

## **INTRODUCTION by Alexander Kremer**

Alexander Kremer is Associate Professor at the Department of Philosophy, University of Szeged, [alexanderkremer2000@yahoo.com](mailto:alexanderkremer2000@yahoo.com)

The first volume of the CEPF online journal, *Pragmatism Today*, makes available material from a conference on *Dewey and Rorty* that was held on November 6-7, 2009 at the University of Szeged, Hungary. The conference was organized by the John Dewey Research Center of Hungary (with the help of the Hungarian Philosophical Association) on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of John Dewey's birth. (The program can be seen at <http://www2.u-szeged.hu/jdrc/public/index.php?id=6> )

*John Dewey* (1859-1952) was one of the main figures of traditional pragmatism, along with Charles Sanders Peirce and William James, and his lifelong efforts made pragmatism a well known philosophy. John Dewey made the following remarks in 1948, but they are valid even today in lots of sense:

In short, the problem of reconstruction in philosophy, from whatever angle it is approached, turns out to have its inception in the endeavor to discover how the new movements in science and in the industrial and political human conditions which have issued from it, that are as yet only inchoate and confused, shall be carried to completion. For a fulfillment which is consonant with their own, their proper, direction and momentum of movement can be achieved only in terms of ends and standards so distinctively human as to constitute a new moral order.<sup>1</sup>

*Richard Rorty* (1931-2007) was one of the most prominent philosophers in the world at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and his work served to renew pragmatism. Due to the immigrant Europeans, mostly analytic philosophers and logical positivists, the traditional version of American pragmatism became part of the history of philosophy during the 1930s and 1940s, and Rorty's neo-pragmatism has stirred much interest in contemporary developments, but it has also brought renewed attention to John Dewey and classic American philosophy. He frequently emphasized that he regarded John Dewey as his philosophical hero, and much of the secondary literature has tried to show first of all their common features as well as their differences.

Pragmatism was born twice, but it has never been a canonized philosophical movement. Nowadays, when we live in political, economic and ecological crises and our human world stands on the threshold of a new era, because we cannot stop globalization, we need dialogue more than ever. We need dialogue not only in politics, economics, ecology and culture, but in every field. We need dialogue even in philosophy, and especially within pragmatism. We have to show the common and relevant features of this wide philosophical movement, in order to help us to achieve the best local and global ends.

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<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Mineola: Dover Publication Inc., 2004, p. xxiii-xxiv.

The *John Dewey Research Center of Hungary* (<http://www2.u-szeged.hu/jdrc/public>) was opened with an inaugural conference on May 30-31, 2007 with the help of the Hungarian Philosophical Association, the University of Szeged, and above all that of Professor Larry Hickman, who is the director of *The Center for Dewey Studies* at the SIU, in Carbondale, Illinois.

The *Center* in Szeged promotes research work on American pragmatism. Its members translate the works of Dewey and other pragmatist philosophers. We offer – with the *Center's* help – new courses on Dewey's philosophy and pragmatism in general for our Hungarian philosophy majors and graduate students. We discuss our professional results in workshops and conferences not only with Hungarian philosophers, but also with experts of pragmatism and Dewey's philosophy of other countries, first of all with those of the U.S.A. Pragmatist philosophers of the Central European Pragmatist Forum (CEPF, <http://www.filozofia.sk/cepf> ) have come together every second year from 2000 in Europe and exchange their ideas. The release of our online journal, *Pragmatism Today*, celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the CEPF. This issue provides mostly extended versions of the papers from the 2009 conference on Dewey and Rorty.

