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The global reception of John Dewey's thought: Multiple refractions through time and space. Bruno-Jofré, Rosa del Carmen and Schriewer, Jürgen (Eds.). New York, NY and Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2012. 272 pp., hardcover, 125\$/£, ISBN: 978-0-415-89888-1.

John Dewey observed, “travel is known to have a broadening effect, at least if the traveller is willing to keep his mind open”¹. Dewey’s works have been read since the 19th century in different corners of the world. In this sense, his texts have traveled around the globe for over a century. Similarly, people in various nations have been traversing the vast sea of John Dewey’s thought from his lifetime up to the present, when his writings are an essential part of any canon of education studies. *The Global Reception of John Dewey’s Thought: Multiple Refractions through Time and Space* presents an itinerary of the journey his texts have taken and a record of the voyages of readers in the ocean of thought left by this prolific American philosopher.

Each part of the book approaches the richness of Dewey’s reception from a different angle, and each chapter provides a distinguished analysis of the significance of Dewey’s influence from a unique perspective. For example, Part II focuses on East Asia, where Dewey travelled from 1919 to 1921. While Chapter 5 focuses on Dewey’s connection to China, Chapter 6 addresses how Dewey was received in Japan. According to the author of this chapter, Jeremy Rappleye, “nowhere in the world was the enthusiasm for John Dewey greater than in Japan” (p. 116). This enthusiasm, however, does not imply that the country’s acceptance of Dewey was consistent and ordered. Rappleye clarifies that rather interests in and interpretations of Dewey’s thought in Japan have always been strongly influenced by the atmosphere of each age. Thus Dewey’s Japanese readers have projected their shifting values on the writings of this most prominent pragmatist in American history.

Particular examples are Dewey’s personal visit to Japan in 1919 and during the period of occupation following Japan’s defeat in the Second World War.

¹ J. Dewey (1983). Some factors in mutual national understanding. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *The middle works of John Dewey, 1899–1924* (Vol. XIII, pp. 262–271). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, p. 262.

Regarding the former, Rappleye attends to the contrasting poles in Japanese thought. On the one hand, “the mainstream forces of tradition” (p. 126) displayed “un-receptiveness” (p. 127) to Dewey’s pragmatist American philosophy. Tokyo Imperial University, where Dewey’s eight lectures were held, had been constructed according to “the image of the German model,” (p. 126) and the university’s faculty of philosophy was “nurtured by both German nationals and Japanese professors trained in Germany” (p. 126). One renowned Japanese education historian Tokiomi Kaigo commented, “philosophies like that of Dewey are too practical, too uncomplicated” (as cited in Rappleye, pp. 126–127). In short, they were dissatisfied with Dewey because they thought his philosophy was too simplistic. On the other hand, the position of a particular political and intellectual group stood in contrast to the mainstream of thought. The intellectuals in this group, whom Rappleye terms “the young radicals,” were critical of the German model and were sympathetic to “revolutionary ideas of socialism, communism, and anarchism” (p. 127). This group, however, did not support Dewey because his position seemed “ambiguous” (p. 127). Rappleye does not attribute their unreceptiveness to Dewey’s position. In fact, what Dewey really displayed, Rappleye suggests, was not ambiguity but rather a consistent refusal to “articulate a particular type of social system” (p. 127). Consequently, in 1919 the seeds of Dewey’s thought did not take root in the unfriendly ground of either the pundits of mainstream forces or the young proponents of revolutionary ideas. This negative reception changed drastically in post-war Japan, especially in the period of the occupation by the Allied Powers. People were “eager to study Dewey as a means of understanding, if not courting favor, with the Occupation authorities” (p. 134). Dewey became a core focus of the desire to study American philosophy and education. In this manner, Rappleye successfully depicts the ambivalent and shifting reception of Dewey in modern Japanese history. His study provides a valuable cornerstone for developing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Dewey and Japanese intellectuals.

There is, however, one point on which I would like to raise a question. Regarding the debate about “how much Dewey’s ideas were an *explicit* policy of the Occupation authorities” (p. 133), Rappleye cites Kobayashi’s analysis, which states that there was “no explicit use of Dewey in the actual policies introduced” (p. 133). According to Rappleye, “Kobayashi’s conclusion appears to be more

plausible” than Saito and Imai’s opinion (p. 133), which stated, “indeed, the educational thought of the mission [the United States Education Mission who visited Japan in March 1946] was influenced by the philosophy of Deweyan progressive education as well as by American New Deal Idealism” (p. 133). Hence, there seems room for further discussion about whether the influence of the Deweyan philosophy of progressive education that Saito and Imai refer to is analogous to an “explicit use” of Dewey’s thought. In other words, influence by Deweyan progressive education does not necessarily preclude “no explicit use” of Dewey’s ideas. This could be argued in two senses. First, that one is influenced by certain ideas could mean that one uses them indirectly and subtly, not explicitly. Second, as Matsushita indicates, what is called “Deweyan” education should not be equated with Dewey’s original thought.¹

This one example shows how attentive readers of this book are invited to a journey through the long lasting and changing influence of John Dewey’s thought in different places at different times. Such travels should continue to broaden the mind of the interested reader.

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This dissertation-turned book by Dr. Yuxiang Wang adds to a growing body of English-language literature on education of minorities in China in an important

¹ R. Matsushita (2012). 教育学のカノンとしてのデューイとはだれのことか [Who is Dewey as the canon in education?]. In K. Furuya, T. Kunisaki, R. Matsushita, M. Okabe, T. Ryuzaki, & M. Takayanagi, コロキウム 教育学のカノンとしてのデューイ: 過去・現在・そして未来へ [John Dewey as the canon in education: Past, present and future]. 近代教育フォーラム [Forum on Modern Education], 21, 196–199, p. 198.