

### John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899 - 1924. Volume 12: 1920.

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A collection of all of Dewey's writings for 1920 with the exception of *Letters from China and Japan*. A *Modern Language Association Committee on Scholarly Editions textual edition*.

The nineteen items collected here, including his major work, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, evolved in the main from Dewey's travel, touring, lecturing, and teaching in Japan and China. Ralph Ross notes in his Introduction to this volume that *Reconstruction in Philosophy* is "a radical book . . . a pugnacious book by a gentle man." It is in this book that Dewey summarizes his version of pragmatism, then called Instrumentalism. For Dewey, the pragmatist, it was people acting on the strength of intelligence modeled on science who could find true ideas, ones "we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify." Optimism pervades *Reconstruction of Philosophy*; in keeping with Dewey's world of open possibilities, the book recognizes that the observation and thought of human striving can make the difference between despair and affirmation of life.

The seven essays on Chinese politics and social tradition that Dewey sent back from the Orient exhibit both the liveliness and the sensitive power of an insightful mind. Set against a backdrop of Japanese hegemony in China, the last days of Manchu imperialism, Europe's carving of China into concessions, and China's subsequent refusal to accept the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, the essays were startlingly relevant in this time of Eastern turbulence and change.

At the National University of Peking, Dewey delivered a series of lectures on "Three Contemporary Philosophers: William James, Henri Bergson, and Bertrand Russell." The James and Bergson lectures are published for the first time in this volume. Dewey chose these philosophers, according to Ralph Ross, because he was trying to show "his oriental audience what he believed and hoped about man and society and was talking about those fellow philosophers who shared the same beliefs and hopes."

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