



# John Dewey's Earlier Logical Theory

*James Scott Johnston*

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*Analysis of Dewey's pre-1916 work on logic and its relationship to his better-known 1938 book on the topic.*

When John Dewey's logical theory is discussed, the focus is invariably on his 1938 book *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. His earlier logical works are seldom referenced except in relation to that later work. As a result, Dewey's earlier logical theory is cut off from his later work, and this later work receives a curiously ahistorical gloss. Examining the earlier works from *Studies in Logical Theory* to *Essays in Experimental Logic*, James Scott Johnston provides an unparalleled account of the development of Dewey's thinking in logic, examining various themes and issues Dewey felt relevant to a systematic logical theory. These include the context in which logical theory operates, the ingredients of logical inquiry, the distinctiveness of an instrumentalist logical theory, and the benefit of logical theory to practical concerns—particularly ethics and education. Along the way, and complicating the standard picture of Dewey's logic being indebted to Charles S. Peirce, William James, and Charles Darwin, Johnston argues that Hegel is ultimately a more important influence.

James Scott Johnston is Associate Professor of Education and Philosophy at Memorial University in Canada. He is the author of *Deweyan Inquiry: From Education Theory to Practice* and *Inquiry and Education: John Dewey and the Quest for Democracy*, both published by SUNY Press.

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