

The Reception of John Dewey in Hungary

La acogida de John Dewey en Hungría

Imre Fenyő

e-mail: fenyoimre@gmail.com

University of Debrecen. Hungary

Abstract: The 20th century is the century of discontinuity in Hungary. Therefore, the image of the reception of John Dewey's work can be a mosaic only and sometimes incomplete, where the gaps are no less meaningful than in other cases the elements abundance. Despite this fragmentation is still worth to keep tracking of the formations in which a science constantly re-evaluates and re-interprets its own classics, as sources of legitimacy. In this paper we would like to demonstrate the dual (political and scientific) determinism of Dewey's Hungarian reception, with presenting Dewey's works published in Hungary, respectively present the scientific publications related to his work and at times to his person. We do not want to provide a mere register of the Hungarian Dewey-literature, but we would like to outline the effects that determined the scientific opinions which have helped or discouraged propagate of Dewey's ideals in Hungary.

Keywords: Hungary; reception; political determinism; John Dewey.

Resumen: El siglo XX es el siglo de la discontinuidad en Hungría. Por lo tanto, la imagen de acogida de la obra de John Dewey puede ser un mosaico único y a veces incompleto, donde los vacíos no son menos significativos que en otros casos la abundancia de elementos. A pesar de esta fragmentación todavía hoy merece la pena seguir haciendo un seguimiento de las formaciones en las que la ciencia constantemente re-evalúa y reinterpreta sus propias obras clásicas, como fuentes de legitimidad. En este trabajo nos gustaría demostrar el determinismo dual (político y científico) de la acogida de Dewey en Hungría, presentando sus obras publicadas allí, así como las publicaciones científicas relacionadas con su trabajo y, a veces, con su persona. No queremos plantear un simple registro de la literatura húngara sobre Dewey, sino que nos gustaría describir los efectos que determinaron las opiniones científicas que ayudaron o desalentaron la difusión de los ideales de Dewey en Hungría.

Palabras clave: Hungría; recepción; determinismo político; John Dewey.

Recibido / Received: 11/02/2016

Aceptado / Accepted: 23/05/2016

1. Introduction

In 1975 Vág Ottó¹ says the followings in the preface of John Dewey's book entitled *The Characteristic and the Process of the Education*²:

Many people know the name of Dewey in Hungary, however, significantly fewer know his works. The writings of the major American philosopher, psychologist and educator of the 20th century have been translated into many languages, including the languages of neighboring countries as well, but slightly into Hungarian. The inquisitive reader who could read only in Hungarian was forced to settle for some fragments of Dewey's oeuvre and the different presentations of his works – in some cases a biased direction (Vág, 1975, p. 5).

Half a century and then a political regime change earlier poignant words are true today. We can conclude that – History of John Dewey's reception in Hungary reflects the political and professional difficulties which determined the fate of the country and the educational science as well during the 20th century. Looking through the Hungarian academic works related to Dewey, we can formulate two statements in advance. On the one hand it is clearly visible that politics how played a direct and dominant role in the determination of scientific space elements, on the other hand we can also see that the choice of the reference points was not controversy free in some periods in the educational scientist profession. In this paper we would like to demonstrate this dual determinism, of course with presenting Dewey's works published in Hungary, respectively present the scientific publications related to his work and at times to his person. We do not want to provide a mere register of the Hungarian Dewey-literature, but we would like to outline the effects that determined the scientific opinions which have helped or discouraged propagate of Dewey's ideals in Hungary. To perform this task, a methodological decision was taken: we try to enforce double approach at the same time.

One dimension of the analysis is the historical and political determination that separates each chapter, following Hungary's 20th century political history. This approach roughly divides the 20th century into three stages: the first one is the period of years before the World War II, which is typically within the framework of formal democratic political system, but it worked amid highly determined ideological frameworks and clearly identifiable moral determinations. The second period is the post-World War II years, it is influenced by the Soviet and socialist

¹ Vág Ottó (1929-1996) The pedagogy teacher of the Nurse School of Kalocsa (1952-1954), in charge of the editor of Tankönyvkiadó (1954-1963). The Eötvös Loránd University, teacher of the Department of Educational Science (1963-1993).

² The volume contains the first part of Dewey's lectures held in Chicago in January of 1899. The source of the volume: Dewey, John (1966): *Lectures in the Philosophy of Education*, New York Random House 31-125.

features³ with a strong leftist-marxist ideology and the third one is after the collapse of the socialist system, the period of the democratic reforms after the year of 1989.

At the same time, as another dimension of the review, we attempt to analyze approaches are considered scientific in every historical period which is related to the presentation of Dewey's work. In each period we stock of the Hungarian translations of original works published by Dewey, we attempt to review scientific articles issued in scientific journals related to the ideas of Dewey and – where we can – also the textbook chapters.

2. The First Period: Before the World War II

After the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the Kingdom of Hungary were operating with no monarch, but with governor Horthy Miklós and the elected parliament in addition running up an independent government. However, after the fall of the World War I and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Hungary got into a special situation: it lost its status as a great power dominant in Europe, in fact due to ending the war with the Treaty of Trianon, the resources and also a large part of the population and the territory of the country were lost as well. Therefore, it is not surprising that after the resolutions following the World War I, the stabilizing rightist power had to put the country into a new position of the European federal field and had to develop new strategies, including the revitalization of academic life as well. Given the tradition it is also not surprising that the choice of German politics and culture was made.

The consequences of this decision were decisive. One of these is that the non-German world scientific ideas actually were pushed out of the accepted and official forums about science. The official ideas, the ones in the universities, and the ones in scientific associations could be mainly Germans. Thus, the pedagogy was based on the pedagogy of Herbart, or on Spranger's philosophy of culture as an acceptable alternative.

2.1. *Translations, reviews and articles in the first period*

The presentation of Dewey's reception in Hungary has to be started in this position. If we review the dominant scientific forums of this period (in the field of the educational scientists is the *Magyar Pedagógia*, the journal of the

³ As we will see later, this period is not homogeneous itself-the stalinism of the early period is very different from the 70s and 80s (the late kádárism) relief stage. This difference is well demonstrated by changes of the relationships with the ideas of the Western and American (including Dewey, of course) thinkers.

Hungarian Pedagogical Association; in the field of philosophy is the *Athenaeum*, the journal of the Philosophical Association), there is an unmistakable symptom that is the total lack of Dewey's work or related ones as well. If we look at the dominant pedagogy professors who had professorship in this era, we find that they are totally unaffected by the ideas of pragmatism. It can be said the Anglo-Saxon philosophy and the mind of the educational sciences in general, especially pragmatism is trapped outside the circle. Although an official prohibition does not come into operation, cannot be published in the primary scientific press, or in textbooks. However, this unilateralism creates an interesting phenomenon: the appearance of a secondary science publicity. This is – when it is just forced out of the universities and the forums of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, when looks forward its own opportunities for attendance –, forced to move toward the practical pedagogy. The journals of elementary school teachers and nursery school teachers provide opportunities for the ones locked out of the official erudition, and it seems the practical education-oriented publicity received willingly the appearance of the non-official pedagogical ideas.

The first remarkable item is a really great achievement: in 1912 (as a Volume 45th in the Library Series of the *Néptanítók Lapja*⁴, translated by Ozorai Frigyes⁵) was published Dewey's work entitled *The school and society*. The series is created to support the elementary school teacher's professional self-education. In the journal *Néptanítók Lapja* the useful volumes were recommended in regard to the practical pedagogical work to the teachers. Dewey's book remained within the recommended works for many years.

In the foreword, Ozorai introduced Dewey as the «bravest» representative of the American educational reforms, he was highly recommended to the Hungarian pedagogues. All the more need this recommendation because Ozorai feels that: the American pedagogy is not exactly suited to deal with in a field of adopted to the German pedagogical orientation. The American educational reforms are almost unfamiliar in Hungary, and according to the belief is widely accepted it is completely uninteresting as well. Ozorai undertake to alter this status and working on it: the American school reforms were described in a way which the most can be expected the sensitivity of Hungarian teachers – in the terms of the social prestige of schools. He says that America cares about the school, eager to sacrifice the funding, does not preclude its development. It is not difficult to realize the criticism of the domestic (Hungarian) school modernization efforts: the Hungarian state is not expending enough on schools, Hungarian society does not recognize the importance of the school, and the Hungarian educational

⁴ Journal of the Hungarian primary school teachers.

⁵ Ozorai Frigyes (1879-1951) is the head of the Library of Education between 1910-18. From 1918 to 1934, leader of the Metropolitan Educational Seminar.

reforms have to deal with artificially induced difficulties. The American case could be an example for the dissatisfied pedagogues. Thus Dewey's work has already been legitimized with Ozorai's trick.

It is worth to observe the way of Ozorai constantly emphasizes the efforts of Dewey and the American pedagogy for exceeding the German pedagogy, however, he stresses the link between the two. On the one hand, he does not alienate the American educational reality from the geographically very distant Hungarian one as he continuously emphasizes their common roots, on the other hand he keeps awake the Hungarian pedagogues about the similarity of the task as in America as well.

Let us explain just one example of this German determination. We can observe also that when Dewey is presented by Ozorai parallels Rein works for simplicity as both (1) established a pilot training school, (2) emphasize the significance of developmental psychology, (3) aim to educate on ethical grounds (4) their teaching material based on the history of mankind. Thus Dewey is already a close friend of pedagogues knowing the Hungarian actualities; the grounds of Dewey's pedagogy are understandable and acceptable for Hungarian teachers. Of course Ozorai also highlights the differences, because as he says, while Rein is looking for the main emphasis of teaching in the child's inner life and finds it in the history of mankind, until Dewey is focusing on the practical activities of the child. Ozorai finds a symbolic difference between them as in while Rein makes the 8 year-old children to read about the life of Robinson, to acquaint with the primitive life conditions the child, Dewey causes to children to act as Robinson as well.

Ozorai summarizes Dewey's modern pedagogical questions as follows:

1. How can the school be brought closer to the home, to the life of the neighborhood that the school should not just be a place where the child attends for acquiring certain goals?
2. Are there any teachable material in the history, arts and the sciences with a positive value and importance to a child's life?
3. How can we teach formal subjects on the basis of the experiences and activities of daily life?
4. How is the individual education possible?

Ozorai summarizes Dewey's educational stance, according to the practicing teachers' expectations, when it was created by Dewey he thinks the observations of the practice were ennobled to philosophy in every case to «America's teachers to be accustomed to good adjudication against to the Herbartism» – said Ozorai (Ozorai, 1912, p. 8). This philosophy is not based on something else,

such as observing the life of the society. In the social life is found non-sterile, but very much alive, acting children. Therefore the teaching should be focusing on the child's instincts; the aim is not overcome, suppress them. The development of the children is promoted and stimulated by an environment where the actions based on their instincts. And ultimately, the sharing of the productive activities is jumpstart to the society.

Why Dewey's theory of education is so attractive? – asks Ozorai. His answer seems to have a target audience of elementary school teachers again. On the one hand, he states, there is the fact that Dewey can articulate the needs of a modern, democratic and social society, also respect for the child's self as a part of this, on the other hand, flashes the possibilities for new ways of teaching, and encourages the experimenting the practical pedagogy. Both are really unusual for the Hungarian pedagogy. The great merit of Ozorai's work that he does not alienate Dewey from the Hungarian pedagogues, on the contrary – presents him as a cobbler, a consultant who goes ahead on the way they want to go.

The reviews after publishing the book were not issued in professional academic journals. Bárdy Gerő is almost celebrating the published translation on the page of the *Néptanítók Lapja*. As he writes: «American air comes from this book, and we need a little practicality. So the teachers can successfully exploit the lessons taking from this book in the schools» (Bárdy 1913, p. 11). Kristóf György in the *Protestáns Szemlé*⁶ endorses a translation of Dewey's work, there are many noteworthy ideas hiding, it was recommended as a true American spirit work for readers (Kristóf, 1913, p. 212).

Further translations indicating that the interest was alive, which were published in this period with the purpose of popularize of Dewey's work in the journal *Néptanítók Lapja: The teaching methods and the unity of teaching materials* (Dewey, 1929a) and *The typical features of the individual methods* (Dewey, 1929b).

In 1933 was published the next important book under the title: *Dewey's pedagogy* by the journal *Kisdédnevelés*⁷, the translator was Samu Szemere⁸. This book contained additionally an accompanying study with the same title by the translator and translated sections of Dewey's *Democracy and Education*. The selection was done by Szemere and apparently he tried to preserve the integrity of the volume, of its message. But he tried to sort according to the practicing teachers surrounding the journal, to keep their interest. The Hungarian edition includes the following sections of the original: IV. Education as Growth, V.

⁶ Journal of the Hungarian Protestant Church.

⁷ Journal of the Hungarian nursery school teachers.

⁸ Szemere Samu (1881-1978) from 1906 high-schoolteacher, from 1927 until 1942 the National Jewish Teacher Training Institute Director.

Preparation, Unfolding and Formal Discipline, VI. Education as Conservative and Progressive, VII. The Democratic Conception in Education, VIII. Aims in Education, IX. Natural Development, XIII. The Nature of Method.

Szemere names Dewey one of America's greatest thinkers in his accompanying study of the *Dewey's pedagogy*, as he is contemporarily the most typical thinker of American spirit. Moreover, he thinks Dewey himself is aware of the fact that his message is only valid in specific social space, in the democratic America. In the interpretation of democracy Szemere lays down two conditions. In his view, a democratic society is characterized by individuals heavily involved in the public affairs, on the other hand open and close interactions may exist between different social groups – that is why the democratic society is dynamic.

Szemere's summary of pragmatism sees the fullness of life in action. The action put the philosophy in the direction of social and educational issues. The relationship between the society and the education is complex; this is partly a recognition that the social activities influencing education, on the other hand, the education ensures the society's survival. According to the pragmatists' interpretation, the society is a means, which shapes the education but also a goal – says Szemere (Szemere, 1933, p. 5). If we accept this, it is easy to realize that the school will be the most effective if it develops properly equipped environments which have room for actions, even practice of the socially relevant actions. If – as seen above – a democratic society is characterized mainly by dynamism, then the most socially relevant action is the adoption of changing challenges. Dewey's concept of education, therefore, focuses on the process of growth. Szemere calls Dewey's psychology as a help to interpret the concept of growth. As he says, according to this statement people with no abilities, but also with tendencies come into the world. The increase is a continuously reorganization process in virtue of ongoing experience, the school is the place of practical actions whose success is guaranteed if you create a stimulating situations to act and resolve that, which are over the boundaries of school life and also consubstantial with the task of the society. All school activities and subjects are as valuable as can help to understand the real social conditions.

Szemere overall assessment is very positive. His strong opinion is that Dewey's pedagogy is optimistic; the unstoppable progress of the Faustian spirit permeates it. But this belief is not the one in the omnipotence of the education – because according to Szemere, Dewey is one of the firsts who accomplished the Copernican revolution in education. His work is both a pioneer and a summary, every how, he hopes that the Hungarian teachers recognize the results. He summarizes the characteristics of the era as well. Dewey, although was crowded

out of the official forum of erudition to the subsidiary public and gather ground and reaches the recognition of his importance – at least in this circle.

The question arises – the changing social and political circumstances, formally democratizing Hungarian public life will benefit the academic recognition of Dewey's views after the World War II?

2.2. *Excursus I*

A special source but definitely deserves a word a literary work as it created and also recognized on this way Ognev: *Kostya Rjabcev's Diary* entitled book⁹. The book introduces that period of the Soviet pedagogy when they tended to break up the old Russian school system to create a new Soviet school. To make this happen, they received a great support from Lenin and Lenin's wife. Krupskaja had an active interest in all, even toward the western program, which aims to renew the school. One of the programs, which were introduced tentatively in the Soviet Union, was the Dalton Plan. The book presents how could be introduced the Dalton plan in a totally foreign milieu, despite incomprehension, and resistance of parents and students who were not willing to cooperate. The book presents specifically pleasurably, with irresistible humor the experiment, it is well-illustrated how to methodological innovations of the Dalton Plan arouses incomprehension, if it is not accompanied by an explanation. It can be seen also how strong social dimensions appear in the Dalton Plan School. But students tend to see the problems, according to the book there are more of these:

This Dalton goes wrong. No one can understand anything - neither the teachers nor do we. The teachers every night counsel. The only new thing is that now instead of desktop we have benches and nowhere to put the books. Nikpetoz says that there is no need to. The books of certain subjects will be in a separate cabinet in the laboratory. From there, you can take all that you need. But for now we still do not have even the cabinet (Ognyev, 1968, p. 9.)

It should also be noted that the attempt came to an end relatively soon; the decision of 1931 banned the further educational experiments in the Soviet Union.

⁹ In Hungary, the leftist journal entitled 100% published the parts of the book in 1928. And then they attempted to publish in book-form, but it would have been a hopeless attempt, knowing the rightist government's attitude against the leftist and soviets. Therefore, the first Hungarian edition (1929) was amended and the title and the name of the author of the book was Ogne: Me and Mr. Dalton, and the book could be published with US location and persons.

3. The Second Period: 1945-1989

After the World War II, Hungary's political changes were predictable, since belonged to the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. After the Communist Party came to power, the country's independence is practically eliminated. The political publicity talked about democratizing of the country, but the emerging democracy meant a special apparatus, the established democracy was not in the western sense of the word, but *people's democracy* which actually took some formalities from the western practices (such as regular, general elections), but the content did not guarantee the equality of people – on the contrary, intended the country under the rule of a political elite.

This change was decisive both in the practice of scientific research and functioning of the academic sphere. The Hungarian scholarly lost its independence in regard to the research objects as well as the interpretation practice; it was a mere copyist of the Soviet practice. The Soviet practice excluded the translation and dissemination of those resources were other than the accepted (marxist, historical-materialist) ideology. It is therefore understandable if we could not find any translation of Dewey's work in the first part of this period.

3.1. *Scientific articles in the first part of the second period*

And it is also normal there were not a large number of scientific articles about Dewey. However, those ones were published were more interesting and more typical. Only one outstanding work can be found in the Hungarian educational science literature of this period, which is a translation of a work was published in the Soviet Union, V. Sz. Sevkin: *D. Dewey's pedagogy in the service of contemporary American reaction (Section 3-4.)*¹⁰. The book is intended to be a criticism of Dewey's educational ideas, but typically less professional and more political interpretation. It did not take place a detailed presentation of Dewey's educational works; the author does not assume that the readers can know them. The criticism wants to be overwhelming, but rather relying on the Cold War terminology as the confrontation of the scientific arguments. The cited experts are often not from the field of the educational sciences, hence they are practically incontrovertible. Dewey's picked out principles have to face well-known phrases of Stalin and Lenin and spectacularly annihilate according to the intention of the text proving the inferiority of the «Western», «bourgeois» pedagogy in contrast the progressive thinking of the socialist

¹⁰ It should be noted that quite typical momentum that due to carelessness or lack of knowledge of Dewey's surname, the Russian transcript translated into Hungarian – made from John Dewey to Dewey D.

blocks strengthening the faith of socialist teachers in the official standard. The translation contains two chapters of the original work, even the third chapter is already typical: *The pseudo-scientific concept of the education in Dewey's pedagogy*. The chapter's reasoning is based on the presumption as Dewey is the mouthpiece for the US imperialist class. Its mission is to fulfill the assigned instructions by the American wealthy elite, but cover this up with reformist slogans. The argument is obviously mainly directed against the person, not the thoughts of Dewey. The text is constantly trying to embarrass Dewey, for instance, calls him the lackey of American capitalists or the old reactionary furious defender. The text clearly sets Dewey the manifest violence, as committed to the preparation of the World War III. His pedagogical thoughts are constantly declares undisciplinatory, based solely on the axiomatic statement that only the methods of the historical materialism can only lead to scientific solution. The only statement attributed to Dewey, which is actually described in the book, the assumption that education would be the development of the human innate properties. In the interpretation Dewey's mistake is revealed by citing the «great» book of Stalin entitled *Anarchism or Socialism*, according to that innate feelings and wild views of the people are not eternal and ineradicably. Only «a conscious enemy of science» (Sevkin, 1955, p. 13) may think that the existence does not determine people's feelings and views. In addition, Pavlov's experiments also show that the organizations interacting with the environment can develop new attributes. Makarenko's experiment at the Gorky camp utterly proves that, the people can be re-educated – states Sevkin. But he sheds light Dewey's false statements as well, when he reveals that with the man innate characteristics theory argues for the unchangeable eternal human needs, which proves the immutability of bourgeois capitalism of the contemporary America. And that just discourages those who to advocate for: make the American workers believe to rebel against the existing natural order is unreasonable and unnecessary. According to Sevkin's book Dewey relies on H. Spencer's adaptation theory, who is a well-known defender of capitalism, bitter enemy of socialism, trying to extend the laws of the biology to the society – states the author. Based on this, Dewey claims that the education organizes the children's activity in terms of the adaptation to the environment. The meaning of the hidden class is the fact that this sort of education expects the young generation to adapt of the existing capitalist system, the subordination to the ruling class, not to change the order. The book refers to Lenin, who had denounced the process holding a speech on the II Congress of Russian Trade Unions. In this speech, he called the education and science the main instruments of the exploitative activities of capitalist civilization, which helps to keep people in bondage. The book is almost angrily calls Dewey's pedagogy ultimately a mere political apologetics

of the educational policy pursued by US imperialist bourgeoisie; a pedagogy which emerged under the reign of the dollar and is also propagated to the dollar civilization.

The other chapter of the book translated into Hungarian (IV.) *The pragmatist pedagogy representation of the school, the student and the teacher*. In this chapter it comes up the argument of the undisciplinarian pragmatist pedagogy again. The book argues that the American pragmatism is closely related to the pedagogical pseudo-science, which proclaims that man's character, talent, inherited characteristics can be measured. But they just wanted to demonstrate with tests those statements by the bourgeois theorists, that the children of the working class are physically and mentally less, while the children of the exploiting class are talented. Speaking of school, this chapter also qualifies Dewey's ideas undisciplinarian, which claims that the school is not the preparation of the young generation for life, but life itself. Yet the order by the plans and documents, lesson plans and curriculum constitute the school needs imposed by the development of society. The lack of the order and being organized make inaccessible the regularity of the knowledge acquiring. The chaos is prevailed in the field practices in a project-based school concept which is an incorrect conception of freedom. Dewey's school educates people who will be able to implement actions at work, but they will not be able to understand the rules behind the work processes. But Dewey as the true enemy of disciplinarian also wants to use the school to strike at the disciplinarian itself, according to Sevkin. And finally, as the result of the last dimension of the analysis, we are told that the role of teachers is degraded unprecedented by Dewey. The subordinate role of a teacher does not control, just react. By Sevkin this approach is undisciplinarian and even harmful and is far from the truth. The teacher should be the central figure of the school. He has to educate the child, to develop character traits, will, interests, needs, skills, discipline, thinking. The teacher is the bearer of the knowledge that equips students for the life. The pedagogue (preparedness, art of his teaching) depends on the success of the school's work. And only the scientific (as in the Marxist-Leninist), pedagogy understand well the role of their teacher that the teacher serves all the people. Nothing is better proof of the truth of this item, as the teachers are honored and awarded in the Soviet Union. They are elected to be in workers' delegation; however, the opposite is true in the United States: their prestige, qualifications and payment is low; they are not the active forces in society.

How can we value this work differently than typical of the age, by today's standards almost absurd ideologically and emotionally heated pamphlet. Fearful memento of a scientific world where the political and ideological arguments can always overwrite the professional and scientific reasoning.

3.2. *Scientific articles in the second part of the second period*

Speaking of this period it should be pointed out at least that the first half of the post-World War II period was dominated by the socialist ideology, the history of education textbooks are written with independent spirit of disciplinary neither. These are or simple translations of Soviet textbooks, either works that seem to be Hungarian, but still heavily rely on Soviet examples, sometimes literally take into larger passages from them. These sources are not intended for analyzing Dewey's work. But this is exactly the area in which shows cracks for the first time after the World War II. After Stalin's death, and the Hungarian revolution of 1956 when the Hungarians expressed strongly their wish for the independence against to the Soviet rule, the beginning was initially slow and gradual, but characterized by a definite melting. The political leadership on the head of the country recognized the validity of the same dominant ideology, but step by step getting away from the Soviet domination, creating an area of freedom and small independent circles for certain groups in society. The scientific researchers soon used this option, which was first demonstrated by the textbooks of the history education presented in our analysis. There comes the time when Hungarian researchers write and publish their history of education textbooks, researchers who brought up university life before the war, and those who are not accustomed to the Stalin narrowed interpretation of science. So it appears for the first time in the 1970s the introduction of Western educational science in the history of education textbooks. We will return to it soon, but first we review the published translations and the analysis Dewey's work.

One of the first signs of the transformation is the writing of Kozma Tamás entitled *Criticism of the Pragmatic Pedagogy in the United States* (Kozma, 1967). This is an excellent expression of the desire to publish arguments about the critique of the pragmatist pedagogy on the Hungarian scientific forums. But it is precisely that the criticism does not appear between the rival political parties as seek to switch the political field off the professional discourse, even the article dares to say, «there is a blend of political and professional scientific motives in debates surrounded the American pragmatic pedagogy peculiars» (Kozma, 1967, p. 325) Kozma starts his analysis with the observation that he considers the appropriate careful analysis of the American pragmatist for several reasons.

On the one hand because he thinks it is the longest-lasting education reform movement, on the other hand because generalizable lessons can be concluded because it worth to know about the theory behind the modern Anglo-Saxon teaching methods: this theory is a particular manifestation of the pragmatic philosophy which has an emblematic figure, John Dewey who is the most prominent figure of the pragmatist philosophy. Kozma summarizes Dewey's

theory in the following points: (1) he does not only verify the action in cognition, but also (2) there is a value formatting function, however, (3) cognitive processes are only tools for the cognitive subject. His pedagogical innovations are regarded as innovation in two aspects. On the one hand that he confronts the pragmatist epistemology to associative psychology (where the experimentalism is coming from), on the other hand, oppose the pedagogy of the individual ethics, when emphasizes the social determination of moral categories. Kozma after presenting the work of Dewey concludes that, the theory based teaching practice seemed inappropriate to win the competition after World War II. The progressive pedagogy could be meaningful in the circumstances of Roosevelt's social reforms but did not fit to the Cold War conditions. This was recognized by American critics - Kozma says, appearing the attackers dated in 1957 when David Hulburd's *This Happened in Pasadena* entitled book was published actually demonstrating that America is not immune to the curse of politicization of professional debates either.

3.3. *Translations in the second part of the second period*

After Kozma's paper, in 1974, perhaps as the best illustration of how it can be possible again to publish translations of Western European and American thinkers' work, *The sociological problem of school* entitled book was issued which is about sociological study methods of school and the interpretation of the social sciences extended to analyzes of school life.

This is a great new feature after the hegemony of the socialist ideology as Western sociologists' school researches also can gather ground in the volume and in the field of educational sciences as well. In the volume (besides the classical writings of Bernstein, Coleman, Bourdieu, Durkheim) there was published Dewey's two short writings: *Wasting in the school* and *The school and the child's life* entitled works.

But the really big turnover comes in the next year when John Dewey's work was published in the series *Pedagógiai Források*¹¹, under the title *The nature and the process of the education*. The volume contains Dewey's *My pedagogical creed* and some of his notes as well related to organizing the Department of Education. The volume is completed with the editorial notes, Dewey's biography, as well as pre- and epilogue.

In the epilogue Vág Ottó presents Dewey's pedagogical philosophy as a new discipline, which is an essential element in the interpretation of the concept of

¹¹ *Pedagógiai források* is a book series of pedagogical sources, translated from foreign languages. The series was legitimized by translations of Makarenko's, Lunacharsky's, Blonszkij's or Krupszkaja's works.

pedagogy, which is assumed as a process by Dewey. The issue is the nature of this process. Vág's analysis points out: Dewey and Marxism agree to reject the perception of the pedagogical process as a spontaneous process. However, they differ in that way while Dewey's pedagogical process is assumed to be informal and formal at the same time and the institutional education is basically only intended to create an organized structure for social impacts of the non-institutional education, the Marxist pedagogy considered as fundamental the institutional education which is complemented by the effects of non-institutional education. According to Vág, the difference also is that while the Marxist education consider the education as an objective system (with set of the instruments, goals and social origin behind that), Dewey denies the predictability of the social needs against the personality, in fact, the very possibility of the long term pedagogical objective system (both pedagogical goals and the means are the parts of the educational process).

The analysis of Vág Ottó shows the characteristics of this period – he is analyzing deeply and seriously, recognizes and describes the texts and arguments, which are highlighted and evaluated in Dewey's work. He collided arguments, but did not exit out of the framework of approved and official ideology, thus he uses the point of view of the Marxist pedagogy in his alysis. We can see this even when he summarizes the evaluation of Dewey's pedagogy. In fact, according to Vág, while Dewey's philosophy is not acceptable for the Marxism, his psychology would be, conditionally, though it cannot be studied uncritically, but with interest. In the conclusions Vág Ottó holds that Dewey's pedagogy cannot be actualized – warns against using it in this way. He suggests that, it is needed to exceed, to make it history, should be studied as the last great system of the civic pedagogy. And studying this might be the task of the Marxist pedagogy. The main criticism could be that the pedagogy is unable to respond the problems that have emerged in the advanced capitalist countries in the second half of the 20th century, in the late modernity.

The era makes a turn in relation with the translated philosophical works. The volume of *Pragmatism* was published in 1981, which publishes classic philosophical writings of Peirce, James, Dewey and Schiller¹². The volume contains three translations of Dewey: *Essays on the experimental logic*, *Philosophy and Civilization* and *the Properties and Events*. Sós Vilmos writes the introduction part. In the description of Dewey's work, he is presenting them less original than James' or Peirce's writings. However, Dewey is characterized as an author whose oeuvre is covering the overall fields of philosophy; moreover the analysis covers his educational science and social science successes as well. According

¹² Typically, Vajda Mihály gets the chance to translate it who was relegated to the background because of their detachment from Marxism, and he is forced to leave the country.

to the presentation, Dewey's starting point is the identification of the human environment as a physical and cultural environment. This environment is an ongoing challenge for humans, the solution requires effort. And this effort as an action and a process become a measurement of objects and ideas as in the success of the human action depends on these instrumental values.

3.4. *The only Hungarian Dewey monograph*

The turn not only can be seen in the translations: a monograph (the only one in Hungary) was born in this period, which deals with Dewey's works: Tagai Imre's book entitled *John Dewey* (Tagai, 1982). The book lists the philosophical and pedagogical aspects of Dewey's works.

As it states, Dewey is led by the comparison of the characteristic of the philosophy to the problem of the recognition of the experience. It recognizes that, while sciences consider the agents of theory and experience as a unit, where the experience is utilized as a test of the theory, the philosophy ignores the experience, stubbornly insists on its ultimate principles.

According to Tagai the category of the experience will not solve all the problems of Dewey, for example, it does not resolve the difference between object and subject, and thus it is needed to take further steps. And that leads to one of the most important elements of the thinking, this is the realization of that the ideas and objects are context-aware: this is the instrumentalism. Summarizing the lesson, Tagai says that Dewey thus makes an attempt to eliminate the object-subject duality, the object (thing) ultimately becomes equal to its effect of the specific situation, and the subject becomes ontologically equal to the instrument that can be used to achieve the objectives. Tagai does not decide, if this is really resolves the issue of subject-object relation, because as he says, it is actually just a consequence of the lifting of the duality of the two effects. His further criticism is the excuse that the analysis of the concepts' specification is left behind, and the concepts are dissolved in the psychological problem of thinking, but Dewey is actually preserves the old structure, which is about the concepts exist as closed units side by side in our minds and we link them together distract with volitional acts as the equivalents and characteristics of certain areas of the external reality. Thus Tagai says Dewey could not exceed the correspondence principle. Indeed Dewey's analysis makes it impossible to explore the scientific relation between the phenomenon and the essence; in fact, the problem will not be meaningful in this structure.

During the presentation of Dewey's pedagogical theory, one of a little appreciable political assessments can be found, made by Tagai. As he states

Dewey's theory and political activity is interpreted in the context of social determinism. Dewey expresses the lower middle-class oriented mind, which the US official reformist policy relied on as well. However, analyzing the pedagogical ideas of Dewey Tagai states that the «*Democracy and Education*» is Dewey's main pedagogical work. It played a role something similar like the quiet Thomas Mann with his implacable democratic humanism in the shadow of the World War II, but in the taut situation of the World War having bloody conflicts. It has a confident and uncompromising democratism.

Actually, the assessments that can be interpreted in political dimensions just rarely appear on the political dimension, which can be assumed that they are the mandatory language usage of the era, gestures toward the prevailing political system, or simply becoming unintentional habit or motives with no real critical edge anymore. The value of the analysis is hardly detracted by these moments. Tagai's study is extremely intense and careful. He analyzes Dewey's with monographic selectivity on the basis of broad awareness, mobilizing real philosophical literacy.

3.5. *Textbooks in the second part of the second period*

We have already indicated that the history of education textbooks reflect the procedure of the transformation excellently in this period. The «melting» is indicated by the publishing of Bajkó Mátyás and Vaskó László's book entitled *Universal and Hungarian history of education* published in 1971 (Bajkó & Vaskó, 1971). In the book only a long paragraph shows Dewey's pedagogy through the presentation of the American school in the section of *The Contemporary Educational Affairs*. According to the book the American school was born due to the situation of the late 19th century, namely the breaking up with European cultural ideal, and the spread of the educational approach characterized by practical one-sidedness. The pragmatist pedagogy is well suited to this environment as the textbook notes that, it theoretically proved those claims, which were raised against the pedagogy by the prevailing view of life. Although the text actually does not refer to primary source, the political arguments and considerations of the class have been marginalized and professional considerations appear in the interpretation.

This process was completed after 1978, by the time *The History of education* entitled book of Jóboru Magda, Mészáros István, Tóth Gábor and Vág Ottó had been published. Dewey's pedagogical system has a separate chapter (Jóboru *et al.*, 1978, pp. 194-200) which is complemented by a translation of an original Dewey text (*The Child and the Curriculum*). This analysis, of course, starts

with the presentation of Dewey's biography and then a review of ideas formed about American school reforms. The textbook emphasizes four elements: the motivation (1) and the discipline (2) as a starting points of the pragmatist pedagogy (which cannot become the goal of the education); the awareness (3) as knowing the conditions of the actions; and literacy (4) as open-mindedness, openness, characterized by diligence, and in fact the consistency and the satisfactory functioning of the other three elements. These aspects renew the pragmatist school, and the immediacy that is not separating consciously this complex operation from the functioning of the society.

The evaluation of the textbook is clearly positive; it called Dewey the most influential theorists of civic education in the 20th century. He has a measurable impact on the considerations of the European pedagogical thinkers (Claparede & Kerschensteiner) such as in the Asian school reforms or American school practice. Verifying this statement, the textbook presents Kilpatrick and the characteristics of the project-based method; respectively the operation of the Dalton Plan, and also Helen Parkhurst.

The analysis stroll to the political field only once, when comments that, Dewey's pedagogy cannot avoid the problem of the existence of the social classes. In accordance with the principles of liberal pedagogy he is striving for rearing people equally but he makes a difference in regard to the content of the education, whether the individual has an intellectual role or an executive role in the activity process.

However, the textbook also admits that Dewey considers the pedagogy as an essential way of social progress, extending the importance of education far beyond the borders of the school.

4. The Third Period: after 1989

The political transition following the fall of the Berlin Wall seemingly eliminated the difficulties for researchers wishing to deal with Dewey's ideas. However, the situation is not cloudless. We are witnessing that even though the translations are huge opportunities for translators, vanishingly little translations are published, Dewey's untranslated oeuvre remains unavailable in Hungarian. An exception is the volume of Ludassy Mária, *The Anglo-Saxon liberalism classics II*. which attempts to fill a huge gap on the field of the classics of the modern political philosophy in Hungary¹³. The book contains two translations of Dewey's

¹³ Dewey were placed next to Hayek's, Dworkin's, Rawls's and Berlin's texts in the book, which contains a short biographical summary and explanatory notes as well for completing the texts.

writings: *America's historical traditions* and *The Democracy and the United States*¹⁴. Both texts were translated by Balogh Katalin.

The academic literature of the post-transition period was showing specific duality about Dewey. First, Dewey becomes unavoidable and unquestionable one of the classics of the era (perhaps to be displaced from the earlier era, it guarantees his freshness, since he is not used up, the ideology did not hackney him, even the attacks of Stalinist science lift him out of the crowd). There is a bunch of academic work which refers to Dewey's works but we cannot find any with in-depth analysis of them. His prestige is taken as a reference in many cases but his works are not well examined enough¹⁵.

4.1. *Scientific articles in the third period*

János Boros's¹⁶ researches are the exceptions dealing with the the philosophy of pragmatism – mostly Richard Rorty's pragmatism – addresses with Dewey. The book on pragmatism (Boros, 1998) devotes an entire section to Dewey, besides Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Sanders Pierce, William James and Richard Rorty. Boros consider Dewey as a philosopher of the pragmatism's heyday, who made the pragmatism not just to come the climax but with whom the first classical section is closed off. According to Boros, Dewey's key concepts are the truth, the democracy and the philosophy. Starting from the analysis of the first concept, Boros provides a well-known interpretation – the truth is none other than experience. The attendant of this logic is the scientific *future orientation*: Boros says it becomes the key persuasion of Dewey thus his cornerstone which says a truth of a thesis guaranteed by verifiable nature which is always subsequent. The rules of the process based thinking and dynamised truth-concept have to define the philosophy. Boros' analysis explains Bertrand Russell's, Arthur O. Lovejoy's and Max Horkheimer's criticism, which relate to Dewey's theory about the truth. These debates confirm: Dewey's conception of ideas cannot be before the experience, regardless of true and investigations (as we know them) cannot be independent of the cognitive process. According to him, the ideas are nothing more than the intersections of the interaction with the environment and they are correct (and valid, true) when induce changes that meet their content. Boros points out two problems in Dewey's argument.

On the one hand there is the question: who should be the confirmer of the ideas in practice? This problem raises the issue of the interpretative scientific community.

¹⁴ The original texts: *Freedom and Culture* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), 50-73, 155-176.

¹⁵ Regrettable typical example is the John Dewey Research Center, established in 2007, that does not seem to be active and whose website woefully inaccurate bibliographic data can be found.

¹⁶ Boros János (1954-) Professor at the University of Pécs.

On the other hand, there is the question of critical thinking: Dewey does not question the pragmatic nature of his pragmatism. According to Boros this problem suggests that Dewey is using the correspondence principle. The source of these problems is none other than that Dewey is not using the potential of his own philosophy he does not use the method on himself, that does not ask the question about the pragmaticness of the pragmatic principle.

Boros continues the presentation of Dewey according to his epistemological considerations, and reveals that his principles determine his ethics where the basic findings can be summarized that the assumption of the unprecedented values cannot be accepted there is not good or bad object or subject in itself – deeds or actions can become good and equitable. This dynamic ethics would reach the possibility of the need for a democratic community, because this is the environment which does not allow in term of the politics the deeds become the final attributes of the persons which makes any identification, institution or role temporary that prevents stiffening.

Boros closes his very careful and very thorough review with the recognition of that the instrument to reach the essential academic and political values and conditions is the pedagogy for Dewey, which is such an integral part and a support of Dewey's philosophy as well.

In contrast to the selective philosophical analysis, in the field of educational science after the political transition the analysis dealing with Dewey's work does not undertake really serious examination nor their scope neither their depth. A good example is Bécsi Zsófia's writing (Bécsi, 2012), in which the modernity of Dewey's oeuvre, a brief overview of and also highlighting a part of it occurs. But similarly, Kállai Gabriella also grabs one part of Dewey's oeuvre who analyzes the social interest (Kallai, 2008), just like Bánka Peter the project-based method (Banks, 2008), Végh József the objective-theory (Vegh, 2013), or Golden Dániel (Golden, 2009) the pragmatist epistemology.

4.2. *Textbooks in the third period*

The market of history of education textbooks is double-faced during this period. On the one hand we can find that type of textbook – fortunately, the most common and most widely used history textbook – which is detailed and appreciative about Dewey's work, his significance and impact (Pukánszky & Németh, 1996). The 10th chapter in Pukánszky Béla and Németh András' work the entitled *Schooling and pedagogy in the 20th century* deals with the topic in a wide extent. Besides the new pedagogical and psychological efforts and childhood-study movment they discussed prominently the pragmatic

conception of pedagogy, including William James' pedagogy as an outline but mainly Dewey's pedagogy (Pukánszky & Németh, 1996, pp. 487-493). The review is based on the original works as Pierce *How to Make Our Ideas Clear* and a work by James entitled *Pragmatism*.

The analysis of Dewey's work begins with a biographical overview, followed by an introduction of the principles on *My pedagogical creed*. According to the summary of the textbook, Dewey sees the individual as who is always guided by the individual objectives and his aspirations are aimed at to find appropriate instruments for that. Such instruments are all the ideas, sensual experiences, knowledge or objects. Since the child is a part of the social relationships, the school should not be different from real life. The acting person cannot be formed based on school textbooks: if the teaching material is not related to the child's experience, it becomes formal, motivation for knowledge acquisition is terminated. The textbook describes the particularities of Dewey's school model on the basis of *The society and the school* entitled writing, and his considerations related to curriculum based on the *Curriculum and the child*. The textbook finally reviews the impact of Dewey and his followers, explains the project-based methodology, Kilpatrick's works, the characteristics of the Winnetka and the Dalton Plan.

However, after the textbook-market liberalization it is not surprising to find textbook that in undeservedly small extent and superficially deals with this topic. For example Takács Lajos separates in his *History of Education* entitled book only a half-page on pragmatism discussing (Takács, 1996, p. 98). He summarizes Dewey's work as considerations that are radically changing the structure and methods of the school. The classroom work changes to group work, the projects taking over the role of the curricula and subjects. The text also describes a possible project as an example. The textbook does not present any of Dewey's work or sources. It is doubtful what the results are of summarizing the pragmatist pedagogy, not to mention the critical approaches.

5. Conclusions

Based on the above presented, we have to say, our overview on the trends of Dewey's Hungarian reception fully proves the widely prevailing and applied narrative which claims that the 20th century is the century of breaks in Hungary.

Therefore, the drawn image can be a mosaic only and sometimes incomplete, where the gaps are no less meaningful than in other cases the elements abundance. Despite this fragmentation is still worth to keep tracking of the formations in which a science constantly re-evaluates and re-interprets its own

classics, increasingly taking advantage of the functions of them – the ability of legitimacy. This process is well observed on the attitude of the academic space toward Dewey's oeuvre. We could see the Hungarian Dewey reception is heavily influenced by political and professional discussions. Some translations of his basic works were published relatively early, but for historical reasons, they had never re-published, possibly upgraded, improved translations, they were not spread by a large number of practicing teachers as part of their library, they did not have a widespread impact. Most of the oeuvre is waiting to become available to the Hungarian readers. This is all the more strange because the harsh treatment of the years following the World War II, from the 70s and 80s, but mostly after the political transition, he has been considered an undoubted classic of educational science in the Hungarian pedagogy. His work is an indispensable reference point – we deserve the Hungarian translation of the oeuvre with a new, modernized and full translation of *The democracy and education*. The hundredth anniversary could provide an excellent occasion to do so.

Excursus II.

The Hungarian pedagogy summed up the results of the educational research with writing three lexicons. These three pedagogical lexicons exactly cover the eras we outlined. They were published in 1933, 1976 and 1997, when the new edition was published. In the Pedagogical Lexicon in 1933, John Dewey's section have been found, although its extent is not large, only half a block, and it is especially about the titles of works and covers a descriptive text by Kenyeres Elemér (Pedagogical Lexicon 1933 I, 383.). In 1976, the lexicon deals with Dewey with two blocks and a whole page extent giving even a picture of him, without identifying the author of the article. Besides the short biographical overview, the article references to a number of significant effects on Dewey's work, as pragmatism, Nietzsche, Bergson and Dilthey's philosophy. Presenting his social theory considers important to note that in fact it was born as the criticism of the contemporary American society. The exposition of his pedagogy is built around the idea that the school should be the life itself. This description covers his instrumentalism, its followers and influence (Pedagogical Lexicon 1976. I. 262-263.). The section of the lexicon in 1997 with similar extent, gives two images of Dewey. After a detailed biographical review, the author (Horváth Attila) conducted Dewey's pedagogical thoughts by the opposition against Herbart. The author emphasizes pragmatism of James and Pierce as significant impact, and highlights the Dewey's interpretation of action-based learning. The article as the most important topic, emphasizes the question of democracy, the problem of the community, or the phenomenon of the democratic school (Pedagogical Lexicon 1997 I.).

6. References

- Bajó, M., & Vaskó, L. (1971). *Egyetemes és magyar neveléstörténet*. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó.
- Bánka, P. (2009). Tessedik Sámuel nevelésfilozófiája a projekt-pedagógia és John Dewey pragmatizmusának tükrében. *Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, 58(8-9), 223-231.
- Bécsi, Z. (2012). Dewey a pedagógus szerepéről. In Kardos Sándor (szerk), *Középpontban a pedagógus*. Budapest: Áron kiadó.
- Boros, J. (1998). *Pragmatikus filozófia*. Pécs: Jelenkor kiadó.
- Dewey, J. (1912). *Az iskola és a társadalom*. Budapest: Lampel.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *Demokrácia és nevelés*. Budapest: Kisdednevelés.
- Dewey, J. (1929a). A tanítási módszerek és a tanítás anyagának egységéről. *Néptanítók lapja*, 41-42, 7-8.
- Dewey, J. (1929b). Az egyéni módszer jellegzetes vonásairól. *Néptanítók lapja*, 45-46, 8-9.
- Dewey, J. (1939). Nevelői hitvallásom. *Néptanítók lapja*, 4, 121-126.
- Dewey, J. (1976). *A nevelés jellege és folyamata*. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó.
- Ferge, Z., & Háber, J. (Eds.). (1974). *Az iskola szociológiai problémái*. Budapest: Közgazdasági és jogi könyvkiadó.
- Golden, D. (2009). *Dewey, Lakatos és a tudás pragmatikus képe*. Világosság 2009 tél
- Jóboru, M., Mészáros I., Tóth Gábor, & Vág Ottó (1978). *Neveléstörténet*. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó.
- Kállai, G. (2008). Durkheim és Dewey öröksége. *Educatio*, 17(4), 631-634
- Kozma, T. (1967). A pragmatikus pedagógia bírálata az Egyesült Államokban. In *Tanulmányok a neveléstudomány köréből* (pp. 323-50). Budapest: Akadémiai.
- Kristóf György (1913). Az iskola és társadalom – recenzió. *Protestáns Szemle* 4. 212-213.
- Ludassy Mária (Ed.). (1991): *Az angolszász liberalizmus klasszikusai II*. Budapest: Atlantisz kiadó.
- Ognyev, N. (1968). *Kosztja Rjabcev naplója*. Budapest: Európa kiadó.
- Ozorai Frigyes (1912). John Dewey. In Dewey, J., *Az iskola és a társadalom* (pp. 3-13). Budapest: Lampel.
- Pedagógiai Lexikon (1933). Budapest: Révai Kiadása.

- Pedagógiai Lexikon (1976). Budapest: Akadémiai könyvkiadó.
- Pedagógiai Lexikon (1997). Budapest: Keraban könyvkiadó.
- Pragmatizmus (1981). Gondolat. Budapest.
- Pukánszky, B., & Németh András (1996). *Neveléstörténet*. Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó.
- Sevkin, V. Sz. (1955). *D. Dewey pedagógiája a mai amerikai reakció szolgálatában*. Budapest: Pedagógiai Tudományos Intézet.
- Szemere, S. (1933). Dewey neveléstana. In Dewey, J., *Demokrácia és nevelés* (pp. 3-15). Budapest: Kisdednevelés.
- Tagai Imre (1982). *John Dewey*. Budapest: Kossuth kiadó.
- Takács Lajos (1996). *Neveléstörténet*. Veszprém: Egyetemi kiadó.
- Végh József (2013). A nevelés célja. *Sola scriptura*, 15(1), 8-20.

page intentionally blank