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THE RECEPTION OF DEWEY IN THE HISPANIC WORLD

ABSTRACT. The aim of this paper is to describe Dewey's reception in the Spanish-speaking countries that constitute the Hispanic world. Without any doubt, it can be said that in the past century Spain and the countries of South America have been a world apart, lagging far behind the mainstream Western world. It includes a number of names and facts about the early translation of Dewey's works in Spain, Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Argentina in the first half of the century and a brief explanation of the decline of Dewey in the second half. To a great extent, Dewey's conception of education was immersed in the international movement of reform that started at the turn of the century and would eventually slowly but surely, renovate the structure of the educational system throughout the entire century, including that of South America. But it is equally clear that the Spanish-speaking countries have displayed a general ignorance of Dewey and, by extension, of American pragmatism during most of the century. In spite of mutual incomprehension, a deep affinity between Dewey's pragmatism and Hispanic philosophy is suggested in this paper, anticipating that the gradual process of democratization of Spain and the Hispanic countries of South America may be in some sense related to the rediscovery of Dewey and to the application of his key ideas in education. After decades of neglect of Dewey and of his contribution, there is a strong feeling not only that his conception of things is important to understand the last century but that Dewey – along with Peirce and other American classical pragmatists – may very well prove to be a key thinker for the XXIst century also in the Hispanic world. Along this vein, the recent resurgence of pragmatism can be understood not as the latest academic fashion but the occasion to start to close the gap between the two worlds.

KEY WORDS: educational thinking, Hispanic world, pragmatism, John Dewey, South America

INTRODUCTION

In a recent issue of this journal on “Dewey and European Education: General Problems and Case Studies” there is no mention of Spain. In the introduction to that issue the editors mention the “German Dewey,” the “French, Italian or English Dewey” (Oelkers and Rhyn, 2000, p. 1) but no attention is paid in the volume to the reception of Dewey in Spain. Rather than a shortcoming, the absence of any reference to Spain in that excellent issue mirrors the effective isolation

of Spain and the Spanish-speaking countries during most of the 20th century. Without any doubt, it can be said that in the past century Spain and the countries of South America have been a world apart, lagging far behind the mainstream Western world. This world apart may be identified as the “Hispanic world,” because the Spanish-speaking countries of South America and Spain constitute a real cultural community, having a common history and strong cultural ties but living apart from the English speaking world and the more advanced European countries.

In this sense, the aim of my paper¹ in this issue on “Pragmatism and Education in South America” is not only to overcome that lack of description of Dewey’s relationship to Spain and the Hispanic world. I want also to suggest that the gradual process of democratization of Spain and the Hispanic countries of South America is in some sense related to the rediscovery of Dewey and to the application of his key ideas in education. After decades of neglect of Dewey and his contribution, there is a strong feeling not only that his conception of things is important to understand the last century but that Dewey – along with Peirce and other American classical pragmatists – may very well prove to be a key thinker for the XXIst century also in the Hispanic world. Along this vein, the recent resurgence of pragmatism (Bernstein, 1992) can be understood not as the latest academic fashion but an occasion to start to close the gap between the two worlds, because “Dewey’s philosophy affirms and reflects values that are pre-dominant and are cherished by Latin, not North American, culture” (Pappas, 1999).

In this paper, a number of names and facts will be inevitably mentioned but my intention is also to highlight some of the ideas of Dewey that had the greatest impact on Hispanic culture. With that purpose in mind, the paper is arranged in the following parts: first, a presentation of the early reception of Dewey in the Hispanic world until the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and the World War II (1939–1945), stressing the role of Dewey’s ideas in the movement for pedagogical renewal (Sections “The early reception of Dewey in the Hispanic world,” “The affinity between Dewey’s ideas and the

¹ A previous version of this paper was presented orally in the conference *Democracy and Education in the XXIst Century: John Dewey’s Challenge and Influence*, held in Cosenza, Italy, in April of 2000, whose proceedings remain unpublished. My paper relies upon the extensive research on this topic developed over a period of almost 40 years by Anton Donoso. I am also indebted to Juan Carlos Estrada and Ruth Breeze for their help.

innovative educational ideals in Spain,” and “The early reception of Dewey in South America”); second, a description of his influence during the second half of the century, with an attempt to explain the eclipse of his recognition (Section “Dewey’s influence after the wars”) and, finally, a brief evaluation of the recent resurgence of pragmatism and of the figure of Dewey in the Spanish-speaking world (Section “Dewey and the recent resurgence of pragmatism in the Hispanic world”).

THE EARLY RECEPTION OF DEWEY IN THE HISPANIC WORLD

Although the official *John Dewey: A Checklist of Translations 1900–1967* assigns to Spain the honor of having been the first country in which a translation of Dewey was published, a careful study of the evidence available shows that this honor should go to the translation of *The School and Society* in Japan in 1901 (Boydston and Andresen, 1969, p. 49; Donoso, 2001, pp. 347–348, n. 3). The earliest translation of Dewey into Spanish also corresponds to the book *The School and Society* and it was done by Domingo Barnés but not before 1915.² Barnés was a well known Spanish educator of his time, a member of the famous *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, an independent pre-university institution of learning founded in 1876, expert in psychology and sociology, and translator of William James, Edwin A. Kirkpatrick and others. The relevant point is that, thanks to the work of Domingo Barnés (1870–1943) and Lorenzo Luzuriaga (1889–1959), another relevant educator and translator, from 1915 onwards, Dewey’s papers and books began to be translated more or

² My doubts about this puzzle were not totally dissipated until I found a text from Luzuriaga (the supposed translator according to the official *Checklist*) of April of 1918 under the title “La pedagogía de Dewey. La educación por la acción” that provides valuable details about the textual reception of Dewey in Spain: “The most important pedagogic works of John Dewey are: “My Pedagogic Creed,” 1897, recently translated in “Quaderns d’Estudi,” of Barcelona; “The School and Society,” 1899, translated into Spanish also recently by D. Barnés (this work has appeared in the last year in a very enlarged second edition in English); several isolated works, some of them collected and translated into French with the title of “L’Ecole et l’Enfant” (Publications of the Institute J. J. Rousseau); “Schools of To-Morrow,” 1916, that has just been translated by the present author, and his last and recent work “Democracy and Education” (*El Sol*, 22 abril 1918, p. 8).

less systematically into Spanish and, thanks to the effort of Eugeni d'Ors (1881–1954), also into Catalan.

In relation to the early reception of Dewey in the Hispanic world, three points of special interest should be mentioned. The first is that, as Kandel already pointed out in 1929, we can only guess to what extent the renovating tendencies in European education were influenced directly by Dewey or indirectly by American pedagogy during the three first decades of the 20th century (Kandel, 1929, p. 702). As Biesta and Miedema have stressed “determining the actual influence of Dewey’s ideas on the renewal of education outside of the USA is far less easy than it may appear to be” (Biesta and Miedema, 2000, p. 23). The reception should be understood more as an interaction with the existing traditions, ideas and practices than a pure and neat penetration of Dewey’s ideas and practices. Also it is necessary to keep in mind that in a complex process of this type the specific context of the real interaction is always essential. This brings us to my second point, which is that most of Dewey’s ideas in education were in some sense not really *new*: “Most of Dewey’s ideas are not wholly new to those who are already acquainted with the great educational thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries” (Ulich, 1945, p. 318). Moreover, they were especially well received in Europe *in spite of* the scarce appraisal of pragmatism from European philosophers. It was felt that Dewey’s ideas merely reflected those expressed by thinkers such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbart, Fröbel and their followers, but that, coming from abroad, he made them sound like new ideas (Brickman, 1949, p. 262; Kilpatrick, 1951, pp. 470–473; Pereyra-García, 1979, p. 80; Biesta and Miedema, 1996, p. 3 and 9).

The third point is a corollary of the previous two: all the works of Dewey which were received, praised and translated into Spanish in the second and third decades of the century pertained to education, a fact which agrees with the general trend in the rest of the European countries. While in the United States “during the 1920s and 1930s John Dewey’s pragmatism dominated the intellectual landscape” (Westbrook, 1991; Cotkin, 1994, p. 283), his influence in Europe during those decades, insignificant though it was in academic philosophy, was all the more impressive in the realm of education: Dewey was at the center of the pedagogical debate in Europe concerning the methods of teaching and the organization of the school system. As Abbagnano and Visalberghi wrote in their handbook of pedagogy, “no contemporary philosopher has exerted so much influence upon the thought, the culture, the political usage and,

especially, upon educative practice of the civilized world as the American John Dewey” (Abbagnano and Visalberghi, 1974, p. 635).

THE AFFINITY BETWEEN DEWEY’S IDEAS AND THE INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL IDEALS IN SPAIN

The new philosophy of education was rooted in American pragmatism and pragmatism itself, essentially a product of American academic philosophy of the 19th century, was poorly known by Hispanic philosophers who commonly saw pragmatism as a parochial current outside the mainstream of European philosophy and, in particular, totally foreign to the Hispanic tradition. Pragmatism was often understood as an “American way” of dealing with knowledge and truth, which was alien to the general discussion. In view of such philosophical disdain, the European interest for Dewey’s work in education was all the more remarkable. In Brickman’s words, “the European interest in Dewey’s educational philosophy and practice is a remarkable occurrence in the educational history of the 20th century. It was a rare American thinker indeed who was fortunate in having his ideas received seriously in the Old World” (Brickman, 1949, p. 258). As Kandel writes, “it was John Dewey who became the leading and most influential exponent in pragmatism both as a philosophy and as a method.” Indeed, Dewey was the first to make use of pragmatism in his revolutionary approach to education, which he tested in his own laboratory school started in 1896 in Chicago and which later would be generally applied in university laboratory schools and ultimately in the public schools in the United States (Kandel, 1957, pp. 106–107). This movement not only affected the United States but would also permeate the entire process of educational renewal throughout Europe and eventually, throughout the Hispanic world.

The following paragraph taken from Dewey’s *Pedagogic Creed* (1897) eloquently expresses Dewey’s general view regarding education: “With the advent of democracy and modern industrial conditions, it is impossible to foretell definitely just what civilization will be twenty years from now. Hence it is impossible to prepare the child for any precise set of conditions. To prepare him for the future life means to give him command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities; that his eye and ear and hand may be tools ready to command, that his judgment may be

capable of grasping the conditions under which it has to work, and the executive forces be trained to act economically and efficiently. It is impossible to reach this sort of adjustment save as constant regard is had to the individual's own powers, tastes, and interests – say, that is, as education is continually converted into psychological terms” (Dewey, 1972, p. 86).

In fact, this *Pedagogic Creed* was translated and published several times in Spain over the years; first in Catalan, in 1917–1918, by Joan Palau (*Quaderns d'Estudi* 1917, I/2, pp. 129–134; 1918, I/4, pp. 252–259); later in Spanish by Barnés in 1924 and 1926. When Luzuriaga reprinted it in 1931 in the *Revista de Pedagogía* (1931, X, pp. 1–5 and pp. 74–80) he felt compelled to explain that “in spite of the 34 years elapsed since its publication, this work has as much freshness and actuality as when it was originally published” (Capitán, 1994, p. 536).

Dewey's ideas were very well received by all the people trying to renovate the traditional Spanish system of education. In particular, the pedagogical ideals of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza were quite similar to those of Dewey. Both Dewey and the Institución emphasized the principle of activity or “learning by doing” (Pereyra-García, 1979). The members of the Institución felt that Dewey's ideas were exactly in tune with their own movement. Not surprisingly therefore, most of the Spanish translations of Dewey's works during the twenties and thirties were published in the *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza*. Moreover, apart from 11 papers by Dewey himself, there were also four articles about his educational conception by A. Kohler, Claparède and Barnés. Furthermore, between 1926 and 1929, Barnés translated eight small volumes by Dewey and published them in *La Lectura*, which was at first a journal close to the Institución and later became a publishing firm. Dewey's ideas were also widely disseminated by Lorenzo Luzuriaga throughout his life and especially from 1922 to 1936 in *La Revista de Pedagogía*, Spain's first professional journal devoted to education.

To illustrate the affinity between Dewey's ideas and the innovative educational ideals in Spain, the following passage, written by an eminent member of the Institución, Manuel Bartolomé Cossío in 1882, may be quoted extensively: “Developing the activity, the spontaneity and reasoning of the child, stimulating his initiative, favoring the development of his inner powers, getting him to be not merely a participant but the principal author of his own education instead of degenerating into an inert cog within the mechanism of the school; getting life to boil in him, making everything speak to him,

getting him to feel within himself the wish of seeing everything, of catching everything, of understanding everything (...) There is no positive result unless the child creates and inquires for himself (...) The child is an investigator, he discovers relationships which his teacher perhaps never saw” (Cossío, 1929, pp. 218-219; Pereyra-García, 1979, pp. 81–82). These words from Cossío were written 15 years before Dewey’s *Pedagogic Creed* and express very well that deep affinity between the Institución and some of Dewey’s most cherished pedagogical ideas (Luzuriaga, 1957, p. 148).

THE EARLY RECEPTION OF DEWEY IN SOUTH AMERICA

Thus, there are clear indications that Dewey was read and quoted extensively by the Spanish pioneers of educational renewal. Something similar could be said about Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Argentina, the four countries in which translations of Dewey appeared in the decades before the wars. As Brickman rightly asserts, “Latin America is another region where Dewey enjoyed a wide reputation as an educator.” To this he adds, “since the time of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and José Pedro Varela, Latin-American educators became accustomed to regard with respect the work of their colleagues north of the Rio Grande. Interest in Dewey was probably stimulated in part by the availability of translations made in Spain, and it was sustained in the face of rising suspicion of the ‘Colossus of the North’” (Brickman, 1949, p. 261).

In Chile, a Spanish translation by Darío E. Salas of *My Pedagogical Creed* appeared already in 1908. Dewey’s ideas began to be known in this country in particular through the educational activities of his former students. As Donoso writes, “the most influential of these was Salas, who, as holder of the Chair of Pedagogy in the Instituto Pedagógico for 30 years, introduced generations of Chilean teachers to the ideas of Dewey” (Donoso, 2001, p. 349). Other relevant introducers of Dewey in Chile were Amanda Labarca Hubertson, who also studied under Dewey and worked especially among women and Enrique Molina, the founding president of the University of Concepción (Jaksic, 1989).

In the case of Cuba, under the dominance of the United States after the Spanish American war, at least three names should be mentioned: Alfredo M. Aguayo, who translated in 1925 Dewey’s 1913 *Interest and Effort in Education* and who is said to have been

“the spiritual director of all pedagogical renovations that have been brought about in Cuba” (Donoso, 2001, p. 350), Martha de Castro, who did a doctoral dissertation in the University of Havana in 1939 on Dewey and in particular Jorge Mañach, a Cuban educator and writer who had studied at Harvard University and had taught Hispanic Literature at Columbia University from 1935 until 1939. In his study *El pensamiento de Dewey y su sentido americano*, Mañach pointed out the parallels between the traditions of the religious American puritans and the practical pioneers and two relevant traditions of the Hispanic world: the Hispanic ethicism of Don Quixote and the concern for action that arises directly from experience. According to Mañach these parallels help to explain the sympathetic reception of Dewey’s ideas in particular by Hispanic teachers (Mañach, 1953, p. 29; Donoso, 2001, p. 351).

Mexico was the only country in Latin America personally visited by Dewey. In the summer of 1926 he gave two courses at the Mexican National University in Mexico City³ and visited Mexico again in 1937 as chairman of the Commission of Inquiry into the charges made against Trotsky in the Moscow Trials (Westbrook, 1991, pp. 480–482). Two names must be highlighted in the early reception of Dewey’s ideas in Mexico: José Vasconcelos (1882–1959) and Moisés Saénz (1892–1941). The former, Vasconcelos, Rector of the National University and later Secretary of Education, wrote against some of Dewey’s ideas in one of his best known books, *De Robinson a Odiseo*. Vasconcelos argued against the doctrine of learning by doing, on the grounds that *intelligere* is richer than *agere*. Vasconcelos thought that, though pragmatism may be adequate for the United States, “to adopt pragmatism in countries like ours that aspire to an autonomy based in its own culture would be suicide” (Vasconcelos, 1935, p. 26). Contrary to this view, Moisés Saénz must be credited for introducing

³ Dewey described his impressions of his visit in four short articles: “Church and State in Mexico,” “Mexico’s Educational Renaissance,” “From a Mexican Notebook,” (Dewey, 1984a, pp. 194–210) and “Imperialism is Easy” (Dewey, 1984b, p. 158). In the first of these articles Dewey writes: “The flourishing National University has 10,000 students, a large number being women; its Rector, Doctor Pruneda, is much interested in the exchange of students and teachers and during a visit to the United States in the coming autumn will arrange for such exchanges with our own country, a consummation which is to be hoped for. As it is, the University maintains, under the direction of Doctor Montaña, a truly unique summer school for North Americans (one learns in a Spanish–American country to temper the arrogance of our ordinary “American”), attended during the past summer by more than 300 persons, mainly teachers, from the United States.” (Dewey, 1984a, p. 200).

Dewey's pedagogical ideas to Mexico during the thirties (Larroyo, 1986, pp. 463–466). Saénz was a self-proclaimed follower of John Dewey and was trained at Columbia. In a lecture at the University of Chicago just prior to Dewey's trip to Mexico, Saénz said: "John Dewey has [already] gone to Mexico. He was first carried there by students at Columbia; he went later in his books – *The School and Society* is a book well known and loved in Mexico. And now he is going there personally. When John Dewey gets to Mexico, he will find his ideas at work in our schools. Motivation, respect for personality, self-expression, vitalization of school work, the project method, learning by doing, democracy in education – all of Dewey is there. Not, indeed, as an accomplished fact, but certainly as a poignant tendency" (Saénz, 1926, p. 78; Donoso, 2001, pp. 352–353).

Last but not least, it is necessary to pay attention to Argentina, whose interest in North American educational philosophies and practices dates from the mid-19th century when the former teacher Domingo Sarmiento turned politician and was elected president. He was determined to correct Argentina's educational errors by creating a system of public education patterned after that in the United States (Donoso, 2001, p. 354; Correas, 1961). In fact, Argentina was the country after Mexico most receptive to Dewey. First of all, Alejandro Jascalevich, student with Dewey in Columbia, translated in 1916 *How We Think* into Spanish with an introductory note by Dewey in which he wrote: "One of the greatest satisfactions I have experienced in the last years, as chair of the Department of Philosophy in Columbia University, has been to observe amongst my pupils the ever-increasing number of Hispano-American students. Since a long time ago I have the strong conviction that if the intellectual relations between my country and the brother countries of the South would become more intimate, the results would be of benefit for both sides. Our very differences of race and historical traditions are combined with the sameness of our social tendencies and politic ideals to show us, very clearly, what ones have to learn from the others (Dewey, 1917, p. iii; the translation is mine.). Dewey ended his foreword encouraging the relations between South and North American countries not only in commercial terms, but also specially from an intellectual and ethical point of view. Hugo Biagini has studied carefully most of the traces of the American pragmatism in Argentina in the early decades of the 20th century (Biagini, 1989).

Like Dewey, many Hispanic intellectuals in Spain and in South America were interested in reforming society through a transformation

of the schools. This was the appealing Dewey view that the school, as an “embryonic community,” should improve society at large by making it democratic and harmonious: “the school is the democratic factor par excellence” (Barnés, 1915, p. 6). The New Education represented a revolt against formalism, against the existing passive methods and against the uniformity of the curriculum in traditional education. Its essence was to shift the center of gravity back to the child by proposing methods which made use of the child’s natural inclination to conversation, to inquiry, to construction, and to expression, all of which were now considered to be the main source of the educational process (Cremin, 1964, pp. 118–119). According to the pragmatist point of view, the function of the philosophy of education is not to discover universals or extrinsic values in view of their incorporation in curricula and courses of study to be learned by the pupils. On the contrary, the real task of a philosophy of education is to define procedures by which the pupils will be placed in a position to develop their own values and to reconstruct their own experiences as the situation demands, instead of uncritically accepting values and results of the experiences of others (Kandel, 1957, p. 108). Thus, progressive theories of education seemed to be insisting that genuine thought arises only from real problems as they present themselves in the child’s personal environment, rather than from abstract theoretical motives.

From an Hispanic point of view, the really surprising point is that this pragmatist approach fits perfectly well with the individualistic and experientialist character typical of Hispanic philosophy.⁴ Along this direction, several recent Hispanic authors have identified the peculiar affinities between the Latino character and pragmatism (Pappas, 1998), as well as some common features shared by Hispanic philosophy and American pragmatism (Dascal, 1991, pp. 3–6; Gracia and Jacsik, 1993).

⁴ The Cuban philosopher, Jorge J. E. Gracia, recently presented a full case in favor of using this term “Hispanic philosophy” for the philosophy of Spain and South America: It is a way of gaining a better understanding of all the philosophical thinking that has been developed over the last few hundred years in Spain and Portugal, the Spanish colonies of the New World and the countries which grew from them. This term is particularly accurate, because it brings out the close relationship between philosophers in these geographical areas but it does not imply that there is some special idiosyncratic trait which characterizes all the figures who have devoted their energies to philosophy within the Hispanic world (Gracia, 1998, pp. 15–18).

DEWEY'S INFLUENCE AFTER THE WARS

The impact of Dewey's ideas upon the persons who were promoting educational reform in the years of the Republic in Spain between 1931 and 1936 has been clearly acknowledged (Capitán, 1994, p. 592, 662 and 666). In fact, Dewey's two principal translators, Barnés and Luzuriaga, did even hold political posts in several governments of the Republic and through their activities some of Dewey's ideas made their way into the legislation on public education (Carda and Carpintero, 1991; Barreiro, 1994, p. 660).

The Spanish Civil War abruptly interrupted that process. On the one hand, Dewey's opinion regarding the Spanish Civil War was well known. On the 3rd of March of 1937, the *Christian Century* printed a letter by Dewey under the title "Aid for the Spanish Government," in which he criticized American pacifists for defending the non-interference of the United States in the Spanish war. Two relevant paragraphs of that letter might be quoted: "Civil war like the one in Spain may be the means of defending and continuing the democratic method and checking fascism. It is idle to speculate whether the government which emerges from the struggle will be more or less democratic. There is plenty of testimony that Spain is so constituted as to make a dictatorship in the interest of popular forces impossible. Certainly the United States must be kept out of any European war but the best way to block such a contingency is to block the aggression of Fascist states by the preservation of the democratic method of progress. Spain is the international testing point in that struggle. Obviously it is the duty of all Americans concerned with that struggle not to involve the government in any policy but that of permitting the recognized Spanish government to carry on normal commercial relations. Private aid, however, should be unrestricted" (Dewey, 1978, p. 528). On the other hand, in 1939, together with Sidney Hook and others, Dewey formed the Committee for Cultural Freedom, whose purpose was to "expose the repression of intellectual freedom:" the Committee condemned practices in the Soviet Union, Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain (Westbrook, 1991, p. 485; Hickman, 1999, p. 516). Both facts make clear that Dewey was aligned with the defeated side.

One of the consequences of the Spanish Civil War was the exile of a fair amount of Spanish scholars, most of whom had leftist leanings. Amongst them were some of the people who had introduced Dewey's

ideas into Spain: Barnés, Luzuriaga, Imaz, Gaos and others. This movement of emigration combined with Dewey's alignment with the Republican side of the conflict explains both the subsequent general silence in Spain regarding Dewey during the decades of Franco's dictatorship in Spain (1939–1975), but also the spreading of Dewey's ideas and a flourishing of new translations of his works in South America, especially in Argentina and Mexico.

After the Spanish Civil War the focus of the interest in Dewey in the Hispanic world shifted from Spain to these two countries. In 1939 Lorenzo Luzuriaga emigrated to Argentina. In that same year his translation of Dewey's *Experience and Education* appeared in Buenos Aires and other translations would follow with the years. "To Luzuriaga goes, Donoso writes, the honor of having translated more of Dewey's works into Spanish than any other Spanish-language translator" (Donoso, 2001, p. 358). In the case of Mexico, two Spanish emigrants, the outstanding philosophers José Gaos and Eugenio Imaz, together with the native-born Samuel Ramos, translated four of Dewey's major contributions to general philosophy. The books, published in Mexico City by Fondo de Cultura Económica, were *Experience and Nature* (Gaos, José 1948. *La experiencia y la naturaleza*), *Art as Experience* (Ramos, Samuel. 1949. *El arte como experiencia*), *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (Imaz, Eugenio. 1950. *Lógica. Teoría de la investigación*) and *The Quest of Certainty* (Imaz, Eugenio. 1952. *La busca de la certeza*). Each of them features a really valuable introduction by their translator.

As Gaos observed in his preface to *Experience and Nature*, John Dewey was not unknown to the Spanish-speaking public, but until then not one of his principal philosophical works had been translated: "This signifies in general a real deficiency for culture of the Spanish language" (Gaos, 1948, p. xix). According to Donoso, Gaos had agreed to translate Dewey's book into Spanish in order to offer to philosophers in Latin America "an opportunity to consider a solution to the modern problems other than their own proposals" (Donoso, 2001, p. 358). He wanted Latin American philosophers to confront Dewey's way of solving the modern philosophical problem of dualism versus monism, or of transcendentalism versus immanism, because in Gaos' estimation, Dewey's great merit had been that he did not separate the cultural or human from the natural.

The references to each one of the countries of South America could be tediously multiplied, but what has been said is probably enough to illustrate the general point I wish to make. On the one

hand, in spite of the reticence which has marked Hispanic culture in respect of the "colossus of the North," Dewey's thoughts, especially in education, did find their way not only to the books but, and perhaps more importantly, to the schools of the Hispanic world. To a great extent, Dewey's conception of education was immersed in the international movement of reform that started at the turn of the century and would slowly but surely eventually renovate the structure of the educational system, including that of South America throughout the entire century. But on the other hand, having said this, it is equally clear that the Spanish-speaking countries have displayed a general ignorance of Dewey and, by extension, of American pragmatism during most of the century.

The extent of that ignorance is perhaps epitomized by the reception of the book by Harry K. Wells *Pragmatism: Philosophy of Imperialism* of 1954. This book, which wanted to be a Marxist critique of pragmatism, was translated into Spanish in 1964 and has been a relevant source of information about pragmatism for a good number of contemporary professional philosophers in South America. Thus, it could be said that the figure of Dewey not only suffered an eclipse due to dictatorships or other authoritarian regimes, which regarded him as a dubious leftist, but he was also dismissed in the more democratic countries for being a representative of American imperialism, which had sided with the oppressors of the poor in Latin American. To say the least, nothing could be more unfair about Dewey.

On the contrary, the focus of the conception of Dewey is his concern with the meaning and future of democracy. As Hilary Putnam puts it, for Dewey, "democracy is not just one form of social life among other workable forms of social life; it is the pre-condition for the full application of intelligence to the solution of social problems" (Putnam, 1992, p. 180). In that sense, the gradual process of democratization of the Spanish-speaking countries could only benefit from the rehabilitation of the unfairly neglected figure of Dewey.

DEWEY AND THE RECENT RESURGENCE OF PRAGMATISM IN THE HISPANIC WORLD

In spite of the availability of translations in the forties and fifties, a surprising fact of the second half of the 20th century is the decline of Dewey's influence. "It is one of those paradoxes of history that

Dewey's major works in philosophy were available for the first time to the Spanish-reading world at the very time when his influence in philosophy at home and abroad was rapidly declining and his life was ending" (Donoso, 2001, p. 359). Besides the perception of Dewey's educational theories and practices as a variety of the positivism, which had helped the ruling classes deliver the resources of Latin America into the hands of North Americans and Europeans, an essential factor for the decline of Dewey and pragmatism was the strong influence of new philosophical fashions coming from Europe (existentialism, phenomenology, marxism, neo-thomism) and from Spain (Ortega's perspectivism). South American scholars have been always extremely dependent on the last intellectual fashion coming from abroad.

Also the analytic turn of the American philosophical stage that buried Dewey in the libraries make it really very difficult to acknowledge that deep affinity between American pragmatism and Hispanic philosophy. This ignorance of Dewey and of pragmatism in general, which characterizes many Hispanic philosophers, is sadly mirrored by the lack of knowledge of Hispanic philosophy from the side of American thinkers in the pragmatist tradition. Both are probably the result of mutual cultural incomprehension worsened by sociological factors, which have separated these two worlds throughout the 20th century and have thereby prevented each of them from recognizing their true affinity with the other.

Fortunately, the recent resurgence of pragmatism in American philosophy through the work of R. Bernstein, H. Putnam, R. Rorty and a handful of European thinkers like K. O. Apel, U. Eco and J. Habermas, is also having its effect in the Spanish-speaking countries. This growing interest for pragmatism in the Hispanic world may be partly due to the gradual convergence of the Hispanic philosophers toward American academic philosophy, but it is also related to the discovery of some peculiar affinity between American pragmatism and the Hispanic tradition. As Gregory Pappas has recently remarked, "Dewey's philosophy affirms and reflects values that are predominant and are cherished by Latin, not North American" (Pappas, 1999, p. 2). If so, Dewey's philosophy may very well be a wonderful instrument to start to close the gap between the two worlds. Something along this vein has been already done to trace the links, for instance, between the pedagogical ideas of Dewey and Paulo Freire (Betz, 1992).

With the study and the “use” of Dewey the Latin America experience may be improved: “If you were to know what Dewey meant by democracy you would agree that his homeland is the last place to look for an example of democracy in the Americas. There is no better philosophy to criticize the U. S. than Dewey’s philosophy. Perhaps that is why he continues to be mostly ignored in the U. S. (Pappas, 1999, p. 4). In this sense, an introduction to Dewey and American classical pragmatism, highlighting the affinities with the Hispanic tradition, may provide an excellent and perhaps the easiest way to provide students and readers with a better view not only of the American philosophy, but of their own Hispanic tradition, and maybe even of what this tradition can teach the North-American experience.

Probably, Dewey’s influence during the XXIst century will only increase. Larry Hickman does not hesitate to write that, “together with Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger, Dewey is widely regarded as one of the three most innovative philosophers of the 20th century” (Hickman, 1999, p. 517). These words, in as much as they pertain to Wittgenstein and Heidegger, may be true for the Hispanic world. It may well be that, when it comes to Dewey, they are primarily prophetic of what is yet to come.

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