, and for this reason he was removed from his public functions (Bortoloti & Cunha, 2010, p. 1).

Due to his book *Educação Progressiva*, published in 1933 and republished, respectively, in 1934 and in 1938, these attacks intensified so much that he resigned from his post in the Federal District in 1935. In this regard, writes Nunes “[...] already in his book *Educação Progressiva* (1933), inspired by Dewey, Anísio defended the material, social and moral reconstruction of the school and civilization in the formation of an individual’s independent and responsible conscience” (Nunes, 2000, p. 477).

It is worth drawing our attention to the strong positive impact of Dewey’s—as a North American educator—receptivity in Brazil and to the reactions to his ideas, based on the strength of that influence and the insight of Dewey’s pragmatist philosophy. It spread in Brazil through the administrative actions and writings of Anísio Teixeira but in ways that touched upon political attitudes linked to equalizing society and valuing all. In the School of Fine Arts (Escola de Belas Artes) established at the university Teixeira created, Universidade de Brasília (UnB) or Brasília University, also known as The University of the Federal District (UDF), painting was occurring that portrayed the images of Rio de Janeiro and its poorer classes:

From the round brush to the loofah and cloth and from the finger to the toothbrush, the students’ imagination, traveling in form and color, produced images of the city and its poorer classes: people carrying water on their heads, workmen breaking pavements, workers eating lunch boxes, street beggars (Nunes, 1992, p. 169).

Undoubtedly, all of this was seen as an affront, as street life began to penetrate education. It jumped from the street to canvases of works of art that ended up in places frequented by the elite, linked to the dominant powers of the time. In this regard, it is possible to understand in greater detail the following:

These paintings ended up at the Palace Hotel. [...] now, social problems sprang from the screen. At a time (...) when they tried to hide all of Brazil’s misery, Portinari [Head of the Art School] made it visible in his works and in the work of his students: “unpleasant” and “shocking” images of Brazilian life. When the UDF was closed, the paintings produced by the students and located in public places were seized. We must ask: Why were these paintings so feared? (Nunes, 2000, p. 318).

Observing the excerpt above, we can surmise that the acceptance of John Dewey's philosophical thinking in Brazil had a strong positive impact and great influence on the critical formation of citizens, to the point of generating reactions such as apprehension and fear of the works that portrayed the crude reality of Brazilian social inequalities. This double reception was manifested on the one hand, in the search for a process of democratic construction of the country and, on the other hand, in the attempt to curb the democratic movement in order to preserve the bourgeois life that was already rooted in the ruling classes. That affect is due, therefore, to the commitment of Anísio Teixeira and his peers who are signatories of the New Education Pioneers Movement, in spreading Dewey's ideas so that democratic society could begin to take shape in the harsh and unequal Brazilian reality. In this regard, it is possible to observe that:

There was a time in Brazil when discussion and reflection on Education had John Dewey's ideas as one of the pillars of support. As a result of this enthusiasm, it is observed that the philosophy of experience, proposed by this philosopher as the philosophy of education, was carefully studied. It was intended that the principles exposed and defended by the American philosopher happened in the practice of primary education schools. There was a thirst for knowledge about these ideas and therefore one could not think of Education without resorting to this name [of Dewey] and its innovations, criticisms and attempts to change the school with a view to improving the quality of training for students. As is known, this happened in Brazil due to the diffusion of this theory made by Anísio Teixeira, who, having been a disciple of John Dewey, brought this philosophy of revolutionary education to our educational milieu (Lins, 2015, p. 23).

Through these fragments, it is possible to notice the richness and strength of the American philosopher's thought in Brazilian soil. It is observed that an interaction between theory and practice, characteristic of John Dewey's philosophy, takes shape in the teaching carried out and conducted by his disciple, Anísio Teixeira, in Brazil: "Deweyan liberalism provided him with a theoretical guide that fought improvisation and the mere self-taught, in addition to opening the possibility of operationalizing educational policy and creating educational research in the country" (Nunes, 2009, p. 5).

Even considering that the context in which John Dewey lived differs from the current one it is possible to argue that the social problems of that time remain today in Brazil. The federal government's constant criticism in 2019 of the phenomenon of communism was already present in Teixeira's time:

Street life began to penetrate schools in many ways and provoke slanderous accusations from Catholics who identified Anísio Teixeira and his collaborators as communists and who even saw in the sanitary facilities common to children of both sexes, inside the new primary school buildings, the embodiment of “atheist communism,” in its eagerness to dissolve the family and morally pervert children. The strength of this situation, extending beyond school walls ended up shaking also the academic work of the recently inaugurated Federal District University (Nunes, 1992, p. 169).

The criticism that needs to be made in this excerpt points out that the expression “slanderous accusations of Catholics,” in the fragment above, should be written “slanderous accusations of some conservative Catholics,” given that certainly not all Catholics considered Anísio Teixeira a communist. The consequences of Teixeira’s action in bringing John Dewey’s revolutionary thinking to school curricula gave him a time of absence from public life: “[...] between 1937 and 1945, a period in which a dictatorship reigned, Teixeira remained far from public life, dedicating himself to the translation of books and commercial activities in his home state” (Nunes, 2000, p. 65). After this period, in the 1950s, with the commemoration of the first centenary of John Dewey, as a disciple par excellence of the American philosopher in Brazil, he resumes the works of dissemination of Dewey’s philosophy:

Anísio Teixeira, the Brazilian disciple of John Dewey, who disseminated his work and philosophy in Brazil, was invited by Columbia University in a letter published by the *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos* (1959) to be part of the international committee for the planning of the commemorations of this important date (Lins, 2015, p. 21).

On this important occasion, Teixeira retook his opportunity to reinsert into Brazilian educational reflections the process of welcoming and spreading the thought of John Dewey. To this end, Teixeira commissioned an analysis of Dewey’s philosophy—work done by the Brazilian philosopher Newton Sucupira, from the University of Recife. This is how the impulse given by the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education in 1932 was revived in the 50s: through a new manifesto, the *Mais Uma Vez Convocados*, dated 1959.

Newton Sucupira’s article, published in 1960, as well as Paulo Freire’s writings, enabled a new view of this process of acceptance and dissemination of John Dewey’s thought in Brazil. Further, the dedication of several people in translating the English language work of the North American philosopher into Portuguese was a subsequent part of this process: Antônio Pinto de Carvalho, who translated *Reconstruction into Philosophy* (1959); Haydée Camargo Campos, who

translated *How We Think* (1979b); Godofredo Rangel and Anísio Teixeira, who translated *Democracy and Education* (1979a); and Teixeira, who translated *Life and Education* (1988) and *Liberalism, Liberty and Culture* (1970). Other translations are also noted, such as: *Experience and Nature*; *Logic—the research theory* and *Art as an Experience*, both by Murilo Otávio Rodrigues and Paes Leme and *Theory of Moral Life*, by Leonidas Contijo de Carvalho. These translations into Portuguese are a sign of the great acceptance awarded Dewey's thought, consolidating the strength of his philosophy in Brazilian intellectual life. These translations inevitably gained space in Brazilian school curricula.

### **How Does John Dewey's Thought Gain Space in Brazilian Schools?**

Analyzing the diffusion of the philosophical thought of John Dewey, Sucupira writes:

Dewey's work presents itself as so vast and multiform, stretches and branches in such a quantity of writings, and constitutes such an important milestone in the history of modern thought that it is not possible for us, within the limits of a conference, to properly assess its full scope and meaning and we cannot even make a summary of his thought that would encompass it in all its complexity (Sucupira, 1960, p. 79).

This feeling of impotence, when dedicating himself to the work of John Dewey, certainly affects every researcher who dedicates them self to any aspect circumscribed by Dewey's thought. Paradoxically, the philosophical thought of Dewey is so intuitive and motivating that it arouses, at the same time, great interest in the reader when faced with its richness and depth. Certainly, this vigor emanating often from Dewey's work contributed to Brazilian educators continuing to advance it, even in the midst of challenges.

Faced with challenges inherent to the educational conditions of Brazil, it is argued that by revisiting the work of John Dewey, light can be shed so that educators can continue to have courage and motivation for creativity, as well as show resistance for positive social transformations. It is worth noting, however, that there are strong criticisms of the presence of John Dewey's pedagogy in Brazil, especially outlined by Jorge Nagle in his book *Educação e Sociedade na Primeira República* (1974). In the same strain of thought are the texts of Dermeval Saviani (1980, 1981, 1981a, 1982, 1982a). Regarding the thought of John Dewey, such thinkers have already written that the New School (Escola Nova) movement implemented in Brazil has a technical perspective that favors or legitimizes an elitist view of education, accusing Escola Nova of being a movement characterized by "pedagogical optimism." Such critics misunderstand Dewey. They want education to be instrumentally fixed as a means to favour the ruling class. In this regard, it can be

seen that “[...] the thesis of instrumentalism is reinstated and endorsed by Dermeval Saviani who argues that Escola Nova served as a mechanism for recomposing the hegemony of the ruling class” (Muraro, 2012, p. 207). The criticism is limited to the mistaken thought that Escola Nova only improved the quality of education aimed at the elite, thus forcing down and keeping static the low quality of education aimed at the lower classes. It is worth noting that Saviani’s criticism (1980, 1981, 1981a, 1982, 1982a), pointing out that the vision of a renewed school lacks ethical, aesthetic and political criteria, also reveals that the author does not seem to have understood Dewey’s text. Likewise, he also seems not to have understood the thought of Teixeira, who took pains to ensure that the thought of John Dewey was accepted in Brazil, so that the democratization process could begin. That is, that quality education could be offered indistinctly to all Brazilians. This was so that, through the democratic machine that is the school, the individual would become an increasingly socio-transforming agent capable of genuinely promoting democratic life. Muraro writes:

Saviani understands that Dewey sees education as a process linked to life, making scientific knowledge of organic and social life necessary for pedagogical intervention. Anísio Teixeira appropriated Dewey’s pragmatist and progressive look to invest in the idea of individual reconstruction for social reconstruction at the national level through public education, with the goal of democratic society. The reception of Dewey’s pragmatism in Brazilian educational thought, through A. Teixeira, subsidizes the movement of educational renewal, in a technicist, functionalist and pragmatist way, under the influence of scientific knowledge, excluding ethical, aesthetic and political criteria. (Murano, 2012, p. 208).

It is not possible to see Teixeira’s presentations—in favor of quality education in Brazil—as devoid of ethical, aesthetic and political criteria. The scope of the pedagogy of Paulo Freire, disciple of Anísio Teixeira, deserves to be highlighted for its links to this. It is worth considering Paulo Freire as an important person in the process of disseminating knowledge that has praxis as an essential foundation, which itself serves to continue the study of the process of receptivity of John Dewey’s thought in Brazil. It is now necessary to analyze the current status of this reception and dissemination.

### **What is the Contemporary Status of This Receptiveness?**

As a beacon in Brazilian pedagogical thought, John Dewey’s theory was widely used by educator Paulo Freire, in order to continue the process of making Brazilian democratic life effective. Paulo Freire’s acceptance of Dewey’s work began from

the moment he became a reader of Anísio Teixeira. Therefore, he embraced at once the pragmatist ideals brought forward. Regarding the philosophy of John Dewey and its acceptance by Paulo Freire, we find:

For Dewey, democracy as a “way of life” depends on two criteria: the existence of common interests shared between the components of the social group and the interaction and cooperative reciprocity between the different forms of association. The democratic ideal of life is based on the process of reflective thinking about the common problems of the community and on freedom of communication. Democracy constitutes a moral choice, the only one worthy for the human being. For Freire, this agenda of democracy proposed by Dewey needs to be historically incarnated and constructed in Brazilian society, which is still inexperienced in democratic life. In Freire’s view, education has a limited but significant role in the construction of democracy (Muraro, 2012, p. 205).

It is thus understood that the advances achieved in the Brazilian democratic process are due, in part, to the acceptance of progressive education. This is a yearning for a democratic education as one that can be genuinely dialogic, questioning and which transforms the political and social-historical reality. Freirean pedagogy, which offers a process of awareness to oppressed classes to stimulate their continuous liberation, is due, in large part, to an acceptance of concepts based on the thought of John Dewey and Texieria, who was influenced by Dewey (see e.g., <https://iep.utm.edu/freire/#H3>). Paulo Freire directly quotes Dewey in different passages of his writings. For example, in the book *Educação como Prática de Liberdade* (translated as *Education for Critical Consciousness*), he refers to *Democracy and Education* when he says: “[...] the originality is not in the fantastic, but in the new use of the right things” (Dewey, 1979a; Freire, 1989, p. 122). This does not mean to say that Paulo Freire is a follower of all the ideas of John Dewey, given the other influences he received and other paths he pursued. Even so, popular education, led by Paulo Freire, made advances in the liberation of impoverished people from economic and political exploitation in Brazil. In contemporary times, the fragility of the nascent Brazilian democracy requires a fresh look at the pragmatist theory of John Dewey, in order to obtain new life in the guaranteeing of rights, via long, painful struggles arising from a process of educational awareness. Regarding the harmony between Dewey and Freire’s thinking:

By observing each person’s ideas according to their reality, it is possible to understand their thoughts. John Dewey was looking for democracy in the classroom, while Paulo Freire was looking for social equality in a

country with so much inequality. However, it is concluded that the ideas of both authors had the same objective, a more just and egalitarian society, with citizens with a critical conscience (Caron, Costa Souza & Mendonça de Souza, 2016, p. 100).

It is necessary to understand the “[...] non-linearity of the historical process with advances, setbacks and unforeseen events, in which the bourgeoisie moves in a contradictory way with other social classes” (Muraro, 2012, p. 207). This understanding allows for a focus on the continuity of this receptivity and diffusion of John Dewey’s thought in Brazil, given its historically experienced importance. Such is done by understanding the role of education as a strong instrument to influence changes in social and political structures and as a strong counterpoint to the cruelties of the ruling classes.

It is worth noting that the process of receptivity of John Dewey’s thought in Brazil followed dynamics common to historical conflicts. It is known defenders of Escola Nova following Dewey’s thought were rejected by conservative movements. In view of this, it is important to understand that “[...] the theme of Escola Nova as a bridge for Dewey’s reception in Brazil still deserves further treatment from a historical, philosophical and educational point of view” (Muraro, 2012, p. 207).

As mentioned regarding the vastness of writings about Dewey, it is also worth highlighting the text by Pedro Pagni (2018), writing about *Democracy and Education*, a hundred years after its publication. He seeks to use Deweyan concepts of democracy and education to analyze contemporary political reality, specifically the Brazilian democratic crisis. Pagni, faced with the emptying of democracy in the present, therefore resorts to the thought of John Dewey in dialogue with Michel Foucault, in order to argue that perhaps we need to enhance our understanding that education is a space or instrument of resistance. In this regard he says:

The proposal is to read this work from a problem of democracy posed by Michel Foucault in his last courses and from the ethical inflection it evokes about politics today. Specifically, the objective is to analyze the effects of that problem on education and discuss the hypothesis that this could constitute a form of resistance to a certain emptying of representative democracy in the present. When resuming the Deweyan notion of democracy as an ethical way of life, it is argued that this hypothesis would be possible in the educational sphere, especially if it were recovered from the point of view not of an increasingly inclusive society, as required by its original formulator, but from a society in which difference is its beginning and its end, as the Foucauldian political perspective suggests (Pagni, 2018 p. 65).

Pagni's critique of what he calls the emptying of representative democracy of the present is based on the understanding that democracy fostered by liberalism becomes a cold democracy in the neoliberal regime. This occurs because it is economically calculated and controlled by biopower technologies. The result is to make the school system corroborate and sustain a system of democracy transmuted into today's neoliberal existence. The confusion generated in the neoliberal democratic system, for example, confuses education with teaching, training with qualification for the market and so on, thus inverting the role of education as an instrument of resistance. The challenge in this case will be to foster an educational system capable of resisting all types of domination through criticism and strengthening the ethical imperative of reflective judgment. At this juncture, the role of the school becomes essential, especially when it embraces the way of thinking underpinned by Deweyan philosophy. In this regard, Pagni asserts:

Therefore, it seems necessary to us to return to the ethical sense that presides over the exercise of reflective thinking at school and its contribution to the preparation of future citizens to act politically in line with their ways of life in the terms expressed, as in the work *Democracy and Education*, by John Dewey (Pagni, 2018, p. 77).

Given the above, we can understand that the work of John Dewey will always bear an essential contribution to school curricula, against the failures of democracy in schools and in society. In view of the setbacks within Brazilian education, it is necessary to use the text of John Dewey so we can understand and give new meaning to Brazilian education: "It is still necessary to investigate and deepen this research in order to discover the extent to which education as conceived by Dewey is present in today's education" (Carvalho, 2011, p. 76).

### **Final Considerations**

As stated, the originality of this article concerns the absence of studies carried out that highlighted the receptivity of John Dewey in Brazil. The social relevance of this research hinges on the relevance that the thinker has for the educational context. John Dewey's work was born in a context in which changes were gaining a rapid pace never seen before, whether in the field of politics, economics, scientific knowledge, or in the field of morals and customs. Faced with this scene, he was always in favour of a harmony between the school and the accelerated movement of society in its surroundings. "In this context, the school was seen as a privileged space for the insertion of the transforming impetus; a transformed school, evidently, a new education, as seen in the 1932 Pioneers' Manifesto" (Cunha, 2001, p. 87).

Considering the accelerated social changes, it is worth remembering that, despite the differences between today and the 1930s to 1960s, in which Brazil was

faced with the need to follow the evolution of Western countries, developments in Brazilian life now demand that John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy resurfaces. It is however worth remembering that "...the Deweyan concept of movement—understood as synonymous with a changing world—played an extremely relevant role in Brazilian educational thought in those decades. If it still performs today, perhaps it is not with the same connotation as before" (Cunha, 2001, p. 87).

In light of the above, we note that the nexus between philosophy and education, defended by the pragmatist thought of John Dewey, had an excellent reception in Brazil and the urgent continuity of its dissemination and systematic studies is essential. There is a need for direct reading of John Dewey's texts in undergraduate courses and in the human sciences. It is necessary to understand that Dewey, "[...] with a strong stoic inspiration and influenced by the pragmatist theory of action, understands philosophy as a way of life that has the task of reflecting on the social and community dimension of human praxis" (Dalbosco, 2018, p. 567).

In this way, people will not be instrumentally treated. Individuals will return to exercising participation in the decisions of the social fabric. In this way, people will acquire the material and social conditions to enjoy a dignified life. With concrete participation in social cooperation learned at school through exposure to Deweyan principles I suggest that the values of cooperation and solidarity will be developed. We can hope for expansion from there to the building of a large democratic society.

It is not necessary to go very far into Brazilian life to realize that, taking inspiration from the philosophical thinking of John Dewey, "[...] investing pedagogical efforts in localized training experiences, which foster the spirit of responsible social cooperation, is a great challenge to and for current education" (Dalbosco, 2018, p. 468). This is most easily done when family and school come together for a genuine and mutual contribution to democratic formation and a good life, yet "[...] if we really believe that an educational philosophy can contribute to a good life, it cannot be impartial or insensitive to the destructive forces of capitalism" (Kohan, 2019, p. 240).

Educators have used the thought of John Dewey to reflect on democratic values. Likewise, it is important to emphasize that such values are not given a priori, but sought for in a moving world, with intentionality. Life and education happen at the same time, as Deweyan literature highlights. In this regard, acceptance and dissemination of the thought of John Dewey in Brazil must develop, as:

Deweyan pragmatism was not designed to rest on library shelves, to support an inhuman society or to give credit to passivity, but rather to implement the understanding and change of world order for the benefit of the continuous enrichment of human experience (Cunha, 2001, p. 98).

We can appreciate that the understanding of experience and education linked to John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy does not lose its relevance today; on the contrary, it remains current, especially if understood via the philosophy of education:

In this sense, the conceptual search elucidates the construction and elaboration of educational theories, something that John Dewey did competently in his historical time, so much so that he is one of the most important theorists in this field, with good exploration among Brazilian researchers (Mendonça & Adaid, 2018, p. 136).

Given the question about the receptivity and dissemination of John Dewey's thought in Brazil, with a main focus from 1930 to 1960, considering everything discussed, we conclude that this philosopher was significantly received in the country and his ideas were disseminated. A greater appreciation of the relationship between theory and practice and experience in education is still necessary, notions that are so present in the writings of John Dewey. This is so that education can make sense within people's lives in Brazil of the ideal of the holistic formation of the human being:

Dewey's conception reveals the importance of philosophy as an instrument in the search for a redefinition of education...even though education has changed a lot since the time when Dewey published his work, there is still a lot to reflect and discuss with a view to improving it (Mendonça & Adaid, 2018, p. 149).

Considering the social and educational context that Brazil is experiencing in recent years, with the authoritarianism of public agents who have withdrawn funding from education as a whole—I am referring precisely to the Jair Bolsonaro government and its attacks on Brazilian education—the study of John Dewey's thought is strategic, either for defense of democracy, or for its uncompromising defense of the teacher as someone capable of producing meaningful experiences in the lives of students, signifying the reconstruction of the conception of country, culture and society as lived. Where the work of Dewey is available in Portuguese, it is highly valuable to read and study it.

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