

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWY

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ABSTRACT



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The aim of the research is to illuminate, uplift, and clarify the life and philosophy of John Dewy. John Dewy was a key pioneer in the philosophy of pragmatism and is regarded as one of the founding philosophers of functional psychology. He is most famous for his groundbreaking books on education, learning, and democracy. John Dewy thought that a democratic society of knowledgeable and involved investigators was the most effective way to advance human interests. He believed that education should focus on developing thoughtful, critically reflective, and socially involved people rather than passive receivers of established knowledge. He supported the idea of learning through personal actions. He strongly supported the promotion of democracy and emphasized two fundamental components: "civil society" and "schools." Regarding the main subject that required focus and restructuring to enhance experimental intelligence, He consistently dedicated himself to studying epistemology, sometimes known as the "theory of knowledge," and progressive education.

Keywords: Educationist, Pragmatist, Philosopher

Introduction

The work of educational philosopher and educator John Dewey (1859–1952) serves as the basis for this discussion. He redirected educational ideas and practices and is still considered the most significant American educator and philosopher of the twentieth century. As a result of his strong democratic beliefs in civil societies and education, Dewey opposed authoritarian systems and, by extension, conventional pedagogical practices in schools. The kid, according to Dewey, was the centre of all academia, and the child was the primary focus of his educational philosophy and reforms. Dewey also believed in progressive education and pushed for changes to the pedagogical parts of teaching and school curricula. Current educational systems across the globe owe a great deal to Dewey's educational theory and its connections to pragmatism, humanism, democracy, and experience.

Biography

The American philosopher and educator John Dewey was an influential influence in the American progressive education movement, a leading figure in functional psychology, and a major player in the pragmatist intellectual movement. His birthplace was Burlington, Vermont, USA, on October 20, 1859, and his death place was New York, USA, on June 1, 1952. His parents, Archibald Sprague Dewey and Artemesia Rich, had three children. One of them was him. In 1886, not long after Alice Chipman earned her doctorate from the University of Michigan, Dewey tied the knot with her. Frederick Archibald Dewey, Evelyn Riggs Dewey, Morris (who died at a young age), Gordon Chipman, Lucy Alice Chipman, and Jane Mary Dewey were the six children born to the couple.

John Dewey's Educational Journey

Dewey graduated from the University of Vermont in 1879 after finishing his undergraduate degree. He began teaching philosophy and psychology at the University of Michigan after finishing his degree in philosophy at Johns Hopkins University in 1884. There, he began to shift his attention away from Hegel's philosophy and towards the American school of experimental psychology, which was then being spearheaded by G. Stanley Hall and William James, a pragmatist philosopher and psychologist. Dewey formulated an educational philosophy to meet the needs of a developing democratic society after conducting further research into child psychology. After joining the philosophy department in 1894, he spent the next several years honing his innovative pedagogical techniques in the lab schools at the University of Chicago. After leaving Chicago in 1904, Dewey went to New York to enroll at Columbia University. It was there that he wrote his famous philosophical essay, *Experience and Nature* (1925), and where he spent the majority of his working life. In his later works, which appeared in popular periodicals, he explored themes of faith, politics, and physical attractiveness. According to Dewey, the best approach to promote human interests was to establish a democratic society of informed and active investigators. This was the central tenet of

his philosophy.

Objective of this Study

- To discuss the overview of the life and philosophy of John Dewey

Research Methodology

The whole study is based on the qualitative data which was collected from various secondary sources like journals available online and offline, newspapers, research publications, magazines, books, websites. Libraries and websites were used to compile all of the material. The data presented in the literature has all been double-checked and approved.

John Dewey's Philosophy Of Life

John Dewey was an outspoken advocate of pragmatism, an American philosophical tradition that rejected modernism's dualistic approaches to knowledge and theory. In contrast, pragmatism advocated a naturalistic view of knowledge as something that evolved naturally from the way humans adapted to their surroundings. This view holds that inquiry is best understood as a process that begins with a problem or hindrance to effective human activity rather than as the mind merely observing the environment and developing ideas that correspond to reality. It then moves on to actively altering the environment in order to test theories, which eventually causes the creature to readjust to its new surroundings, allowing humans to get back to work. Looking at it this way, Dewey produced a mountain of writing that touched on nearly every branch of philosophy that was popular during his lifetime. Furthermore, he became well-known as a social critic of his day due to his voluminous writings on social issues published in popular magazines such as the New Republic. According to Dewey, it is through engaging with the world that individuals grow and gain knowledge. Individuals build their own understandings through exposure to new information and experiences in their surroundings; these understandings are then reinforced through formal schooling and informal social interactions.

John Dewey was a prominent figure in education and philosophy during his era. Even now, his ideas are used in educational curricula worldwide. John Dewey held the belief that pupils acquire knowledge through human experiences. In addition, Dewey held the belief that the experiences of students influence the future judgments that a learner makes. Dewey argues that an educational philosophy rooted in a purely rationalistic understanding of knowledge assumes that the mind is separate from the external world. This approach viewed education's objective as solely cognitive, without any connection or involvement with the surrounding environment in which the mind exists. When Dewey describes his approach as empirical naturalism, we observe the main element of

firsthand knowledge in action. His approach starts with the realm of initial encounters. It is clearly based on observation and evidence, as it begins with the world that we perceive via our senses.

Dewey's Moral Philosophy

Dewey believed that moral judgments influence behavior through statements that may be tested empirically. Assessments of worth can be both helpful in guiding actions and supported by evidence since they take on an instrumental shape. It is said that if something were to be done, then certain outcomes would occur, which would be considered valuable. The purpose of making such statements is to effectively direct the planning and choice of a course of action that will resolve a problem, where the statement is a component of the process through which the action is accomplished. Dewey's psychology involves value judgments in regards to the difference between valuing and evaluation, as well as Dewey's concepts of desire, taste, and interest.

Dewey described value judgments as instrumental in three ways that he did not explicitly differentiate. The initial function might be referred to as the constitutive aspect of value judgments. The purpose of evaluation, or forming an assessment, is to facilitate the continuation of collective action when the regular flow of activity has been disrupted by a challenging scenario. This scenario causes uncertainty and indecision about what to do. Dewey argues that value judgments are fundamentally practical judgments. Their goal is to direct action rather than simply describing things passively as they already exist. Forming a decision is an essential way to determine a new plan of action that will resolve the issue. Furthermore, the substance of value assessments pertains to the worth of acts and objects as a means, specifically their worth in relation to their outcomes or the outcomes of valuing them in the current circumstance. Value judgments take the form of stating that if someone performed in a certain way or valued a specific object, certain outcomes would follow, which would be considered valuable. The distinction between an apparent and a genuine good, between a thoughtless and a thoughtfully valued good, is reflected in its value not just as directly experienced in isolation but also in consideration of its broader effects and how they are valued. The ice cream appears favorable to the lactose-intolerant individual; she quickly values it. However, it is considered unsatisfactory due to the unacceptable outcome of consuming it. Assessments of value situate things within a broader framework and evaluate them based on their outcomes, which are carefully examined.

Thirdly, although the immediate and essential purpose of a value assessment is to resume an activity that has been disrupted by a challenging situation, the judgment also has a more distant purpose, which is to utilize the chosen action as a method for discovering new information about what is worth valuing. Thoughtful assessments of worth are held tentatively and hypothetically, with a focus on changing them if the outcomes of acting on them are not deemed useful. From this perspective,

value judgments serve as instruments for determining how to improve one's life, similar to how scientific ideas serve as instruments for revealing new knowledge about the world.

Educational Philosophy of John Dewey

- Aims of education by John Dewey

Dewey believes that the goal of education is to foster the growth of a child's skills and capabilities. Therefore, education should strive to foster social effectiveness and expertise. Practical education seeks to establish democratic ideas and ideals in the individual.

- John Dewey's view on curriculum

Dewey proposed that education should be founded on the child's personal experience. He said that the curriculum, from one viewpoint, encompasses the child's past, present, and future experiences as they transition into adult forms of knowledge and creativity. Reflecting, especially challenging our previous thoughts is often neither simple nor pleasurable. Dewey regards experience as the core idea of education. Children acquire knowledge from their experiences. The goal of education is to address issues by using reflective or critical thinking. Dewey believes that knowledge is acquired through the processes of inquiry, reflective thought, experimentation, and gathering facts.

- Methods of teaching by John Dewey

Dewey suggests that the approach to education should change based on the interests and inclinations of each child. These concepts impacted contemporary instructional methods and resulted in interactive teaching in educational institutions. The main idea of Dewey's educational philosophy is that students acquire knowledge through practical experience. However, he also stressed that the classroom is similar to a little democracy, where every student takes part in making choices about what and how to learn.

- Role of Teacher in Education by John Dewey

In his educational theory and philosophy, Dewey maintained that teachers are responsible for establishing a setting that promotes curiosity and investigation while also supporting student independence, originality, and analytical thinking.

- Discipline by Dewey

As per Dewey, an individual who is "intellectually disciplined" has acquired the skill to control and guide their desires and impulses, evaluate their beliefs and attitudes, enhance their capabilities and skills, and contemplate their personal and social actions through reflective thinking.

Works and Publications

John Dewey authored over 60 books, including "Democracy and Education" (1916), "Experience and Education" (1938), "How We Think" (1910), "Art as Experience" (1934), "The School and Society" (1899), "Experience and Nature" (1925), "Human Nature and Conduct" (1922), "Reconstruction in Philosophy" (1920), "The Public and Its Problems" (1927), "My Pedagogic Creed" (1897), "John Dewey on Education" (1959), and "Freedom and Culture" (1939). However, his most significant writings were "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" (1896), which critiqued a commonly accepted psychological concept and served as the foundation for his subsequent work, "Democracy and Education" (1916), his renowned work on progressive education, and "Human Nature and Conduct" (1922), a study on the role of habit in human behavior.

Honors

- The Brooklyn, New York, John Dewey High School is named for him.
- A Green Bay, Wisconsin, charter school bearing his name is the John Dewey Academy of Learning.
- One boarding school that helps troubled teens get ready for college is the John Dewey Academy in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.
- He was honored with the name of the elementary school in Warrensville Heights, Ohio, which is situated east of Cleveland, Ohio.
- Adams County in Denver, Colorado, is home to the secondary school named for him, John Dewey Middle School.
- He was honored with the name Dewey Hall, which is on the campus of the University of Vermont.
- In 1968, as part of the Prominent Americans series, the United States Postal Service honored Dewey by including him on a postage stamp.

Principles of John Dewey

Additionally, he contended that education needs to equip kids for existence in a democratic society where they have the ability to engage in social transformation and advancement. Dewey's educational theory was grounded in four fundamental principles: usefulness, curiosity, firsthand knowledge, and synthesis.

Conclusion

In summary, we may state that John Dewey's work is impressive and noteworthy. His study sheds light on the overlooked aspect of the current discussions about globalization and democracy. The scope of this study has been limited to examining Dewey's educational philosophy in relation to

experience and democracy, and how it pertains to a child's growth and development. However, Dewey has made numerous contributions to the fields of education, politics, humanism, logic, and aesthetics. It was an arduous endeavor to summarize the important ideas and works of John Dewey. Throughout his fruitful and lengthy career in education, Dewey ushered about seismic shifts in the philosophies, methods, and pedagogies of education. By placing the child at the core of education, Dewey's philosophical philosophy seeks to foster the growth of a contributing citizen in a democratic society that values freedom and fairness.

Educators who have tried to implement Dewey's philosophy have encountered both theoretical and practical roadblocks. The main issue is that he doesn't provide enough information on how to establish systems that can track ideas from start to finish, evaluate progress, and properly plan and build curricula. Despite these criticisms, John Dewey is still considered a trailblazer in the field of modern education. His ideas and methods of instruction have inspired countless scholars and practitioners who are adding invaluable insights to his corpus of work.

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