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John Dewey's Letters from Asia: Implications for Redefining "Openness" in Rhetoric and Composition

Karen Pierce Shea
University of Rhode Island, kshea@jwu.edu

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JOHN DEWEY'S LETTERS FROM ASIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR REDEFINING
"OPENNESS" IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

BY

KAREN PIERCE SHEA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DISSERTATION

OF

KAREN PIERCE SHEA

APPROVED:

Dissertation Committee:

Major Professor: Jeremiah Dyehouse

Nedra Reynolds

Peter Adamy

Nasser H. Zawia

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

Particularly in his early 20th century writings, the American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey advocated open-mindedness as a critical value for education. Rather than a passive kind of tolerance that is acquired through intellectual consideration alone, Dewey recommended open-mindedness that is attained through a combination of contemplation and embodied experience. A close reading of Dewey's personal correspondence from Japan and China between 1919-1921, previously unexplored to this degree, highlights the profound impact that *experiencing* the different cultures had on Dewey's understanding of difference compared to *considering* them from afar.

In particular, this study sought to investigate how Dewey's experiences in Asia affected his understanding of open-mindedness; how Dewey's evolving philosophical insight can help educators more fully understand open-mindedness; and how Dewey's interpretation of open-mindedness can help contemporary educators employ his pragmatic concept of "intelligent practice" to engage writing students in activities that will help them attain openness.

Composition specialists can use Dewey's discoveries to begin to extend multiculturalism and comparative rhetoric by requiring all students to research and write using rhetorical patterns typical in other cultures. A pragmatic approach to teaching comparative rhetoric can also involve a wider shift in the field's inquiries, as students approach courses in other disciplines, and even beyond university, with the kind of openness of mind that Dewey comes to realize in Asia.

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Dedication

To my father, Neale Orion Pierce Jr., who with great love and compassion had the foresight to realize how much I would appreciate my letters from Japan one day.

Preface

My fascination with different cultures began in third grade, when a new student came to my school from Portugal. A recent immigrant, she spoke only a few English words and lived with her parents, brothers, and grandmother in a second-floor apartment of a tenement house in my town. I befriended her during recess, both of us relying on body language and her limited English to communicate, since I could not speak Portuguese. I played at her house one day, feeling shocked by her vivacity and chattiness in the Portuguese-speaking environment of her home—I had only seen her as a shy, nearly voiceless girl in the English-speaking environment of school. Being in *her* comfort zone was my first experience to feel like an outsider, as she and her family members exchanged words that had no meaning to me. While I had been her lifeline at school, our roles were reversed as she became my lifeline in her home.

Although I lost touch with my friend when we entered different junior high schools, my interest in other cultures and languages stayed with me long after elementary school. After graduating from college, I moved to Japan to teach English for what was supposed to be one year but which turned into nearly five. I now recognize that I have been deeply shaped by the years that I have spent living as the “other,” working with the “other,” teaching writing to the “other,” and trying to find ways for *everyone* to think of himself or herself as the “other.” In particular, these experiences have brought three critical components of my life together to form the foundation of this dissertation.

First, Dewey’s thoughts on diversity and open-mindedness particularly piqued my curiosity because I have spent all of my post-baccalaureate life working with

English language learners. Having taught English composition and communication to Japanese students in Japan and international students in the United States for a combined twenty-five years, I have experienced others calling into question my own values and ideas about rhetorical “correctness” and what constitutes “good writing.” While I have traditionally taught and continue to see value in the clarity of the Aristotelian, linear pattern of academic essay organization that I learned to emulate from kindergarten through graduate school, my students have helped me realize the value of other, non-linear rhetorical patterns. I was drawn to Dewey’s thoughts on diversity, experience, and open-mindedness in his personal correspondence from Asia because I, too, wrote many letters home from Japan, and, like Dewey’s daughter Evelyn did, one of my family members saved all of my letters. Since many of Dewey’s experiences were similar to my own, I realized by reading his letters that “no matter how original we consider ourselves to be, it is evident that our emotions, motives and desires have echoes in the past. We’re not so special; someone else has almost certainly been there first” (Garfield 200). One feature of Dewey’s correspondence that particularly resonated with me was his repeated emphasis on the eye-opening dichotomy between simply reading about difference in guidebooks and actually feeling difference both mentally and physically, as well as the ways in which experiencing otherness rattles our interpretations of culturally-defined descriptive words such as “good,” “bad,” “true,” “fair,” “comfortable,” “painful,” “delicious,” and “strong.”

Second, having studied John Dewey and American Pragmatist philosophy in graduate school, I was attracted to Dewey’s definition of open-mindedness as active

inquiry as opposed to passive tolerance, particularly his belief in the critical role that experience plays in discovery and invention. Writing a theoretical essay gave me the opportunity to trace my chosen concept of interest, open-mindedness, through the works of pragmatists John Dewey, William James, and Jane Addams. In doing so, I realized that I had been treating open-mindedness as a type of tolerance. In other words, I perceived my tendency to let others “do their own thing” as open-mindedness, and I did not feel the need to *engage* in otherness in order to *understand* otherness. John Dewey’s pragmatic definition of open-mindedness, however, challenged me to reconsider this perception.

Third, I became aware of the definition of openness in “The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing” as one of the eight critical habits of mind necessary for postsecondary student success in writing as part of my doctoral coursework. While I appreciated the importance granted to this critical habit of mind, I also felt that Dewey’s definition of open-mindedness as active inquiry (rather than a more passive kind of tolerance) offered an experiential enhancement to the definition of openness in the “Framework for Success” as the ability to “consider other ways of being and thinking.” As I paid close attention to Dewey’s references to open-mindedness and diversity in his major works and personal correspondence, I came to see the need for an application of Dewey’s evolving, pragmatic definition of open-mindedness to the contemporary composition classroom.

I have based both the content and methodology of this project on the ideas of rhetoric and composition specialists Patricia Sullivan and James E. Porter, who advocate for “research as a set of critical and reflective practices” in which inquirers

are “aware of the limitations of the self, the possibility of the other, the strength of diversity” (xvi). As a teacher at heart as well as in practice, I agree with Sullivan and Porter’s insistence that “good research has to clearly and directly connect itself to the function of teaching” (xvi), and it is in the first-year composition classroom that I see a suitable fit for the implementation of Dewey’s educational theories and ideas about open-mindedness. Like Dewey, Sullivan and Porter extend the concepts of “reciprocity” and “respect” beyond mere tolerance in order to focus on the “extra work” necessary in fully comprehending difference (113). It is this idea that finds its origin in pragmatism and in the writings and seldom discussed personal correspondence of Dewey from Japan and China, and it is that which has motivated me to engage in a deeper exploration of Dewey’s evolving concept of open-mindedness.

Nearly three decades ago, composition educator Kevin LaGrandeur presented a paper on multicultural rhetoric at the 40th Annual Conference on College Composition and Communication in which he called for “a type of listening which does not know ahead of time what it will hear, but . . . listens to the discourse of the other without filtering what it hears through the screen of ethno-centric prejudgments or overly narrow rhetorical biases” (12). Ten years later, Susan Latta asserted in a conference presentation that teachers need to “do more in . . . composition classes than to simply include multicultural readings” (2). Engaging students in contrastive rhetoric, she argued, helps students understand multicultural rhetorical strategies while simultaneously sensitizing teachers to their students’ diverse writing approaches (4). Latta wondered, “Why has so little been done with this idea?” in composition studies,

just as she questioned why most of the work related to multicultural rhetorical patterns happened in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs (5). Analyzing unfamiliar discourse communities helps students and teachers understand their own rhetorical approaches, she claimed, and can “serve as a stepping stone to an analysis of the cultures we do belong to” (13).

While these scholars agree that more needs to be done to promote widespread understanding of diversity, they do not offer practical advice in terms of actual assignments that can potentially help students and teachers achieve this goal. One scholar contends that “whatever” the solution is, “it should equip us for understanding and interacting well in the complex and various world that we will confront in the twenty-first century” (Calloway-Thomas 153). I agree with these scholars, yet I am discouraged by how little has changed in three decades, as the same, apparently lingering concerns have prompted me to write this dissertation. Although my primary purpose is to analyze how Dewey’s concept of open-mindedness was enhanced by his living in Japan and China, this in-depth exploration and analysis has fed my practical motivation for this project, which has been to answer the call of these scholars for “more to be done” by applying Dewey’s ideas about embodying difference to an actual assignment in first-year composition as well as a call to rhetoric and composition educators and administrators to incorporate comparative rhetoric into the curriculum in order to bolster current efforts related to translingualism and multiculturalism.

In typical dissertation fashion, this project has been an involved process, as ideas have been added and deleted but most of all shifted, dissected and clarified.

Ultimately, I feel that I have been able to best express my research, from hypothesis to conclusion, by presenting the following content sequentially from chapter one through chapter five: a review of literature related to multiculturalism in rhetoric and composition, pragmatism, and open-mindedness; my methodology; Dewey's ideas about experience and open-mindedness prior to 1919; Dewey's ideas about experience and open-mindedness while living in Japan and China from 1919 to 1921; and finally a statement on how applying Dewey's ideas about open-mindedness to the composition classroom can help postsecondary students become more open-minded towards multicultural rhetorical approaches, which is arguably a necessary step towards becoming global citizens.

Chapter One, "Introduction and Review of Literature," begins with a summary of views on multiculturalism in the field of Rhetoric and Composition, focusing on specialists in the field who have dedicated their careers to creating a community of writers in which diverse rhetorical patterns are valued. This chapter also explores the relevance of pragmatism to composition studies, more specifically the ways in which a philosophy focused on *doing* rather than only on *thinking* can complement the educational scholarship that promotes an appreciation of multicultural rhetorical approaches.

Chapter Two, "Methodology and Methods," offers a detailed explanation of my methodology for this study, which integrates intellectual historical and qualitative interpretive methods. More specifically, this chapter outlines the ways in which I apply methods of an intellectual historian to explore Dewey's ideas related to open-mindedness, diversity and experience in his writings before 1919; how I use

qualitative interpretive methods to organize and analyze Dewey's letters from Japan and China thematically; and finally how I am now exploring teacher research methods (as well as the operating principles of pragmatism) to describe how Dewey's evolving definition of open-mindedness can inform composition pedagogy today.

Chapter Three, "Dewey on Open-mindedness, Experience, and Diversity Prior to 1919," focuses on Dewey's early ideas about open-mindedness, diversity, and the importance of experiential education as reflected in select major works as well as in his personal correspondence before going to Japan and China. This chapter also explores Dewey's early ethnocentrism and how it potentially limited his ideas about open-mindedness before he had the opportunity to experience other cultures firsthand.

In Chapter Four, "Dewey's Personal Correspondence from Japan and China, 1919-1921," I have followed John W. Creswell's guidelines for conducting qualitative research, arranging Dewey's letters according to themes. Based on the frequency of occurrences related to particular topics, I have grouped the letters into four categories: (1) firsthand versus secondhand experience, (2) politeness, (3) conscious control, and (4) getting "Chinafied." In this chapter, excerpts from Dewey's letters from Japan and China provide rhetorical context for his philosophy regarding open-mindedness. They also suggest a humorous, passionate, brilliant, and loving (though not infallible) man in a way that his published works alone cannot offer as he personally experienced life as the "other." A summary of Dewey's evolving definition of open-mindedness based on his experience living as the "other" in Japan and China for two years concludes this chapter.

In Chapter Five, “A Deweyan Approach to Attaining Openness in Rhetoric and Composition,” I relate Dewey’s evolving concept of open-mindedness and his concept of cultivated naiveté to the contemporary composition classroom. By spending months in Japan and years in China, Dewey came to realize the importance of understanding other ways of thinking and acting (Wang 92) as well as the need to actively pursue the kind of open-mindedness that children naturally possess, even if attaining a child’s “primitive naiveté” is not possible. Such ideas can be directly applied to the first-year composition classroom, a door through which the majority of university students pass. This chapter details an assignment with samples and corresponding assessment tools that could potentially be used in first-year composition. Their goal is to help students attain open-minded thinking towards comparative rhetoric by actually composing in diverse rhetorical patterns.

Mainly, this project focuses on finding ways to understand and appreciate diverse methods of rhetoric and composition by following Dewey’s insistence on experiencing rather than only considering difference. Contemporary rhetoric and composition scholar Stephanie Kerschbaum has recently highlighted the impact of firsthand experience with otherness, recognizing in *Toward a Rhetoric of Difference* how challenging it is for others to understand the effects of her deafness on her daily life without actually communicating with her firsthand. Like Kerschbaum, I see a need for teachers and students in multicultural postsecondary institutions to “co-construct knowledge of what it means to work together in the classroom” (65-66). Dewey’s pragmatic definition of open-mindedness, I contend, has the potential to bolster this effort in rhetoric and composition.

What readers can expect from this dissertation is a historical overview of Dewey's involvement with pragmatism, an unprecedented, in-depth exploration of Dewey's ideas related to open-mindedness in his personal correspondence before and while living in Asia, and a takeaway practical assignment to be used in first-year composition to engage students in writing processes that will help them understand not only what it *looks like* but also what it *feels like* to compose according to unfamiliar, culturally specific rhetorical expectations.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Review of Literature

Open-mindedness. This attitude may be defined as freedom from prejudice, partisanship, and such other habits as close the mind and make it unwilling to consider new problems and entertain new ideas. But it is something more active and positive than these words suggest. It is very different from empty-mindedness. While it is hospitality to new themes, facts, ideas, questions, it is not the kind of hospitality that would be indicated by hanging out a sign: 'Come right in; there is nobody at home.'

~ John Dewey, *How We Think*

At the 2015 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Chair's address, Adam Banks compared the role of Composition Studies to a spaceship and its affiliated teachers, administrators, and scholars like the crew of the Star Ship Enterprise—looking out over the edge of the promenade at the vast uncertainty before, under, and all around them. His goal was not to intimidate the audience with tales of “sci-fi” obscurity but rather to excite and motivate them by encouraging a contemplation of the blurring borders and limitless opportunities of rhetoric and composition to create meaningful spaces for communication in ways previously unfathomed (“Funk, Flight, and Freedom”). Several rhetoric and composition scholars, including Paul K. Matsuda, Victor Villanueva, Suresh Canagarajah, Bruce Horner, and Min-Zhan Lu have addressed the confluence of

multiculturalism and rhetoric and composition over the past several years. Most have stressed the need to rethink commonly accepted rhetorical patterns as culturally informed. For my part, I aim to demonstrate how John Dewey's pragmatic concept of open-mindedness can help writing teachers create opportunities to help students gain awareness of contrastive and comparative rhetoric in first-year composition.

Although Rhetoric and Composition has continued to expand beyond the traditional emphasis on process writing concurrent with advances in technology and diverse rhetorical demands placed on speakers and writers in myriad fields, the same cannot be said of the field's development of comparative rhetoric alongside increasing diversity and globalization. The Department of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Rhode Island, for instance, is representative of the field's excitement about its limitless opportunities referenced by Adam Banks, offering courses such as technical writing, digital writing, travel writing, food writing, and media communication, yet courses focusing on multiculturalism, translingualism, multiculturalism, or comparative rhetoric do not appear in the program's undergraduate course listing ("Undergraduate Program"). Just as interest in digital writing has expanded alongside technological innovations, I submit that awareness of comparative rhetoric should be fostered alongside increasingly diverse student bodies and promises to graduate global citizens.

An introduction to the differences between contrastive and comparative rhetoric, followed by practice writing in one unfamiliar rhetorical approach, would introduce students to writing across difference. In 1966, American applied linguist Robert Kaplan suggested the challenges that English language learners often

experience are caused at least in part by differences between rhetorical patterns in diverse cultures (Connor et al. 2). As contrastive rhetoric stresses the ways in which “discourse in a second language is influenced by characteristics of the native language” (Taft et al. 514) and how cultural contexts affect texts (Connor 493), the goal of contrastive rhetoricians has traditionally been to understand why second language writers or speakers struggle when writing or speaking in a second language. Kaplan’s ideas have been criticized for being ethnocentric in their tendency to cite essential rhetorical patterns in specific cultures and for focusing only on students’ second language acquisition. Such criticism has prompted rhetoric and composition scholars and educators such as Dwight Atkinson and Paul Kei Matsuda to “call for open-ended conversations that will take contrastive rhetoric in a positive direction in the future” (Connor et al. 7). I aim to add to these conversations, particularly as intercultural rhetoric has recently received increased attention “not only in L2 situations . . . but also in the teaching of mainstream writing in the United States” (Connor 506).

Criticism of the negative focus of *contrastive* has led to increased attention to the more positive connotation of *comparative* rhetoric. Unlike contrastive rhetoric, comparative rhetoric has grown out of a desire to focus on strengths rather than on struggles, as rhetoricians began to compare rhetorical traditions “without invoking the deficiency model or without forcing an appropriate fit or contrast” in order to “develop a creative understanding of different rhetorical traditions” (Mao 403, 418). Ulla Connor and LuMing Mao provide a thorough analysis of these two traditions. For my part, I submit that attention should continue to focus on comparative rhetoric as

students, teachers, administrators, employers, and employees who come from diverse rhetorical traditions engage in communicating in international communities. Not only exploring and discussing but also experiencing the cultural underpinnings of multicultural rhetorical patterns, I contend, will not only heighten student (and teacher) awareness of audiences across cultural boundaries but will also expand the pool of rhetorical strategies that writers from all cultures might draw from as they write in interlinked international communities.

Employing Dewey's pragmatic approach to the attainment of open-mindedness can arguably help teachers and students connect rather than collide in the classroom by encouraging both to engage in the active inquiry of difference that leads to deeper understanding. In turn, helping students attain open-mindedness in the classroom, I contend, will help graduates approach spoken and written communication with an understanding of the differences that potentially exist across cultural boundaries. As globalization continues to require an understanding of cultural variations in communication, rhetoric and composition program administrators need to incorporate comparative rhetoric and multilingual instruction into the curriculum. No longer is multiculturalism solely about helping English language learners succeed in the university, though this remains a critical consideration, but it is also about helping *all* students and teachers realize the cultural dependence of the processes, styles, arrangements, and expectations of multicultural rhetoric and composition.

Gleaning contemporary relevance from the ideas of John Dewey is by no means unprecedented in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. Books such as *Trained Capacities: John Dewey, Rhetoric, and Democratic Practice* (2014), for example,

represents “the most recent wave of rhetorical interest in Dewey’s American pragmatism,” according to Jeremiah Dyehouse (“Trained Capacities . . .” 95-96). The edited collection contains twelve chapters related to connections between Dewey and rhetoric, including Nathan Crick’s “Rhetoric and Dewey’s Experimental Pedagogy;” Scott R. Stroud’s “John Dewey, Kenneth Burke, and the Role of Orientation in Rhetoric;” Keith Gilyard’s “John Dewey, W.E.B. Du Bois, and a Rhetoric of Education;” and finally, Gerard A. Hauser’s “Afterword: The Possibilities for Dewey amid the Angst of Paradigm Change.” These chapters and others, together with Dyehouse’s acknowledgement that the collection “builds upon decades of study of Dewey’s pragmatism among students of rhetoric” (99), suggest that rhetoric and composition scholars *are interested in* John Dewey. In 1984, Kenneth Bruffee explored Dewey’s Pragmatist idea of writing as a social act; in 1994, Gert Biesta focused on Dewey’s idea of learning in a social context; and in 2003, Nathan Crick made connections between Dewey’s philosophy and the creative process. Additionally, Stephen Fishman, Lucille McCarthy, and Paul Lynch have asserted the relevance of Dewey’s philosophy to composition pedagogy. Clearly, Dewey’s Pragmatism has influenced composition studies for decades.

Like Pragmatism, the concept of open-mindedness has been deeply explored. In fact, William Hare is a contemporary author of entire books dedicated to the complexities of the term. Hare evokes Dewey by claiming that open-mindedness is not the same as neutrality (*Open-Mindedness and Education* x). Additionally, he stresses that it is “a much misunderstood notion” and that without a firm understanding of its complexity, educators will be unable to assess students’ development of openness (xi).

The “threat,” as Hare sees it, is that schools strive for open-mindedness yet maintain standardization, as the norms determine whether or not students are ready to advance. This is apparent in universities that recognize the objectives of the “Framework for Success” and claim to graduate global citizens but neglect to include comparative rhetoric in required writing courses. Hare also points out that embracing open-mindedness by reconsidering ideas in which time, energy, and trust have been invested may be an exasperating process (“Helping . . .” 17), which is another reason the typical first-year rhetoric and composition curriculum continues to focus on direct, linear, Aristotelian rhetoric.

Further developing Hare’s analysis, Wayne Riggs defines open-mindedness as “primarily an attitude toward oneself as a believer, rather than toward any particular belief.” Riggs also makes the point that a person who is open-minded is one who can recognize the possibility of his or her own “fallibility as a believer” (“Open-Mindedness” 172). Teachers and students who have been culturally conditioned to believe that a particular rhetorical strategy constitutes “good writing” (as defined by writing which receives commendation from composition educators) may hesitate to question their own ideas of effective speaking and writing. However, as educators in Rhetoric and Composition as well as pragmatists have asserted, this re-visioning is necessary in a multicultural setting. Seung Chan Lim, director of the ongoing project “Realizing Empathy,” argues that empathy is necessary for any creative process to happen, from sculpting a piece of clay to creating open-minded relationships. He says that it is in our nature to want to empathize and connect with others, but that this requires a new paradigm of humility and courage because we tend to judge others

based on our own understandings of reality. Setting biases aside allows for a blurring of self and other, which is when a sense of connection and coherence can be achieved. Like Dewey, Lim contends that respect, which is an active attempt to appreciate otherness, is not the same as tolerance, which is a passive allowance for others to act and think differently.

Traditionally, scholars who have focused on multiculturalism in the field of Rhetoric and Composition advocate for increased open-mindedness towards the rhetorical approaches of minority students. Many of these scholars and educators have advanced through the dominant white education system as minority students themselves, experiencing the pull of their home cultures and home language in one direction and that of the American culture and American edited English in another. They have persevered against the tide of standardization to succeed in academia, perhaps acquiescing on standard format and academic language expectations in order to communicate with an American academic audience—but not wavering on their beliefs regarding the need for equality for their students. In other words, they use standard academic language in order to be heard by the majority, yet the content of their writing is in support of linguistic minorities.

Increasing numbers of international and domestic non-native speaking students in United States composition classrooms have shaped rhetoric and composition specialists' inquiry as well. For instance, the 2006 publication of *Second-Language Writing in the Composition Classroom* (Matsuda et al.), a compilation of essays and empirical studies related to second language learners in the composition classroom, is a testament to the increasing numbers of international students and domestic non-

native speaking students enrolling in American universities. Challenges posed by the merging of composition studies and English language learners are apparent in the section titles in the book, including “Second-Language Writers: Definitions and Complexities”; “Shifting Our Theoretical Framework”; “Rethinking Curriculum Design”; and “Responding to and Assessing Second-Language Writing.” In fact, Matsuda et al. note that “the first-year composition classroom is no longer the kind of monolingual space it once was” (1). The authors point out the growth trend of international students over the past fifty years, highlighted by the *Students’ Right to Their Own Language* (1974), which was developed by College Composition and Communication (CCC) and “charged teachers with learning about and respecting” students’ dialects. Since then, and particularly since the 1990s, discussions regarding composition and second language learners have become increasingly prominent in forums such as the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Bruce Horner and Laura Tetreault discuss the various theories and approaches that have “emerged in response to this postmonolingual condition” (15). Clearly, composition teachers need to be “shifting” and “rethinking” ideas concerning multicultural interpretations of “good writing,” but confusion seems to remain regarding how to begin this process, and much of the focus remains on English language learners rather than on all learners. Matsuda et al. attribute the widespread feeling of unpreparedness to work with second language learners to limited composition scholarship and lack of availability of graduate composition courses related to second-language writers (2). Horner and Tetreault recommend translation of words and meaning as “a particularly useful

analytical framework by which composition teachers and students can address the negotiation of difference in and through language” (26). While I agree that this method does provide a way for teachers and students to focus more on comparison than contrast, what I am suggesting is a way for all students and teachers to “address the negotiation of difference” through pragmatic inquiry and direct experience with comparative rhetoric and composition.

Other rhetoric and composition scholars and educators continue to advocate for English language learners. Suresh Canagarajah, for example, has dedicated much of his scholarship to highlighting the need to pluralize academic writing, asserting the need for even native English speaking domestic students to be able to negotiate a variety of World Englishes in order to communicate effectively as global citizens. Canagarajah points out the unfairness of writing pedagogies and rubrics that are based on “native speaker norms” and argues that people do not need “uniform codes and conventions” in order to communicate successfully across language and cultural differences (“Multilingual” 1). He contends that monolingual English speakers and non-native multilingual speakers must both work towards the ultimate goal of valuing multicultural rhetorical patterns, noting that “writing in new media and the digital world call for greater openness to idiosyncrasy, deviation, and diversity” (“Multilingual” 25).

Joining Canagarajah’s call are fellow rhetoric and composition scholars Bruce Horner and John Trimbur, who argue that the United States culture would benefit “by different speakers, thinkers, and writers speaking, thinking, and writing differently” (“English” 618) and note the “growing interest in how writing is taught in other

countries” (624). Additionally, Gloria Anzaldúa asserts that those who are able to successfully negotiate multiple discourse communities, including international discourse communities, will be better able to “juggle cultures” and “negotiate difference, contradiction, and ambiguity” as borders between nations continue to blur (101). Based on the work of these scholars and others, writing teachers need to ask what is being done to promote this “juggling” of cultures in Rhetoric and Composition.

Victor Villanueva is a particularly important proponent of increased awareness of the challenges facing students who need to “juggle” cultures in order to succeed in writing in an American university. Having grown up a Latino minority, Villanueva had to adjust his ways of speaking and writing in order to be accepted by the academic elite. He laments that Antonio Gramsci’s Marxist theory of cultural hegemony (in which the cultural components of a society are first defined by a ruling class and then accepted by the entire society as the norm) continues to dominate the American society and composition studies. In *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*, Villanueva documents his academic journey as he acquiesces to the definition of what is considered normal and acceptable by the academic community. Later, when he achieves success in the field and gains more confidence to push back against the status quo, he focuses much of his scholarly work on the importance of considering context and discourse communities when making rules for writing and communicating. For example, in *Bootstraps* he points out the differences between accepted grammar rules in his Latino community and in the academic community.

At home I would correct my folks when an English rule was broken. Yet, even as I was dogmatic and doctrinaire at home, I understood there were different rules on the block. On the block, not only could infinitives be split, but if emphasis was desired, then words could be split (fanfuckentastic); the subjunctive would be solidified into a state of being (If I be you); and, like other languages which don't make some silly analogy between language and mathematics, more negatives simply meant greater emphasis. 'Ain't no way' never implied there was a way. And 'ain't nobody tellin' me nothin' about nothin' never implied that the speaker was open to suggestion. (8)

Villanueva's point that these different styles should not be labeled correct or incorrect devoid of context is one that deserves significant attention by writing teachers, and by educators in general. Villanueva emphasizes the importance of experience in understanding the challenges faced by non-native speakers who straddle at least two cultures. He writes about the irony of scholars and educators who theorize about these students without experiencing what it feels like to be them.

That there are different worldviews, different notions of what constitutes reality, was always a given. That this is a heavy philosophical concern among academics today, even a radical rhetorical concern, only shows the limits of experience within a stratified society. Freire writes about 'experts on Marx' who have never had a cup of coffee in a worker's home. How much can they know, really? (18)

My concern for all university students in the United States, regardless of cultural background, is similar: How can they know who their audience is on a global level if

they have not experienced writing for an audience whose definition of “good writing” is different than their own? Villanueva notes the lack of plurality in the United States, lamenting that in the phrase “*e pluribus unum* . . . the emphasis seems to be on the *unum*” (78). Moreover, he argues that cultural norms need to be criticized in order to affect change and promote plurality. While I agree that the current multicultural postsecondary environment nationwide calls for increased understanding of diverse rhetorical approaches, my argument is that in order to be considered global citizens, teachers and students must *all* consider themselves both first- and second- (or rather “other-”) language writers. In other words, every global citizen must recognize that his or her preferred rhetorical approach is one of many possibilities, and that it is always culturally informed. This recognition, in turn, will likely enable writers in multicultural communities to anticipate the potentially diverse rhetorical expectations of their audiences.

Some educators may wonder if and how students can experience multicultural rhetorical approaches without physically studying abroad. Nedra Reynolds addresses these concerns in *Geographies of Writing*, in which she highlights the need for educators to “give readers and writers both strategies and tactics for negotiating among different discourses” but also recognizes the challenges of doing so when “most people, like Socrates, live their daily lives within a very small radius” (2-4). “Cultivating an open mind,” she contends, requires giving students the experience of going abroad without actually leaving campus (46). Although Reynolds does regard direct experience as critical, she also recognizes that with some creativity, teachers can bring direct experience with different discourses into the spaces where they meet

students. Researching about and composing in rhetorical patterns typical of other cultures, I contend, will open students' minds to the choices and expectations of writers in different cultures even when studying abroad is not an option.

Other rhetoric and composition specialists have promoted increased exposure to diverse discourses and ideas about what constitutes good writing. John Trimbur, for example, asserts that collaborative learning and acceptance of dissensus actually propels communities forward ("Collaboration and Dissensus . . ." 615). A multicultural classroom is rich with opportunity, and focusing on the positive may encourage teachers and students to tap into the resources that they have to offer each other when their varied backgrounds with writing can be researched, discussed, and sampled. In fact, as American university postsecondary student bodies become increasingly diversified, the United States may be uniquely positioned to consider the composition classroom an incubator for fostering greater awareness of cross-cultural communication.

Successful communication across diverse cultures at any level, however, requires a shift in thinking, contends rhetoric and composition scholar and educator Linda Flower. According to Flower, successful engagement and communication requires "a willingness to engage with rival interpretations" as well as a choice "to stay in dialogue with alternative realities" (*Community* 6). She asks the critical question that also occupies my thoughts as an educator who works daily in a multicultural environment: "How does one fashion a rhetoric of making a difference within an intercultural community?" (9). Like Reynolds, Flower is concerned not only with *how* but also with *where* to make this happen, as she ponders, "So where does

one find the space . . . that can support a sustained dialogue across difference?” (10). The first-year composition classroom, I contend, is one place to start.

In their desire for appreciation of otherness, these scholars have much in common with John Dewey in that they see diversity as an asset for society rather than a liability. As increasing numbers of students with diverse cultural backgrounds enter first-year composition classes, simply discussing difference may not be enough to reach the goals established by the “Framework for Success.” Students will not necessarily understand what it means to write for a multicultural audience simply by reading literature written by multicultural authors any more than they will necessarily become good writers for an American audience simply by reading essays written by American authors. Villanueva contends that those who are able to “code switch” between languages and cultures are “rhetorical power player[s]” (23) and argues that cultural norms need to be criticized. While I agree with the former point, I submit that refocusing *criticism* of cultural norms instead as *active inquiry* of cultural norms will highlight the fact that being “other” or “different” is a relative term, which is something that Dewey comes to understand to his core while living in Japan and China.

As Deborah Brandt notes, literacy plays an important role “in strengthening democracy” (207). Incorporating an assignment that encourages new university students to engage in Dewey’s pragmatic thinking about openness can uniquely enhance the current definition of openness in “The Framework for Success” by stressing the need for experience in understanding difference. In short, Dewey’s

pragmatism supports current goals of rhetoric and composition and must therefore be considered critical to contemporary composition pedagogy.

Pragmatism and Rhetoric & Composition

John Dewey, argued by many to be America's greatest philosopher, was one of the original American pragmatists, along with Oliver Wendell Holmes, Charles Sanders Peirce and William James. In the late 19th century, Americans were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with traditional religious belief systems and were consequently looking for new answers to questions regarding ethics and epistemology. In other words, there was a growing belief that morals and knowledge did not simply come from God but evolved out of human experience. One response to this dissatisfaction was pragmatism, which William James contends aimed "to formulate a philosophy shorn of idealistic dogma and subject to the type of rigorous standards developed in the physical sciences" (*Pragmatism* iii). Pragmatists rejected the idea that the purpose of philosophy is to find "truth" and argued that *believing* means little if it does not lead to *doing*.

John Dewey and his fellow pragmatists wrote on topics and issues including democracy, education, human nature, and ethics, but their contemplation of "open-mindedness" is of particular significance to the contemporary multicultural communities of American universities nationwide. From the first publications related to pragmatism, the importance of open-mindedness is apparent. In fact, James dedicates his book *Pragmatism*, "to the Memory of John Stuart Mill from whom I first learned the pragmatic openness of mind" (v). Pragmatists like Dewey, James, and Peirce not only promote openness of mind but also want to see theory put into action,

for they see a certain degree of futility in philosophy that is only for the sake of thinking. As James asks in *Pragmatism*, “Now, what does *thinking about* the experience . . . come to compared with directly, personally feeling it . . .? The philosophers are dealing in shades, while those who live and feel know truth” (12). James’s ideas embrace the value of diversity and counter the beliefs of philosophers such as Plato and his successors, who believe that there is *one* indisputable truth that cannot be altered according to individual experiences or interpretations. Unlike Plato, who believes that truth is an inherent property of an idea, James believes that actions and events make an idea true. James claims, “The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events . . . Truth is *made*, just as health, wealth, and strength are made, in the course of experience” (84). In other words, while a rationalist would say that a thing is already true before we perceive it, a pragmatist would say that we perceive a thing, and *so* it is true (87).

James says, “The whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one” (20). In fact, James believes so strongly in pluralism that he thinks the universe should be referred to as the “pluriverse” (Menand 88). In *Pragmatism*, James also claims that “pragmatism may be a happy harmonizer of empiricist ways of thinking” and that we must constantly be reevaluating truth (27). In other words, James believes that we need to understand both the diversity *and* the connection between what reality means for different people in order to be able to focus on “totality” (50). Recognizing the ideas of others may not be

taxing, but actually accepting them can be challenging, according to James, who highlights the lingering perseverance of old ideas even when new ones are introduced.

Our minds thus grow in spots; and like grease-spots, the spots spread. But we let them spread as little as possible: we keep unaltered as much of our old knowledge, as many of our old prejudices and beliefs, as we can. We patch and tinker more than we renew. The novelty soaks in; it stains the ancient mass; but it is also tinged by what absorbs it . . . it happens relatively seldom that the new fact is added *raw*. More usually it is embedded cooked, as one might say, or stewed down in the sauce of the old . . . You may rinse and rinse the bottle, but you can't get the taste of the medicine or whiskey that first filled it wholly out. (64-65)

James longs for a world in which individual differences are respected, “in which the eaches form an All and the All a One that logically presupposes, co-implicates, and secures each *each* without exception” (102). This is obviously in contrast to a dogmatic belief in one truth, one reality, and one way, and it is a belief that is echoed throughout Dewey's major philosophical works both before and after he lives in Japan and China.

Like William James, John Dewey devoted much of his life to pragmatism. In fact, in the introduction to Dewey's *Essays and How We Think: The Later Works, 1925-1953*, Richard Rorty notes that Dewey devoted most of his work to “reconciling the purported ‘intuition’ that truth is a timeless property of beliefs with the pragmatic claim that beliefs are rules for action, to be judged in terms of their effectiveness in resolving problems” (x). The things we claim to be “true,” Dewey argues, are ideas

that “are picked up – we know not how . . . Tradition, instruction, imitation – all of which depend upon authority in some form . . . are responsible for them” (LW8: 116). In other words, most people do not often engage in what Dewey calls “reflective thinking,” or in careful consideration of their “truths” but rather accept as true the beliefs of authority figures. What is even worse, according to Dewey, is that they then judge others based on what they *believe* to be true: “Most persons are quite unaware of the distinguishing peculiarities of their own mental habits. They take their own mental operations for granted and unconsciously make them the standard for judging the mental processes of others” (LW8: 160). Rather than thoughtlessly accepting what they are taught to be *the* truth, he argues, people should be flexible and recognize the plurality of truth in order to remain open-minded to other possibilities. Dewey argues that open-mindedness is different than “empty-mindedness,” as “it includes an active desire to listen to more sides than one; to give heed to facts from whatever source they come; to give full attention to alternate possibilities; to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs that are dearest to us” (LW8: 136).

Dewey expands James’s interests in habit to focus on experience, particularly in the areas of education and politics. Seeing his own children and the students at the Chicago Laboratory School explore and learn, and being immersed himself in experiencing cultural difference both mentally and physically in Japan and China, prompted Dewey to focus specifically on how experience shapes our minds. Dewey’s letters offer an inside perspective not only of his experiences with alternate possibilities of eating, moving, thinking, and behaving, but also of his glimmers of realization that even his most deep-seated beliefs may not always be universally

“correct.” While in Japan and China, Dewey realized that his former preconceptions about the two countries had to be adjusted after he experienced the local conditions, philosophies, and lifestyles firsthand. After returning from Japan and China, Dewey claims in *The Public and Its Problems: An Essay in Political Inquiry* (1927) that most behavior is “social” rather than “organic,” and that those who truly appreciate this idea will be more open-minded (LW2: 299). Nevertheless, Dewey agrees with James that being truly open-minded is challenging, noting that when our habits of opinion are “supposedly thrown out of the door, they creep in again as stealthily and surely as does first nature” (LW2: 337).

Dewey’s fellow pragmatist Jane Addams channeled her understanding of the importance of open-mindedness towards diversity into the founding of Hull-House, America’s first settlement house. Together with her friend Ellen Gates Starr, Addams creates a place where immigrants can socialize and have access to educational opportunities. Living and working among people from various countries, Addams realizes the “resources” (148) that diverse ethnicities contribute to “the advance and improvement of the whole,” without which “no man can hope for any lasting improvement in his own moral or material individual condition” (76). Like Dewey, Addams stresses the importance of open-mindedness towards difference, as she asserts, “If we held our minds open, we might learn something of the mystery and complexity of life’s purposes” (37). Just as rhetoric and composition scholars and educators such as Villanueva, Canagarajah, and Anzaldúa argue years later, Addams believes that “social spirit discharges itself in many forms, and no one form is adequate to its total expression” (220). Founding Hull-House was Addams’ way of

opening people's minds to the contributions that all members of a diverse society have to offer. Her efforts to "make vivid the consciousness of modern internationalism" (250) were relevant in the late 1880s, and her ideas remain relevant in multicultural composition classrooms nationwide today, as diverse rhetorical approaches need to be understood and appreciated in order for students and teachers to attain openness of mind towards multicultural communication.

Flexibility is at the heart of pragmatism; "global citizens" are those who understand how culture affects rhetoric, and they are flexible and prepared to adapt their means of communication if necessary in order to facilitate communication across cultures. As Louis Menand, author of *The Metaphysical Club*, explains, Oliver Wendell Holmes, William James, Charles S. Peirce, and John Dewey believed that "ideas are social" and that "their survival depends not on their immutability but on their adaptability" (xii). According to Menand, Dewey regards a democracy as a consolidation of parts that function together as a "greater whole" (305), he regards knowledge as "experience itself" (329), and he contends that variety actually increases chances of survival, as a plethora of ideas is necessary to get the ones that we actually need (431). Like Dewey, Charles Sanders Peirce questions the validity of one truth and one way and devotes "virtually all" of his work to the question, "What does it mean to say we 'know' something in a world in which things happen higgledy-piggledy?" (Menand 199). Since "each mind reflects differently" and "reality doesn't stand still long enough to be accurately mirrored," Peirce concludes that "knowledge must therefore be social" (200). Dewey agrees with Peirce, and he gradually realizes by living as the "other" in Japan and China that reality is not the same everywhere.

Pragmatism is relevant to comparative rhetoric since pragmatists like Dewey assert that knowledge is not a static condition but rather depends on and is defined by human experience. Robert Danisch highlights this idea of “epistemological anthropocentrism” in *Pragmatism, Democracy, and the Necessity of Rhetoric* (ix). Danisch notes that “by focusing on concrete communicative practices instead of abstract ideas, the pragmatists were persistently hinting at, and searching for, rhetorical strategies for binding communities together and granting individuals a voice in the affairs of those communities” (3). It is clear that pragmatism seeks collaboration, community, and action rather than authoritarianism, hegemony, and passivity. As Dewey was one of the original pragmatists, it is easy to see how his philosophy is connected to the concept of open-mindedness and the importance of experience; nevertheless, as his letters reveal, he was still surprised by the tremendous effect that firsthand experience had on him when he stayed in Japan and China for an extended time.

From Dewey’s experience can be gleaned the importance of engaging students in actually experiencing a rhetorical pattern that is equated with “good writing” in another culture. Pragmatism is an appropriate philosophy for Composition Studies and for the multicultural university setting of the twenty-first century, in which teachers and students from many cultures discuss, research, and compose as a community. John Dewey’s pragmatic approach to open-mindedness provides a theoretical foundation for pedagogical options that foster understanding of diverse rhetorical approaches in a pluralist society. Believing that there is *one* truth and *one* way works well in a homogenous group of people, but pragmatists recognize the insufficiency of such a

philosophy when considering communities of people from different cultures, religions, and backgrounds. This is a message worth retrieving and emphasizing to teachers who are teaching the Aristotelian, direct, linear rhetorical approach as the *best* pattern of argumentation rather than as *a* pattern of argumentation.

The following chapter explains in detail the methodology employed to explore these ideas further through historical, interpretive, qualitative, and textual methods focusing on John Dewey's personal correspondence from Asia, as well as select major works written before and after he experienced life as the "other" in Japan and China.

Chapter 2

Methodology and Methods

This dissertation employs a combination of intellectual historical research and interpretive qualitative textual research to provide a close analysis of John Dewey's ideas about the attainment of openness that potentially lay the foundation for the introduction of comparative rhetoric in composition programs. My project includes a historical study of John Dewey's pragmatic philosophy regarding open-mindedness accompanied by a textual study of Dewey's references to the complexities of experiencing otherness in his personal correspondence from Japan and China from 1919 to 1921.

My study involves intellectual historical research because I have engaged with historical episodes (late nineteenth and early twentieth century) and people (John Dewey) in order to explore the relevance of John Dewey in his time as well as in mine. Intellectual historical research is appropriate "when insight arises in one's own mind in dialogic response to what was said and thought in the past" (Megill 492). It involves interacting with the past rather than simply documenting the facts. I feel that I have been in dialogue with John Dewey throughout this process, focusing on gaining insight from his written works to understand how he came to define open-mindedness as something more than "empty-mindedness"—as well as how his definition was confirmed and enhanced by his life experiences.

My research has been interpretive and qualitative because having lived and worked in Japan for five years, and having taught composition, grammar, and

academic preparation to international students for twenty-five years, I have strong opinions about how students come to understand cultural differences between rhetorical approaches and the ways in which such understanding facilitates communication across culturally diverse intellectual communities. The interpretations of qualitative researchers “cannot be separated from their own backgrounds, history, contexts, and prior understandings” (Creswell 176). Similarly, my research has been guided by the act of witnessing my international students sometimes having to adapt or perhaps even relinquish strategies that they believe constitute “good writing” in order to employ a direct, linear, Aristotelian approach to composition.

What makes pragmatism unique among philosophies is its focus on *doing*; John Dewey and his fellow pragmatists were not only exemplary thinkers but also exemplary *doers*. Dewey, for example, did not merely philosophize about the importance of experiential education but rather created an actual laboratory school that provided students opportunities to explore and experience the kind of active inquiry promoted by pragmatism. Likewise, Jane Addams did not merely talk about the importance of individual contribution to the advancement of society but rather founded Hull House, the first settlement house in Chicago, in order to provide a place where immigrants could participate in and contribute to the community in meaningful ways.

Pragmatism provides not only a theoretical but also a practically motivated foundation for teachers who aim to help students achieve the objectives that educational experts have determined to be essential for success in university and

beyond. In seeking to apply these multiple methods in the context of this dissertation, I developed the following research questions:

- 1- How did Dewey's experiences in Japan and China affect his understanding of open-mindedness?
- 2- How can John Dewey's evolving philosophical insight help educators more fully understand open-mindedness?
- 3- How can Dewey's interpretation of open-mindedness help contemporary educators employ his pragmatic concept of "intelligent practice" to engage writing students in activities that will help them attain openness?

Had I engaged in intellectual historical research alone, my project would have lacked a critical pragmatic constituent. Had I engaged solely in a qualitative interpretation of Dewey's personal correspondence, I would have neglected the ways in which Dewey's life history, family, students, and colleagues affected his ideas about open-mindedness. Finally, had I dismissed the connection between Dewey's ideas and multicultural rhetorical approaches, I would have neglected to ultimately call for a change in first-year composition that will arguably assist writing students in attaining openness. In short, although combining these research methods has added to the complexity of my methodology, this comprehensive inquiry would have been incomplete without the totality of all three.

Intellectual Historical Research

While this project was guided by the qualitative research methods outlined by John W. Creswell in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2009), I was motivated to read Dewey's personal correspondence by

Buehl, Chute and Fields (2012), who call on students to experience archival research, which they assert can help inquirers “think critically about how historical methods relate to their fields and to think creatively about undergraduate and graduate pedagogy” (297). Studying Pragmatism and John Dewey for a semester of graduate coursework gave me an opportunity to contemplate the difference between open-mindedness as passive tolerance and open-mindedness as active inquiry, which pragmatists John Dewey and Jane Addams modeled in founding the Chicago Laboratory School and Hull-House, respectively. The teachers at the laboratory school, for example, engaged in learning that comes from exploration and discovery rather than from prescription and memorization. Likewise, Jane Addams founded a settlement house to serve as a place where immigrants and underprivileged members of society could actively participate in the community. Dewey and Addams did not passively tolerate the actions of others but rather provided opportunities for them to engage actively in learning. While exploring the ideas and actions of Dewey and Addams, I saw a perfect fit for the “historical methods” of Pragmatism in the quest for increased open-mindedness towards comparative rhetoric in composition studies.

While the textual editing practices governing the publication of Dewey’s letters determined the authenticity of the artifacts for this study (Gall, Gall, & Borg 540), it was necessary to consider Dewey’s bias as he was writing the letters. Since the majority of Dewey’s letters were addressed to his (grown) children, and he had no intention to publish his letters, he would have had little reason to distort his reports of his experiences as a foreigner in Japan and China in order to be socially or politically acceptable. In his letters to his children, he did not necessarily have to worry about

treading carefully on issues related to religion, politics, education, or physical attributes of the local people. Rather, the purpose of his letters was to share his experiences with them and show them how significant his firsthand experiences were in helping him understand the people. Letters to colleagues are also included in the archives; Dewey tends to focus on democracy and political issues in these letters, yet he arguably had no motivation to manipulate his true reactions to his experiences in Japan and China since his letters were simply forms of communication between himself and those closest to him rather than a forum for his political, social, or educational theories.

I also had to consider how my own experiences in Japan might affect my subjectivity and selectivity while reading the letters. Although my data analysis is subjective, I have no political or social motivation to distort or falsify any of the letters (Gall, Gall, and Borg 543). In other words, I chose which letters to include in my study, and I interpreted them subjectively, but I did not alter the letters in order to align them with a personal claim. I then organized and interpreted the letters—a qualitative, subjective process based on my prior experiences and understandings. Since I tend to be interested in other ways of doing and thinking, and I have also experienced living as the “other” in Asia, my “interpretational framework” (Gall, Gall, and Borg 545) may have led me to focus on the letters in which Dewey expressed experiences that were similar to my own. For example, because I had experienced physical discomforts during my time in Japan, I arguably regarded Dewey’s description of the intolerable heat in Japan, or the ways his legs went numb when he

sat on the floor, as critical examples of the importance of embodied experience in understanding otherness.

Although my focus throughout this project has been on Dewey's letters home from Japan and China, Dewey's published works have also been important references, particularly those which consider the complexities of open-mindedness, experience, and diversity. Before going to Asia, Dewey wrote about these concepts in his personal correspondence and his published works, but there is a decided emphasis on the need for experience and active learning in his work published after his return from China. Juxtaposing Dewey's public writing with his personal correspondence has enabled me to attain a deeper understanding of his thoughts on open-mindedness than his public philosophical writings alone can provide. More specifically, while his published works provide evidence of what Dewey believed regarding open-mindedness and diversity, his letters offer a behind-the-scenes look at *how*, *when* and *why* those thoughts may have developed.

Intellectual historians must decide how to organize and present their data. Historical researchers can organize their data chronologically, thematically, or by using a combination of both methods (Gall, Gall and Borg 548). In my case, although I read the letters in chronological order, presenting them chronologically left them thematically disjointed. Therefore, I divided Dewey's major works and letters chronologically at the chapter level but thematically within chapters three and four. Chapter three explores Dewey's ideas about open-mindedness, diversity, and experience prior to going to Asia. Chapter four analyzes the themes of firsthand experience, politeness, conscious control, and getting "Chinafied" in Dewey's letters

from Asia as well as how his ideas about open-mindedness and experience were enhanced in his published works after his return from China.

First, I traced Dewey's ideas about open-mindedness, diversity, and experience through his philosophical writings and letters before he experienced living as the "other" in Asia. I then traced the same ideas through his personal correspondence from Asia and his major works published after his return. Following this process provided a chronological overview of how Dewey's personal and professional experiences led him to a greater understanding of the benefits of immersion in otherness. Intellectual history considers artifacts or ideas that are culturally relevant to the present (Megill 500); I submit that Dewey's pragmatic ideas about what it takes to understand cultural differences are worthy not only of attention but also of application in the contemporary composition classroom.

Interpretive Qualitative Textual Research

Before I was able to interpret Dewey's letters, I had to read them. In addition to reading over two thousand letters from Volume One in order to get a sense of Dewey's experiences before going to Japan and China, I also read all of the letters between 1919-1921: two hundred letters from 1919, one hundred and thirty from 1920, and eighty-nine from 1921. In examining Dewey's letters from Japan and China, I engaged in qualitative interpretive research methods as outlined by Creswell (2009). I copied every letter in which either John or Alice expressed surprise when experiencing new mental and physical sensations for which they had not been prepared after learning about Japan and China from secondhand sources prior to going abroad. In order to trace Dewey's ideas about open-mindedness and experience from

1919-1921, I consolidated Dewey's letters that exemplified his influential experiences with difference into my "observational protocol" (Creswell 181), a computerized document containing excerpts from the chosen letters along with my own commentary on the relevance of the letters to Dewey's acculturation process.

Qualitative research was an appropriate method for analyzing Dewey's letters, as I engaged in an "unfolding model of inquiry" (Creswell 173) and an examination of documents and collection of data through my own theoretical lens (Creswell 175-6). In other words, I did not predict themes and then search for letters that fit into those categories but rather read the letters and organized them into themes that emerged during the process. I then examined the data through the lens of my own studies and my own experiences with otherness.

Several Rhetoric and Composition scholars have relied on qualitative research methods to explore important concepts in the field, such as how students understand the writing process (Flower and Hayes 1981); how they cope with writer's block (Rose 1980); or the role that style plays in writing studies (Butler 2008). Like those studies, this study is not about numbers but rather words – specifically, close readings of Dewey's letters and select major works as data sources. According to Creswell, qualitative research "is framed in terms of using words . . . rather than numbers" and "open-ended questions" rather than "closed-ended questions" (3).

Creswell points out that qualitative research "is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (4); to this end, I have focused on the problem of defining "openness" as a critical habit of mind by analyzing the ways in which Dewey explored open-

mindedness over the course of several decades. Moreover, Creswell notes that this kind of research “involves emerging questions” and “the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data” (4). My original hypothesis was that Dewey became open-minded while living in Japan and China, but questions emerged during my research process: Was John Dewey ethnocentric? Was Dewey open-minded before he went to Japan and China? What was his attitude regarding the importance of experience before going to Japan and China? Did these feelings change after living in Asia for two years? These questions, in turn, helped me to more comprehensively address my three major research questions.

Creswell asserts that researchers “make explicit the larger philosophical ideas they espouse” (5). He calls these ideas “worldviews” and explains their significance since they describe the “general orientation about the world . . . that a researcher holds” (6). With this project, I see myself as a social constructivist, as my motivation has been to “seek understanding of the [multicultural] world in which [I] live and work” by more clearly defining open-mindedness through the public and private works of John Dewey. Investigating the “complexity” of this view is in keeping with Creswell’s description of the primary goals of social constructivist researchers, who “develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things” and pay close attention “to what people say or do in their life settings” (8). In this case, I have focused on Dewey’s personal correspondence because it provides a personal and comprehensive view into Dewey’s experiences as the “other” in Asia.

Data Analysis and Validity

Dewey's letters should not be overlooked, as they offer an intimate, personal account of Dewey's experiences in Japan and China that secondhand accounts in biographies often fail to capture. Although speaking with Dewey himself would offer the most direct line of communication with the renowned philosopher, his letters provide the most intimate form of communication available in his time. "A form of time travelling," letters "bridge the years in ink" and offer a kind of "human connection" (Williams 7, 16) to Dewey that does not result from reading secondhand biographical accounts of his experiences. Moreover, "letter writing continues to be respected as a timeless art . . . [that] connects the artist with the viewer, and . . . leaves the viewer changed in some way" (Shepherd xvi). Similarly, Dewey's letters provide insight to the personal experiences that inspired his philosophy.

According to Creswell's guide to qualitative research, which calls on qualitative researchers to "review all of the data, make sense of it, and organize it into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources" (175), I organized the letters into categories based on several themes, including respect for authority, attitude towards foreigners, education, gender roles, physical movement, conscious control, and several others. Over and over again, Dewey expressed a wonder and awe regarding the cultural differences that he experienced in Japan and China in his letters. Clearly, as he often states, even at the age of sixty, arguably the greatest American thinker of the time had not been able to imagine the unique cultural components of the two countries until he experienced them himself.

Through inductive data analysis, I looked for patterns, following Creswell's suggested method of "working back and forth between the themes and the database until [I had] established a comprehensive set of themes" (175) associated with open-mindedness and Dewey's acculturation process: firsthand experience, politeness, conscious control, and getting "Chinafied." Ultimately, Creswell calls for "an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data" (183), so I engaged in an analytical process that involved continual reflection of the connections between the major works of Dewey before and after going to Asia and his personal correspondence written while living in Asia. As I was unable to engage in a "sustained and intensive experience" directly with Dewey, I relied on textual analysis of his written words, the context in which he wrote, the opinions of Dewey scholars, and my own interpretation of his writing in order to draw conclusions about whether or not (and if so, how) his attitude towards diversity and open-mindedness changed while he was living in Asia. All of these methods are significant components of the qualitative researcher's role (Creswell 177).

The boundaries that I set for this study include select major works and personal correspondence of John Dewey. As previously mentioned, I collected information by reading over two thousand letters written by Dewey prior to living in Asia, as well as all of the letters exchanged between John, Alice, and their family, friends, and colleagues while in Asia. In qualitative research, data can be collected through observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials (Creswell 179-180). Since John Dewey passed away in 1952, my research focused on documents in the form of his major philosophical works as well as his archived letters. This kind of data

enabled me to access the thoughtful language and words of Dewey and also to compare the edited written words of Dewey the philosopher and educator with Dewey the father, husband, friend, and colleague.

Although I read every letter from Japan and China, I recognize that my own experiences as an American female who has experienced living in Japan for an extended time may have determined which letters I chose to include and analyze. For example, as a tall, large female with light hair, deep-set eyes, and white skin, I stood out in Japan. Schoolchildren in northern Japan had certainly seen pictures of foreigners in their English textbooks, but when they stood next to me, looked up at me, and actually shook my hand, they usually fell into a fit of giggles and ran away. I submit that this direct physical encounter opened their eyes much more than seeing pictures of a foreigner in a book could have. When I read Dewey's description of a female foreigner in Japan as a "SPECTACLE" (15 April 1919 [03889]), therefore, I concluded that the letter held significance related to Dewey's definition of active inquiry and firsthand experience in the attainment of open-mindedness.

Being female may have also influenced my choices and interpretations and prompted me to include some of Alice's letters. Unlike John, Alice experienced life not only as a foreigner but also as a woman in Japan and China. Particularly in Japan, she was often excluded for being female. When I worked as a teacher in Tokyo, I was asked to serve tea at ten o'clock and three o'clock and water the plants daily, while my male counterpart was not required to tend to those tasks. I politely explained that American women would not accept this kind of discriminatory treatment, and within a week, a Japanese female "office assistant" was hired. Arguably, these experiences

influenced my choices and organization of the letters and themes on which I have focused. Since interpretations of qualitative researchers are often shaped by their personal backgrounds, however, this selection and interpretation has been a natural and predictable aspect of my qualitative research process (Creswell 177).

Ultimately, Creswell calls for “an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data” (183), so I engaged in an analytical process that involved continual reflection of the connections between Dewey’s major works before and after going to Asia and his personal correspondence from Asia. Through the process of reading these letters, I inductively came to focus on the shift in Dewey’s ideas about understanding difference as he himself became the “other” in Asia.

Overall, this combination of intellectual history and qualitative interpretive research methods has allowed me to fully explore the historical and theoretical background of Dewey’s thoughts on diversity and open-mindedness and to ultimately suggest a pragmatic application of his thoughts to the contemporary composition classroom. Engaging in these methods has allowed me to explore Dewey’s connection to pragmatism, interpret his experiences based on my personal experiences in Asia, and apply his ideas to current pedagogy in Rhetoric and Composition. The following chapters detail this intellectual journey first with a close look at Dewey’s ideas about the value of diversity and experiential education before embarking on his journey to Asia.

Chapter 3

Dewey on Open-mindedness, Experience, and Diversity Prior to 1919

It is impossible to suggest that something has changed without knowing what it was originally. Consequently, in order to propose that Dewey's ideas about open-mindedness shifted while he was living in Japan and China, then it is first necessary to explore what Dewey's ideas about open-mindedness, experience, and diversity were prior to 1919.

Among his major works, Dewey most extensively contemplates open-mindedness in *How We Think*, which was originally published in 1910. In this work, Dewey focuses on the need for openness of mind to new ideas, warning that "aversion to novelty is fatal to progress" (MW6: 296) and lamenting "the waste that comes from inert routine" (MW6: 301). He promotes open-mindedness as "mental play" and claims that even ignorance is preferable to an assumption that having a "definite form" means having a "definite idea" because ignorance is "likely to be accompanied by humility, curiosity, and open-mindedness," whereas belief in the validity of definite ideas "coats the mind with a varnish waterproof to new ideas" (MW6: 319). Students "wake up" when they are presented with new ideas, Dewey claims, whereas they "remain apathetic in considering the familiar" (MW6: 353). In fact, he asserts that it is actually "wasteful and dangerous" to constantly focus on the old when there are new ideas, methods, and circumstances to experience (MW6: 354). Dewey contends that students learn when they consider many alternatives, as progress comes from the "silent, uninterrupted working-over of considerations by comparing and weighing

alternative suggestions” that happens when new ideas appear (MW6: 345). Still, Dewey acknowledges that this kind of “working-over” does not come easily, as individuals must have some interest to engage in deep, critical thinking in order to break out of ruts and routines (MW6: 289).

Dewey also claims in *How We Think* that a fresh beginning is better than a start for inquiry that is bogged down by tradition; in other words, those who are steeped in tradition have a certain inflexibility that prevents them from being open-minded, whereas “a being that cannot understand at all is at least protected from misunderstandings” (MW6: 281). In fact, Dewey longs for “the open-minded and flexible wonder of childhood” (MW6: 207) as well as an “open-minded preference for conclusions that are properly grounded” (MW6: 202). He laments that some students are “labeled hopeless” when taught by traditional methods, yet may learn enthusiastically when material is presented in a non-traditional way (MW6: 208). Dewey asserts that people must be aware of their own learning styles and thoughts and realize that they have *a* way rather than *the* way of thinking; it is only with this realization that they will not judge the thought processes of others or consider their way to be the most valuable (MW6: 218-219).

In *Democracy and Education* (1916), Dewey defines openness as the ability to imagine the experience of others in order to make connections. He notes, “Except in dealing with commonplaces and catch phrases one has to assimilate, imaginatively, something of another’s experience in order to tell him intelligently of one’s own experience” (MW9: 9). A key word here is “imaginatively,” for at this point, before experiencing life as the other in Japan and China, Dewey apparently believes that

imagining the experience of another person is enough to understand otherness. Dewey also argues that adults could benefit by being more like children, who have “sympathetic curiosity, unbiased responsiveness, and openness of mind” (MW9: 55). Some of the habits of mind that Dewey deems “central in effective intellectual ways of dealing with subject matter” in *Democracy and Education* are “directness, open-mindedness, single-mindedness (or whole-heartedness), and responsibility” (MW9: 180). The opposite of being flexible, according to Dewey, is to be “habituated,” as fixed habits are “ruts” with “loss of freshness, open-mindedness, and originality” (MW9: 52-53). Rather than allowing the status quo to determine the progression of society, he claims that the members of a community must continually organize and reconstruct actions which have become habituated. He asserts that philosophy is “an attempt to *comprehend*” and that “any person who is open-minded and sensitive to new perceptions, and who has concentration and responsibility in connecting them has . . . a philosophic disposition” (MW9: 335). Overall, it is clear in *Democracy and Education* that Dewey regards open-mindedness as a critical habit of mind for the members of any community. At this point, however, Dewey is still focusing on imagining and sympathizing with others in order to become open-minded.

Dewey’s Personal Correspondence Prior to 1919

There is plentiful evidence of Dewey considering the meaning of open-mindedness and highlighting its significance in his personal correspondence prior to 1919. Juxtaposing Dewey’s major works with his personal correspondence allows for a more comprehensive understanding of Dewey’s thoughts on the myriad topics that he addresses as a renowned American philosopher. Although generally overlooked,

Dewey's personal correspondence is critical to an intellectual history of Dewey's thinking not only because his letters offer insight into what may have motivated much of his philosophy but also because they supplement his published philosophical works with a more compassionate, less detached perspective that arguably enhances the impact of his ideas by pragmatically grounding them in his personal experience. Dewey's letters encompass his ideas about experience, democracy, diversity, privilege, and education while simultaneously offering a peek into his interactions with his wife, children, and colleagues. Letters "bring back a world and an individual's role within it . . . directly . . . intensely . . . plainly and . . . irresistibly" (Garfield 19); likewise, Dewey's letters bring Dewey to life as a scholar, lover, husband, father, and educator since they are "physical objects that move from person to person rather than only text that goes through space to reach another" (Garfield 143). Because the letters are physical objects, preserved in the archives at the Center for Dewey Studies, they provide unaltered accounts of Dewey's thoughts and experiences; this gives his personal correspondence a grounding in lived experience that has a decidedly pragmatic ring to it. Seeing Dewey work through his thoughts in a letter, sometimes crossing out or misspelling words, highlights the humanness of Dewey that is sometimes missing in his published works. Moreover, the immediacy of his experiences and the intimacy of his conversational tone and language combine to make the ideas in his correspondence accessible to a wide audience. Finally, and most importantly, Dewey's letters are a documentation of a current experience rather than a recollection of a past experience, or "history in the present tense, history from its participants" (Garfield 200). In order to maintain the authenticity of the letters, I have

included exact replications of the letters (including misspellings and crossed out letters and words) as presented in the digital archives of the Center for Dewey Studies at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

A significant example of Dewey's references to open-mindedness in his personal correspondence is evident in a letter to John T. McManis (author of *Ella Flagg Young and a Half-Century of the Chicago Public Schools*) in which Dewey praises Ella Flagg Young, the supervisor of Dewey's University of Chicago Laboratory School from 1901-1904, for her open-minded thinking. Dewey writes that he "was constantly getting ideas from [Young]" and that he admired her "ineradicable tendency to test all philosophic formulations by restatement of them in terms of experience." (1915 [07478]). He continues to praise her "habitual attitude of openness to everything" and "open-mindedness," claiming that she had not only "retained flexibility and open-mindedness" but had actually "cultivated and acquired them to an extraordinary degree" Not only might Ella Flagg Young have been the impetus for Dewey's later thoughts about cultivated naiveté (see Chapter Five), but it is also from Young, as Dewey himself argues, that he learns the importance of keeping experience at one's "finger tips" as each new situation demands a reevaluation of prior experience. Dewey admires her belief in the power of thinking and freedom for teachers and students, as well as her habit of making "genuine intellectual development . . . the test and criterion of the value of everything" (1915 [07478]). The effusive praise that Dewey gives Young and the excitement in his tone regarding what he has learned from her regarding the importance of open-mindedness and experience highlight the significant effect that Young had on Dewey's evolving concept of open-

mindfulness. In time, Dewey's thinking and Young's example combined with Dewey's experiences living in Japan and China to further convince him of the importance of actually *feeling* as opposed to simply *imagining* difference in order to understand difference.

In addition to writing about open-mindedness, Dewey also explores the significance of experience in his major works and personal correspondence prior to 1919. His promotion of connection and experience in *Moral Principles in Education* (1909), for example, is significant, as he maintains that the school must be a microcosm of social life rather than a mere "preparation for social life." The only way the school will be able to achieve this goal, Dewey asserts, is if it "reproduces, within itself, typical conditions of social life" (MW4: 272). In other words, students need to experience what they are learning in order for it to be meaningful. In order to prove his point, Dewey tells the story of a swimming school whose instructors tried to teach children to swim outside of the water. Standing on land, the students practiced how to move their arms and bodies in order to stay afloat, and were "repeatedly drilled in the various movements which are necessary for swimming" (MW4: 272). Nevertheless, Dewey points out that when one of the students tried to apply what he had learned *out of* the water while actually submerged *in* the water, he sank. Dewey's motivation for telling this story is very clear; in it lies Dewey's philosophy about the importance of engaging students directly in what they are learning in order for the learning to be effective.

Dewey clearly admires educators who favor experiential education over passive acceptance of ideas. In the preface to *How We Think*, for example, he praises Alice for

creating an environment at the Laboratory School in which he could test and consequently attain “concreteness” of his ideas through experience (MW6: 179). Additionally, he cites the dangers of traditions or beliefs that “grow up unconsciously” and are merely passed from parents or teachers to children without real regard for whether they are correct or valid (MW6: 184). He warns against the simple recitation of correct answers, which constitutes only a kind of “mechanical” learning that “reduces” the student to “a parasite living on the second-hand experience of others” (MW6: 319). Rather, students need to be engaged in experience, since “when one is *doing* something, one is compelled . . . to use eyes, ears, and sense of touch as guides to action” (MW6: 329). In contrast, “observation will be largely a matter of uninteresting dead work” (MW6: 331) if it is not active and does not include exploration and inquiry (MW6: 332). Imagination, he says, can only be satisfactory for a limited amount of time. For example, children will only be satisfied by pretending to use stones as dishes until they experience using actual dishes. In other words, Dewey argues, “Meaning . . . must find appropriate embodiment in actual things” (MW6: 308). Clearly, Dewey believes that experience is an important component of education even before he goes to Japan and China.

Dewey later expands on these ideas in *Democracy and Education*, noting the critical role that experience plays in discovery and invention as it makes students “more alert” and “more open-minded” to various possibilities in the natural world (MW9: 296). Teachers must encourage exploration and shared discovery, he argues, in order to prevent “imposing intellectual blinders upon pupils – restricting their vision to the one path the teacher’s mind happens to approve” (MW9: 182). Again, such ideas

are evidence of Dewey's progressive thinking about open-minded teaching and remain relevant today.

Dewey's personal correspondence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries corroborates Dewey's inclination towards an appreciation for allowing students to experience, explore, and learn according to their individual learning styles, a tendency which he seems to have gained as a result of being a teacher and a father. Working with teachers and students in the laboratory school, he witnessed the benefits of allowing students to learn by reading, seeing, doing, and engaging in activity, thereby gaining an understanding of various concepts according to their individual learning styles. As a father, he marveled at the way his children explored and expressed themselves, particularly his son Morris, from whom Dewey learned much about the capability of the child as learner. Dewey also credits experience for defining and strengthening his love for Alice. Much of Dewey's early correspondence consists of personal love letters between Dewey and Alice during their courtship. In one letter, for example, Dewey explains to Alice the difference between hearing a description of something and actually experiencing it firsthand. He contends that nobody could ever understand his love for her through a mere explanation of it. He tells her that she is everything to him, and that her love "makes everything else be," but that nobody could ever know what that love is or what it means because he is the only one who can truly know her by experiencing her (11 April 1886 [00042]).

Dewey not only realizes the importance of experience through his feelings for Alice but also by spending time with his own children and students in the Chicago schools. In a letter to Alice, for example, he writes about his image of a school "where

some actual & literal constructive activity shall be the centre & source of the whole thing . . . which is directly experimental” (1 November 1894 [00218]). Two years after he wrote this letter, his dream came to fruition with his 1896 creation of the University of Chicago Laboratory School, which focused on experiential education. In a later letter to Frank Manny, who worked as an assistant to Dewey in the Department of Pedagogy at the University of Chicago from 1896 to 1897, Dewey points out the benefits of starting with what children know, as well as the importance of experiential education. Although Dewey focuses on the child, this idea forms the more global structure of Dewey’s philosophy about race, which is that every member of a society must be respected for his or her prior experience and ability to contribute to the advancement of the society. He writes, “There are no limits to the hold on children’s attention when subjects of instruction are presented to them first in terms of their own life experience” (26 May 1896 [00526]).

Dewey’s letters to Alice also reveal that his focus on experience may have at least in part resulted from his personal learning style. In response to a letter in which Alice tries to describe a house to him, he laments that “not being a visualizer,” he cannot get “any very available image” of it (12 June 1891 [00076]). Perhaps Alice did not write a thorough description, but Dewey’s inability to visualize the house after reading her description may also be evidence of his personal need for experience as a precursor to understanding. In turn, if he learns best through experience, he may assume that *everyone* learns best this way. Dewey was exceptionally forward-thinking in his promotion of experiential education at the time, and his influence on his contemporary educators is apparent in a letter written by Thomas C. Chamberlin, who

came to the University of Chicago in 1892 to serve as the Dean of the College of Science and professor of geology. Chamberlin is impressed with Dewey's focus on the importance of experiential learning, expressing to Dewey that this idea "seems to me to be fuller of radical significance than any sentence relative to educational matters that I have read in a long time" (26 September 1896 [06692]). Later, when Dewey and Alice are staying in Hawaii while he lectures, Alice writes to their children about the benefits of the experiential education that she observes in the local schools. She writes, "The Hawaiian young people care much more for what they can learn to do than they do for what they can learn out of books" (19 August 1899 [00401]). Juxtaposing these letters with Dewey's philosophical writings accentuates the influence that his personal experiences had on his philosophy regarding the significance of experience.

Dewey's relationship and time spent with his own children also affected his attitude towards the importance of experience. Dewey's letters about his children depict his playful, humorous, dedicated, and paternal side and reveal what may have been some of his most compelling formative experiences related to curiosity and experience. Dewey spends much time with his children during times when he and Alice are separated for various reasons, as evidenced by the level of detailed analyses of his children that he shares in the letters. In a letter to Alice, for example, he shows how close he is to his youngest child by writing that Morris is "the joy of my life & the delight of my eyes" and compares him to the infant Jesus. (7 October 1894 [00204]). Dewey's awe of his children's thirst for learning and love of exploration may have prompted his later writing in *Democracy and Education* that children should

not be regarded as lacking, naïve, or uneducated when compared to adults, as they are full of curiosity and other attributes that dwindle as they move into adulthood.

Dewey's belief in the significance of contributions of diverse individuals to the advancement of society is also reflected in some of his personal correspondence. In a letter to Jane Addams, for example, Dewey expresses his respect for her dedication to founding Hull-House for the purpose of helping underprivileged members of society find work and otherwise become contributing members to the successful progression of the Chicago community (27 January 1892 [00475]). Dewey also promotes social and democratic participation in a letter to Joseph Villiers Denney, the first chair of the Department of Rhetoric and Literature at Ohio State University. In fact, Dewey contends that empowering individuals to participate in society is so critical that "the expression of individuality, the getting a voice, ought to begin with infancy." Individuals who have a voice can and should then use it to speak "the language of action . . . [which] is democracy," a "unified language [which] is the breaking down of barriers & rigid separations to my mind" (8 February 1892 [00462]).

In 1892, Dewey organized and published a small newspaper called *Thought News* along with some of his colleagues at the University of Michigan. The purpose of the paper was to take a pragmatic approach to reporting the news by reporting the thought behind the news rather than the facts alone. In a letter to James Rowland Angell, Dewey's student and later colleague at the University of Chicago, Dewey notes that the paper would aim to use philosophic ideas "as tools in interpreting the movements of thought; which shall treat questions of science, letters, state, school and church as parts of the one moving life of man and hence of common interest" (27

February 1892 [00464]). Here Dewey's intentions regarding the connection of all in the face of diversity, the "one moving life of man," is particularly forward-thinking when the fact that he was writing from his own privileged position in society is taken into consideration. Furthermore, in 1893, Dewey again writes to Angell, asserting that ethics are socially constructed rather than biologically inherited (10 May 1893 [00478]), reemphasizing his earlier beliefs in the importance of the combined power of a society rather than the solitary power of the individual.

The importance of each family member's contribution to the traditional family unit before modern conveniences arguably sets the stage for Dewey's ideas regarding the importance of participation of all members in order for a community to thrive. In *School and Society* (1899), Dewey focuses on the importance of each family member's chores, which demanded faithful participation and cooperation, particularly before electricity facilitated some domestic tasks. When things are connected, Dewey argues, "they work easily, flexibly, and fully" (MW1: 39). Each member is involved in the goal of the community, not only contributing to its advancement but also receiving satisfaction, attention and education in the process. This "process of sharing experience," Dewey asserts in *Democracy and Education*, "stimulates and enriches imagination" (MW9: 9), and is the key to individual and community growth. As the dispositions of both parties are modified when they communicate (MW9: 12), interactions between all members of a community result in a "broader environment" for all (MW9: 26). The members must not simply tolerate each other, he asserts, but they must rely on each other. In fact, he refers to the common illusion of being able to act alone as "an unnamed form of insanity which is responsible for a large part of the

remediable suffering of the world” (MW9: 49). Not only is mutual reliance critical, but so is plasticity, or the ability to use knowledge gained from one experience in order to address a later experience (MW9: 49). He says that “the educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming” (MW9: 54); the environment changes, so an “isolated uniform way of acting becomes disastrous at some critical moment” (MW9: 84). Dewey believes that education is the “continuous reconstruction of experience” (MW9: 86) and realizes that difference is not a deficit but rather enables the creation of an even richer society, as “only diversity makes change and progress” (MW9: 96).

Dewey also recognizes the value of difference when he argues that forcing everyone to do things the same way “breeds mediocrity in all but the very exceptional” (MW9: 180). Still, Dewey has a dilemma. He argues for respect towards difference, yet he worries that maintaining difference can sometimes be isolating. He asks, “How shall we secure the diversity of interests, without paying the price of isolation?” (MW9: 257). Dewey often hones in on the importance of every being’s “connection with the common experience of mankind” (MW9: 353) and frequently refers to progress resulting from connections, noting that “barriers to intercourse prevent the experience of one from being enriched and supplemented by that of others who are differently situated” (MW9: 354), yet he remains situated in his own comfort zone on a daily basis, at least until at the age of sixty, when he experiences life for an extended time as a foreigner. Still, a man who says, “. . . no matter how some nations may still look down upon others, no country can harbor the illusion that its career is decided wholly within itself” (MW9: 298) is not one who believes that everything

happens within the confines of his own national borders or without mutual cooperation with others. Likewise, when Dewey says, “Civilization is the progressive mastery of its varied energies” in *Democracy and Education* (MW9: 219), he clearly has a deep-felt appreciation for difference and a sincere belief in the value that all members of a group bring to the evolution of the whole. Moreover, he stresses that “a progressive society counts individual variations as precious since it finds in them the means of its own growth” (MW9: 315).

Finally, Dewey’s correspondence reveals the role that Christianity played in forming his ideas about appreciation of difference. In a letter to Thomas Davidson, who established “Glenmore,” a scholarly camp and summer school in the Adirondacks in NY where the Deweys enjoyed the summer months in a cottage and spent much time with the school’s “scholarly clientele” such as William James, W.T. Harris, and Felix Adler (Dykhuizen 106-7), Dewey contemplates how “the coming of Christianity with its idea of love is . . . an attempt to bring the two sides together.” He continues, “‘Love’ as the summing-up word seems to me to mean a denial of any rigid separation of the temporal and the spiritual; an assertion of their essential unity” (9 October 1892 [00469]). Christianity’s focus on connection, unity, and love, in other words, clearly influenced Dewey’s evolving appreciation of diversity.

Dewey and Linear Historicism

Despite these expansive examples of Dewey’s thoughts on open-mindedness, experiential learning, and diversity, some contemporary scholars have questioned both the quality of Dewey’s thinking on cultural difference and the effectiveness of his philosophy to deal adequately with the cultural challenges posed by teaching and

learning today (Fallace 2008, 2009, 2011; Stack 2009; Margonis 2009). These scholars would probably hesitate to turn to Dewey's philosophical writings for thoughts on open-mindedness. Their reservations may derive partially from the fact that prior to his ventures in Japan and China, Dewey, like many of his contemporaries, subscribed to a linear historicist approach to education and culture; in other words, Dewey believed that non-Western or undeveloped cultures were in earlier stages of civilization compared to those of the West (Fallace 2011). Using words such as "savage" or "barbarian" to describe members of cultures considered less advanced than his own has left Dewey open to criticism from contemporary scholars, yet it is obvious in Dewey's major works and personal correspondence that his thinking reflected a perhaps misguided participation in intellectual movements larger than himself rather than a personal intellectual deficit.

Thomas Fallace, the scholar who has most comprehensively studied Dewey's philosophy on race and diversity, notes that some scholars criticize Dewey for being ethnocentric, others praise him for his relatively forward-thinking ideas about multiculturalism, and still others recognize that while Dewey's views on race are problematic when viewed through a twenty-first century theoretical lens, there remains much of contemporary value in Dewey's philosophy regarding multiculturalism ("Was" 471-472). After reading several of Dewey's major works, as well as much of his correspondence before he went to Japan and China, I place myself in the third camp, with those who acknowledge that Dewey had ethnocentric tendencies yet who also recognize the tremendous value and applicability of his ideas, in this case those related to open-mindedness as active and experiential.

Robert Westbrook notes in the foreword to Fallace's *Dewey and the Dilemma of Race: An Intellectual History 1895-1922* that one responsibility of intellectual historians is to help their audience realize "that their philosophical heroes were not Olympian gods but historical human beings" (vii). While Westbrook highlights Fallace's conclusion regarding the ethnocentrism in Dewey's thoughts and teachings, he also commends him for recognizing how difficult it would have been for Dewey as a late 19th century philosopher to "stand outside of this dominant theoretical frame" (viii) to maintain beliefs that were opposed to those of his contemporaries. Fallace analyzes Dewey's use of ethnocentric language and notes that Dewey's comparison of the intellectual ability of the savage to that of the child "situated him squarely in the intellectual world of the late nineteenth century, not our own" (2); this point must be considered in order to explore with an open mind Dewey's appreciation of difference, which can be found throughout his major works. Fallace points out that Dewey particularly subscribed to linear historicist beliefs (culture moves along a single continuum from savagery to barbarianism and finally to civilization) between 1894-1916, which was before he stayed in Japan for over two months (February 9 – April 28, 1919) and lived in China for two years (1919-1921) and argues that Dewey ultimately redeemed himself by adopting a cultural pluralist belief (human development is varied and cannot therefore be placed on a single continuum) by the 1920s, which is after he spent time in Japan and China.

Despite his later shift to cultural pluralist beliefs, Dewey is accused of being ethnocentric because he promoted the ideas and progress of Western culture as "the most advanced, most efficient, and most socialized end point of progress" (Fallace

75). As more students entered schools from races that Dewey himself had previously referred to as “barbarian” and “savage,” Dewey felt compelled to restructure his curriculum, which included a new focus on vocational education. Nevertheless, the fact that Dewey regarded vocational education as appropriate for these incoming students when he most likely did not have vocational education in mind for *his own* children further exemplifies his ethnocentric tendencies, especially when considered through a twenty-first century theoretical lens.

Dewey also contended that immigrant families were “psychically equivalent, but socially deficient” and had cultures that should “be appreciated as prior steps towards the more advanced modern, scientific, democratic world of the US, but not as culturally unique perspectives to be valued, celebrated, and maintained” (Fallace, “Race” 18). Moreover, he is accused of having “an overly celebratory conception of European American ability” that directly contrasted his “patronizing view of African American ability” and caused him to assume “a remedial orientation” towards education for African American students (Margonis 17), for whom Dewey thought vocational education was suitable when he asserted that vocational education was limiting for a white student body (Margonis 24).

In hindsight, it is easy to criticize Dewey’s philosophies and actions regarding racial issues, but Dewey would be the first to note that it is nearly impossible to judge decisions or actions of the early twentieth century through a twenty-first century theoretical lens. Frank Margonis himself argues that the lack of a “cross-race dialogue” at the time allowed Dewey to neglect African-American scholars, but if Margonis judges Dewey based on that twenty-first century update, then he must also

allow for the ways in which Dewey would have updated his cross-race dialogue between then and now, particularly since Dewey was a pragmatist in both mind and practice.

Naoko Saito is a modern Dewey scholar with whom I feel most closely aligned, as she believes that John Dewey's philosophy deserves attention in the twenty-first century. In "Reconstruction in Dewey's Pragmatism: Home, Neighborhood, and Otherness" (2009), Saito pushes for a reapplication of John Dewey's pragmatism to modern education and community life. She stresses the value of Dewey's "Great Community," which is "a public space in which different individual voices are heard through mutual learning and cooperation" (101). Saito does not judge Dewey's use of words such as "savage" or his linear historicist beliefs by today's standards but rather leaves those components of his philosophy in the nineteenth century and brings what she regards as Dewey's most valuable and still relevant idea to the present: the importance of hearing individual voices. I agree with Saito's assertion that this focus is what continues to make the voices of pragmatism so relevant and appealing today.

Although few in number, there are occasional instances of discriminatory or ethnocentric thinking in Dewey's major works and personal correspondence. For example, in *School and Society* Dewey claims that in order to contribute to the advancement of society, girls can learn to be "more efficient house managers" while the boys can train for their "future vocations" (9). Although it is tempting to criticize Dewey here for gender discrimination, refraining from judging him by twenty-first century standards enables an important philosophy to surface, which is that society is not only united but also successful when people work together with a common goal.

Other evidence of Dewey's ethnocentric beliefs in some of his major works includes his use of the pronoun "we" when discussing "civilized" culture in *How We Think*. He says, "The very essence of civilized culture is that we deliberately erect monuments and memorials, lest we forget" (193). Although Dewey promotes unity, democracy, and appreciation of diversity throughout this major work, his regard for Western culture as more advanced and civilized than others cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, Dewey also makes a point which I believe calls for serious attention from composition educators, which is that when material is given to students "with dogmatic finality," the students are no longer interested in learning because they believe that a field has been completely explored and defined (336). The fact that Dewey is open to revisions of traditional beliefs suggests that, despite his occasional use of ethnocentric language, he was open to readjusting his philosophy with the progression of time and new discoveries.

Ethnocentrism in Dewey's Personal Correspondence

Of the nearly two thousand letters that I read from the archives of Dewey's personal correspondence prior to 1919, I found only a few examples of ethnocentric thinking and writing. One is a letter from Dewey to Alice regarding their son Fred, who expresses his desire when living in Paris with Alice to live in a poor section of the city with "the beggars and the miserables." Fred describes in the same letter how he cried when he saw a blind man begging and how desperately he wants to live among the poor and, like Miss Addams, "give them work to do" rather than giving them money (29 June 1894 [00167]). While Dewey is undoubtedly proud of Fred for his passionate response towards the poor, he responds in a letter to Fred that it would be

unacceptable to live among the poor because it might be dangerous “on the street.” He writes to Fred, “We wouldn’t want little Morris to hear bad words & about bad things all the time.” Dewey tries to reassure Fred, writing that they “will try & do something; & remember that we belong to the common people,” but his refusal to let his family actually live among the poor exemplifies his unwillingness to actually “belong to the common people” (5 August 1894 [00169]).

Another letter from Dewey’s daughter Evelyn to Alice, sent sometime between 1902-1904 from Augusta, Georgia, portrays the tendency of the Deweys to be curious about diversity yet still ethnocentric. When Evelyn visits a mission school for African Americans, she writes to her mother that “all the teachers were colored & the lady that founded it was colored” and “there were 3,000 niggers that dont got to school so they have a summer school for some of them.” Evelyn’s use of the words “colored” and “nigger” can be compared to Dewey’s use of words such as “savage” and “barbarian” in their present inappropriateness but past common usage. What stands out in Evelyn’s letter is the sense of “us” versus “them” regarding the students; she tells her mother that “there were about 60 of them” and that her acquaintances in Augusta brag that they understand “them” more because they were “borne and brought up among them” (1902-1904 [00398]).

Finally, Alice makes an ethnocentric comment in a letter to the Dewey children from Kyoto, Japan. At first, Alice speaks of “a combination of nature and art as one dreams of” and “wonderful temples” that “fascinate one to the point of feeling there must be many more worlds when such multiplicity of ideas and feelings can exist on a single planet, and we live unconscious of the whole of it or even of any part of its

extent.” She compares hearing the bells of Nara, Japan, to a religious experience, and she praises the people for their utmost respect for “historic things.” Overall, her letter is abundantly complimentary of the country and its people, but she offhandedly expresses a touch of ethnocentricity when she concludes the letter with surprise in finding such an admirable life *outside of* Western culture when she writes, “Certainly these people have a nobility of character which entitles them to race equality” (15 April 1919 [10751]). Although undeniably ethnocentric, this comment is out of character for Alice, who far more often writes about her appreciation of and growing respect for the new culture.

These few letters offer some evidence supporting claims of scholars such as Fallace and Margonis that Dewey maintained ethnocentric beliefs. Nevertheless, when this handful of personal correspondence is considered among the thousands of letters that portray Dewey as a father, philosopher, scholar, and educator who aimed to include all students in learning and all members of a community in its advancement, and that portray his family as citizens, learners, and educators who are excited by diversity and involvement in community life, these few letters should not overshadow all that was good in Dewey. Ultimately, Dewey’s conviction in *How We Think* that open-mindedness is a moral trait (MW6: 366) that requires an active pursuit of new ways of being, thinking, and learning leads to the conclusion that Dewey would have long abandoned his use of words such as “savage,” “imbecile,” or “barbarian” to describe members of societies that he considered to be less advanced than the West were he alive today. Nevertheless, due in part to the ethnocentrism betrayed in Dewey’s late nineteenth and early twentieth century writings, contemporary inquirers

might not look to Dewey for a contemporary definition of open-mindedness. However, I contend that we should take heed of Dewey's thoughts regarding participation of all members of a society and attribute Dewey's ethnocentric language to being an unfortunate sign of his times.

Reconsidering Dewey's Ethnocentrism Through a Pragmatic Lens

In fact, my intellectual history of Dewey's thinking about open-mindedness has complicated what was already known about Dewey's ideas, since Dewey's personal letters overwhelmingly convey Dewey's interest in diversity and admiration for the mental fortitude and physical perseverance of the people of Japan and China, which are not the ideas of an ethnocentric thinker. Dewey undoubtedly changed during his sojourn in Japan and extended stay in China, so it cannot be assumed that Dewey would have maintained his nineteenth century ideas well into the twentieth century. Pragmatism allows for this change, as it focuses on active and evolving ideas as opposed to passive and stagnant ideas. Yes, Dewey and some of his family members made ethnocentric comments in their letters, but they are few in comparison to the letters that express how much they are learning about the importance of cultural pluralism and how much they see in themselves a need to reconsider their own definitions of what is culturally acceptable. Seeing how Dewey is affected and even stunned in admiration by the mental and physical habits of the Japanese and Chinese suggests that Dewey's use of the term "barbarian" or "savage" should not label him as irremediably ethnocentric, since as the "other" he humbly began to shed his skin of superiority as he gradually realized the futility of attempting to attain universality across diverse cultures rather than open-mindedness towards difference.

Overall, Dewey clearly dedicates far more time, energy, and thought to issues related to the benefits of open-mindedness, experience, and diversity in his major works and personal correspondence than he does to criticizing members of societies that he considers to be less advanced than his own. Although it is undeniable that Dewey uses ethnocentric language and engaged in ethnocentric thoughts at times, a rhetoric and composition scholar would be hypercritical to criticize him for doing so without considering the late nineteenth and early twentieth century contexts in which he uses such language. That which rhetoric and composition scholars and educators should focus on instead is the fact that his experiences as the “other” in Japan and China, along with the passing of time, encourage Dewey’s philosophy to evolve from linear historicism to cultural pluralism between the late nineteenth century and 1923 (Fallace 13), which shows that he was willing to approach new ideas more rhetorically and with an open mind. Dewey’s personal correspondence from Japan and China offers a personal account of the catalytic experiences that led to this gradual shift in ideology for Dewey, a shift which is also expressed in his major works and correspondence written after his return from China.

Chapter 4

Dewey's Personal Correspondence from Japan and China, 1919-1921

Letters have the power to grant us a larger life. They reveal motivation and deepen understanding. They are evidential. They change lives, and they rewire history. The world once used to run upon their transmission – the lubricant of human interaction and the free fall of ideas . . . It must have seemed impossible that their worth would ever be taken for granted or swept aside.

~ Simon Garfield (2013)

Although Dewey's work from Japan and China between 1919-1921 "has been largely ignored" (Wang, "John" 59), I submit that his personal correspondence during that time should not be overlooked, as his letters provide insight into Dewey's personal experiences in Japan and China that helped him realize the embodiment of difference in attaining open-mindedness. Dewey's letters best summarize the most important ways in which Dewey's experiences in Japan and China affected his ideas about understanding difference, as they offer a direct, intimate, organic, unedited perspective on his life as the "other" that is not available in his major published works. Moreover, Dewey's letters reveal his reaction to his firsthand experiences with difference, his encounters with previously unfathomed levels of politeness and mind-body connection, and ultimately his realization that years in China looking through the theoretical lens of the "other" and living as the "other" actually "Chinafies" him. The letters, in other words, provide a near-daily description of the ways in which his sojourn in Japan and extended stay in China exposed not only his mind but also his

body to different types of mental and physical endurance, treatment of other people, self-discipline, appreciation of art and nature, and acceptance of diverse philosophies. Excerpts from Dewey's major works published while he was in China and after he returned from Asia, such as the 1920 publication of *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, the 1933 publication of *How We Think*, the 1922 publication of *Human Nature and Conduct*, and the 1925 publication of *Experience and Nature*, also reveal Dewey's clear assertion not only of the benefits but also the exigence of experience in attaining openness, clarity that he arguably gained after realizing the depth of understanding of difference that results from firsthand experience of otherness while in Japan and China.

Dewey's letters reveal how repeatedly experiencing difference ultimately convinced Dewey that his ways of being and thinking were not necessarily the most sophisticated or the most effective at all times and in all places. Jessica Ching-Sze Wang, who has extensively studied Dewey's experience in China, notes that Dewey realized in China the need for a "non-Eurocentric point of view – a concept alien to Dewey's time but quite in keeping with his pragmatic sensibility" in understanding China ("John" 64). Although at sixty years of age Dewey would most likely still have preferred to sit in a chair rather than on the floor, to sleep in his own bed rather than on the hard rattan beds in China, and to practice Christianity rather than Buddhism, he came to realize that he preferred these habits only because they were familiar to him, not because they were inherently better than other ways of engaging his body and mind.

While biographies can offer only a secondhand description of the anxiety that Dewey felt when leaving his children to travel so far away from home, Dewey's letters offer a firsthand account of the dread he feels towards the looming separation. Before leaving for Japan, Dewey describes affectionately to his daughter Lucy how difficult it is for him to think of leaving the children, and that as his and Alice's departure draws near, "It seems harder to pull up and go so far away" (6 January 1919 [03744]). Similarly, in a letter to his daughter Evelyn, which he affectionately signs, "Dad," he laments that the two weeks remaining until their departure are a "sad reminder" of the distance that will separate them, as it will take two weeks for a letter to get to their children and for them to receive a response (8 January 1919 [03745]). These two letters give readers a glimpse of Dewey as a "Dad" who will miss his children, offering a useful contrast with received ideas about Dewey the lecturing philosopher. In other words, the letters provide readers an emotional and personal connection to Dewey that is lacking in his published works. The fact that going to Japan and China in the early twentieth century was no trivial matter for sixty-year-old Dewey and his wife is apparent in a letter from Alice to the Dewey children in which she reminds them (with potential finality) of how proud she is of her "fine children who are a credit to the name they bear" (21 January 1919 [03858]).

John's and Alice's letters also convey their preconceptions of Japan and China, which they formed by reading about the two countries and spending time in places such as San Francisco's Chinatown. In a letter to Evelyn before the Deweys depart for Japan and China, Alice reveals her image of China as a quaint, cute place where people enjoy traditional food and drinks. In fact, in her letter she describes eating chop

suey and drinking tea “in true chinese fashion” in San Francisco’s Chinatown, followed by a visit to “a small cellar” where they “heard very intersetting music on queer instrements” (11 January 1919 [03865]). After two years abroad, Evelyn’s advice to “really get to see people” in the new countries would have had new meaning for John and Alice, as they later admit in their letters that they actually had not fully understood the fashion, the people, or the mental and physical attributes of the Chinese until they experienced their ways of living firsthand (12 January 1919 [03864]).

Although John writes hundreds of letters on various topics while he is in Japan and China, this chapter focuses on those in which he (and in some cases Alice) expresses the greatest surprise about the differences between what he expects and what he actually experiences regarding the behavior, attitudes, body-mind connection, and the degree to which a person can be changed by experiencing another culture. Consolidating excerpts from John’s and Alice’s letters in which they describe seeing, smelling, tasting, and feeling difference in Japan and China highlights how they were ultimately able to *feel* as opposed to only imagine cultural difference. Letters in which John and Alice describe their firsthand experiences with physical differences, the politeness of the people, the mental fortitude, and ultimately the “Chinafication” process provide readers a behind-the-scenes look at what John experienced in Japan and China. It was these experiences that led him to later stress not only the benefits of experience but also the need for experience in understanding difference.

Coming to know Dewey’s life experiences as they were relayed to his family, friends, and colleagues also provides an understanding of what motivated Dewey to shift from a belief in linear historicism to cultural pluralism. Before going to Japan and

China, Dewey probably considered himself to be intelligent, physically fit, clean, and well-mannered. Actually feeling physical discomfort, a relative lack of mental fortitude and cleanliness, and illiteracy in Japan and China, however, encourages Dewey to reevaluate his Eurocentric investments in linear historicism. In other words, while Dewey had previously believed that non-Western cultures were in earlier stages of development compared to the West (Fallace, *Dewey*), he realized in Asia that the “linear” in linear historicism was relative, and that on the cultural spectrum in Japan and China, he held a different position than he did in the comfort zone of his home culture. After returning from China, Dewey’s philosophy consequently shifted not only towards an allowance but more importantly a respect for other ways of being and thinking in diverse cultures, ultimately leading him to align himself more with cultural pluralism than linear historicism by 1923.

Firsthand Experience

Although Dewey thought he understood the Chinese political and social situation before his journey to Asia, he admits in his letters that he did not know the whole story until he experienced it himself. Dewey goes to China as a visiting scholar and expert on democracy, yet his self-perception as an expert seems to be humbled by his interactions with the people there. In fact, he later contends that understanding the Chinese philosophy of life is a necessary step in understanding their political and social problems (Wang “John” 69), and it was by *experiencing* the Chinese philosophy of life that he was able to come closer to understanding it and closer to realizing that American democracy was perhaps not a fit for the Chinese culture. Although Dewey initially intends to share the notions of American democracy and experiential

education in China, both with which he has found success in the United States, he gradually learns that one culture cannot be simply transplanted in the soil of another. More importantly, he comes to understand in China the mutual benefits of cultural exchange (Wang 62), and he documents in his letters the experiences that cumulatively lead him to a greater understanding that the Japanese or Chinese people perhaps did not need to learn as much from him as he needed to learn from them. Many of John's and Alice's letters portray how much they learned as they experienced their new life in Asia.

John and Alice are particularly surprised by the degree to which the Japanese and Chinese tolerate physical discomfort. They are impressed by the rickshaw drivers, who tolerate what both John and Alice perceive as intolerable discomfort. While John and Alice can barely withstand the heat of simply being outdoors, the rickshaw drivers run through the streets fully clothed, wearing hats and hauling passengers. Alice describes in a letter to the children how even in the winter the rickshaw drivers "run all day through the mud and snow and wet in these things made of cotton cloth that are neither stockings nor shoes but both . . . and yet they get through the day alive" (10 February 1919 [10735]). John also writes to his children about the ability of the rickshaw drivers to tolerate heat and physical discomfort, as he asks his children to try to imagine "pulling a person at the rate of five or six miles an hour in a sun of a hundred and twenty or thirty with your head exposed . . . their adaptation to every kind of physical discomfort is certainly one of the wonders of the world. You ought to see the places where they lie down and go to sleep. They have it all over Napoleon" (27 June 1919 [03558]).

Experiencing the intensely humid climates of Japan and China for the first time also gives the Deweys an appreciation for the physical discomfort that the university students in Peking tolerate as they build desks for a new school. Having experienced the discomfort of the summer in Japan, which “averages one hundred in the shade,” John appreciates the ability of the students to withstand similar heat, prompting him to write to his children that “there is some stuff here” (4 July 1919 [10769]). In another letter to his children, he expresses doubt that many Americans would have the fortitude to tolerate the physical discomfort that even the prince must endure (8 July 1919 [10769]). Alice reports to her daughter Jane about the physical endurance of the laborers: “the heat is really fierce you just ooze all the time and bath as many times a day as you have time for,” yet “the coolies stand it” seemingly without complaint. In fact, she admits, “If we had any thing active to do we should not sand it long in the sun,” yet there are “no sun strokes amog the Chinese” (21 August 1919 [03568]).

Feeling the oppressive outdoor heat of China brought the Deweys to a deeper appreciation of what the rickshaw drivers, the workers, and even the emperor withstand than reading about these conditions or hearing secondhand accounts of them possibly could have done. Yet, even in their house in China, the Deweys experience the daily physical reminder of cultural difference, as their beds are hard and uncomfortable. In a letter to the children, Alice describes them as made “of woven rattan like our cane seats . . . and over the cane they throw a comfortable and one sheet, and there you are” (13 June 1920 [03937]). Actually feeling the pain of sleeping on rattan beds is a jolt of physically experiencing difference for which they had not been sufficiently prepared after having only read about the culture before going to

China. In another letter to the children in which Alice describes the small and dilapidated Chinese kitchens with “clay stoves crumbling in places, no sink, and one window,” she marvels at the tolerance of the cooks to “sleep on a board” (20 June 1919 [10763]).

In addition to physically experiencing “otherness” by sleeping on traditional Chinese beds, the Deweys also feel the pain of difference by sitting in the traditional Japanese style (“seiza”) on the floor with their legs folded under them, all of their weight resting on their folded legs, shins abutting the floor. Not wanting to attract attention or be conspicuously foreign, Alice tries to withstand the pain of sitting in the Japanese style, but John’s inability to even “bend for the pose” forces him to sit in a chair. While John may have been prepared for the challenging task of lecturing about democracy in Japan and China, he soon realizes that he was not prepared to even *sit* like the Japanese. The pins and needles that result from Alice’s attempts remind them that their bodies are not accustomed to the same kind of movement or physical stress as the Japanese. Alice pokes humor at herself and her husband in the following letter, which is representative of the sometimes painful embodiment of cultural difference that they experience:

One of the amusements of the Japanese is seeing the foreign visitors try to sit, and you can't wonder they are amused. I can manage it, in awkward fashion, but your father can't even bend for the pose. On Sunday we sat for two hours in the presence of the greatest Buddhist priest in Japan, and you can guess whether we wriggled and if my feet were asleep if you try the pose for a few minutes

yourself, even on a nice soft cushion as we were. Getting up properly is the hardest part of it. (4 March 1919 [10740])

As John and Alice are both scholars and educators, it is hard to imagine that they would not have seen pictures of the Japanese sitting on the floor before going to Asia. Nevertheless, it is clear in their letters that they were unprepared for how different their bodies could feel when trying to do something as seemingly simple as sitting.

The Deweys also experience cultural differences with their senses, which both come to realize is an important part of the acculturation process that cannot be conveyed in a book or through secondhand accounts. In a letter to the Dewey children, Alice struggles to describe the scent of a delicious drink, trying to compare it to something familiar to the children by writing that it has “an aroma such as no honey can excel” (4 March 1919 [10740]). She later refers to the aesthetically pleasing aspect of Japanese food when she writes, “Every dish is a work of art in its arrangement” (19 April 1919 [10752]). John writes to his children that the melons in China are “the best,” and that he can only realize how delicious the sweets are by eating them. In the same letter, he writes, “When you get macaroons and little cakes here . . . you realize that neither we nor the Europeans were the first to begin eating” (11 July 1919 [10773]). Here we see John relinquishing some of his Eurocentric mentality, a critical step towards becoming open-minded, as he admits that Western cultures may not always be the most original, creative, or civilized cultures. There is only one letter that refers to an unpleasant stimulation of the senses; Alice describes the smell of the grease that Japanese women put in their hair, which “always gives out a stale odor and then the perfume of the powder and perfumery mixes with that” and “shock[s] you

into wondering what it is she is trying to cover up” (27 April 1919 [03893]). Smells cannot be conveyed in guidebooks or in history books, yet olfactory experiences allow for a more comprehensive understanding of people and places, which both John and Alice realize when their senses are stimulated in new ways.

When John and Alice experience the natural surroundings of Japan and China, they realize that even reading extensively about a place is not the same as experiencing it directly. Alice, for example, is surprised and disappointed by the brown grass in the Japanese gardens and she admits, “It is a little surprising when one sees this famous garden after reading about Japanese gardens for all one’s life” (2 April 1919 [10747]). John, on the other hand, recognizes that he only knows enough to “get a surface view” of the Japanese gardens (20 March 1919 [10741]) and actually places himself in the category of “barbarian” when it comes to appreciating them. While staying in Kyoto, Alice writes to her children about the temples, paintings, and sculptures “of an ancient and unknown kind” and contemplates how “we live unconscious of the whole of it or even any part of its extent” until we experience it ourselves (15 April 1919 [10751]). In a letter less than two weeks later, Alice again writes to the children about a pink azalea with “a thousand blossoms” on it in Japan, and notes, “We know but very little about the dwarfed trees and shrubs in our country as the specimens we see are very small ones and inferior in shape and interest to those we see here.” In the same letter, Alice encourages her children to experience the natural wonders themselves, as she writes, “Come and see the Inland sea sometime” because “it is worth a trip around the world” (27 April 1919 [03893]).

Although the majority of the letters related to the natural surroundings are positive, John does write about floods that are caused by the depletion of the forests in China. He attributes the “stripping” of the forests to the large coffins that the Chinese use to bury the deceased and writes that the “scant forests” are evidence of the need for the passing of “a law that no man could die until he had planted a tree for his coffin and one extra” (19 July 1919 [10776]). It is clear from these letters that actually standing in the temples and among the gardens, forests, and flowers allows the Deweys to realize the extent to which people are “unconscious” of other parts of the world until they are physically immersed in other cultures.

The Deweys are not only impacted by their immersion in the natural surroundings in Japan and China but also by their participation in traditional forms of entertainment, particularly in Japan, where they experience a Noh theatrical production, Japanese dancers, and a doll festival. First, John is surprised by the Japanese theater, which “is not overdecorated like a New York one,” and is attended by an audience that pays such close, respectful attention to the performance that John seems more intrigued by the audience than by the performance itself. Additionally, he is in awe of the different ways that the Japanese dancers move their bodies. He tries unsuccessfully to convey these movements in a letter to his children and ultimately writes that a description of it is not possible, as one has to experience seeing it in order to understand how “wonderful” it is. Similarly, in trying to describe a show by Ganjiro, “the greatest actor from Osaka,” John laments, “There is no use in trying to describe it. . . You will never realize what the human hand and arm can do until you see this” (4 April 1919 [10748]). Later, he reemphasizes the inability of books to

convey reality, writing to the Dewey children, “Personally I think the dancing and music are much more interesting than they are reported to be in the guide books” (12 April 1919 [10749]). Then, experiencing the doll festival, he informs the children that the Japanese “have certainly put the doll to uses which we haven’t approached” (13 February 1919 [10736]), while Alice also tells the children that dolls in Japan “are not dead things like ours, but works of art symbolic of all the different phases of national life” (4 March 1919 [10740]).

Of all of the letters related to entertainment, there is only one in which Alice implies to the Dewey children that artistic depictions and real Japanese art are similar. Nevertheless, in the same letter she says that it is only after staying in Japan for a while and getting used to the artwork on Japanese screens that she and John have finally come to “feel their beauty” rather than seeing them as “grotesque” (15 April 1919 [10751]). Again, there is an obvious appreciation of the new culture juxtaposed with a gradual release of Eurocentric beliefs for both John and Alice as they experience different yet satisfying forms of entertainment, some which even seem strange at first but in time evolve into elements of beauty for them. This understanding serves as one paving stone on John Dewey’s path towards cultural pluralism, a path which he builds cumulatively, experience by experience from the age of sixty to sixty-two, while he is living in Japan and China.

Another aspect of the culture the Deweys do not realize until experiencing it themselves is the cleanliness of the people. When they go shopping, for example, they are given “little wrappers or feet gloves” to cover their shoes. John writes to the children, “Think of what an improvement that would be in muddy weather in

Chicago” (13 February 1919 [10736]). Alice describes a restaurant as “cleaner than any America one, even the best” (28 February 1919 [10738]), and John describes a girls’ dormitory as “so clean you could eat on the floor” (22 February 1919 [03877]). Alice writes, “Truly, the Japanese are a cleaner people than we are” and describes the hot bath that they take every night, saying, “I regret all the years our country went without bath tubs” (1 April 1919 [10745]). Relaxing in the soothing, hot water of the Japanese baths is something that Alice could not have fully comprehended by reading about them or considering them from afar. Similarly, John is surprised by the level of cleanliness of the people, noting in a letter to the children that “they have people come to them to clean their ears and said cleaners go way down in” (17 July 1919 [10775]). Among the hundreds of letters from Japan and China, there is only one from Alice in which she expresses surprise at the personal hygiene of the geishas, commenting on the horrible condition of their teeth, noting, “When they smile as they do a great deal their mouthes are ugly black holes in their painted faces” (27 April 1919 [03893]). What Alice must have later learned is that geishas dyed their teeth black using a procedure called *ohaguro* in order to cover up their yellowing teeth, a discoloration that was accentuated by their white makeup.

One of the major cultural differences for which no amount of reading could have sufficiently prepared them, and that particularly provokes Alice’s ire, is the attitude towards gender difference in both Japan and China. In Japan, they see women prohibited from voting and excluded from social affairs. Alice is occasionally allowed to join social events since she is a foreigner, so at times she is the only woman present because, as John explains to their daughter, “It would not occur to thm to invite their

own wives” (22 April 1919 [03892]). Usually, however, Alice is not allowed to stay with John at home parties, and she is prohibited from entering shrines, a shocking experience that John relays in a letter to their children (12 April 1919 [10749]). Even when John receives a monthly train pass from the Ministry of the Interior of Japan, Alice is prevented from traveling first class on the Japanese railways, since “that privilege could not be extended to a woman” (22 February 1919 [03877]). Alice is particularly surprised by the differences between the language of men and women in Japan. In a letter to her children, she complains that learning Japanese is “impossible” since “the way given in the phrases of the guide books is the way the man speaks” (14 March 1919 [10743]). She becomes the object of laughter when she tries to speak Japanese, which impresses upon her a deep realization of what it means to be a woman in Japan. In China, Alice is particularly shocked by the women who have had their feet bound. In a letter to her children, she writes that she is “sure that must absorb all the psychological energy one has” to endure “the agony of bound feet during the years of childhood.” Then when these girls are grown, she describes what she considers to be their dull lives, “plodding to keep up with the house work and sewing with no stimulation from without” (3 and 4 May 1919 [03899]). John follows with a letter also to the children in which he claims that not only the “domestic and educational backwardness of China” but also the “increasing physical degeneration and the universal political corruption and lack of public spirit . . . is the result of the condition of women” (12 May 1919 [10753]).

The many letters that refer to gender differences exemplify the deep-seated effect of experiencing otherness that the Deweys feel in Japan and China. Coming to

Asia as more or less equal partners on both an intellectual and social level only to find themselves in very different categories of entitlement solely based on gender immerses John and Alice in gender discrimination issues that neither had experienced to the same degree in the United States. Although it can be assumed that both would have read about the elevated status of men in Japan and China, being denied entry into places of worship, separated from her husband at a house party, or scoffed for using language reserved for men forces Alice to feel the discrimination both mentally and physically. Accustomed to being by Alice's side at house parties, visiting places of worship together, and engaging in intellectual discussions and educational endeavors with Alice in the United States, John also clearly felt this discrimination and wrote about it, as noted, in some of his letters.

Just as they are unprepared for the gender inequality that they experience in Japan and China, the Deweys are also unprepared to be surrounded by non-Christians. Although John and Alice certainly know that Japan is not a Christian country, Alice nevertheless comes to a deeper understanding of this reality during an exchange with a Japanese, presumably Buddhist, woman. In a letter to the children, Alice writes, "I asked if she were going to church and she said she wasn't a Christian. Think what a funny sound that has" (16 February 1919 [10737]). For Alice, hearing the woman actually verbalize her lack of any affiliation with Christianity so straightforwardly and unapologetically has a more profound impact on her than simply reading about the prevalence of Buddhism in Japan in a guidebook.

After spending time in Japan and China, Dewey writes to his children that he has "seen less but found out more" about the political situation than he had expected.

Spending time in Japan, he writes, has enabled him to discuss issues related to Japan with “official people” and to witness how the Japanese have to “live up to their position and reputation” as a world power despite their limited material and human resources. Dewey explains in a letter to his children that despite the reputation of Japan as a relentless power, they should feel “sympathetic” towards Japan and not “afraid,” as his firsthand experience there convinces him that Japan may “crack under the strain” (26 March 1919 [10744]). He actually calls the idea that the east is Communist an “illusion” and says that although the Japanese “like to conform” and “are sensitive, as said, to disapproval by others,” living among the people has made him realize that “socially and morally they are more individualistic” than Americans (23 April 1919 [04083]). Dewey is similarly surprised by the extreme poverty in China, writing to his children that he “had no idea” of the poor conditions after only reading about the country (13 May 1919 [10755]).

Dewey was in China during the May Fourth student protests against the government for allowing Japan to take territories in China. Dewey criticizes some of what the students say and do, yet he gradually realizes that his opinions are based on his prior experience and cultural upbringing rather than on any truth. In a letter to Albert C. Barnes, he writes, “I never realized before the meaning of the background we unconsciously carry around with us as a standard of criticism (12 September 1920 [04102]). Here Dewey again stresses the importance of firsthand experience, claiming in a letter to his children that anyone who has not experienced a political movement forfeits the right to judge a movement based on reading a secondhand account of it (9 May 1919 [03903]). Four days later, he writes to his children that the political

situation in China is “infinitely more serious than we realize at home” (13 May 1919 [10754]). In a letter believed to be written by Alice and sent to the Dewey children, there is also frustration regarding the blatant falsification and exaggeration of the information that they had received in the United States. Alice writes: “Get rid of the idea that China has had a revolution and is a republic; that point is just where we have been deceived in the United States” (2 June 1919 [10760]). Clearly, John and Alice both realize the ways in which secondhand accounts can deceive, misinform, and cause misunderstandings.

Having been involved for most of his career in educational issues and advancement, Dewey is particularly interested in the schools in Japan and China, yet his actual discoveries about them is not what he expects. Before going to Japan, Dewey may have regarded the education system in Japan to be excellent, yet actually spending time in the schools leads him to write to Albert C. Barnes that it is “too specialized and intensive,” and that it would be anachronistic for Japanese students with this kind of training to explore beyond the prescribed curriculum. Consequently, he writes, “I have a higher opinion of our American happy go lucky take a chance at anything, than I did before coming here” (23 April 1919 [04083]). Dewey’s attitude towards Chinese schools also shifts when he visits them. Although Dewey intends to “teach theories” regarding education in China, his direct experience with the people and the culture highlights the flaws in his plan. In other words, Dewey finds students who are “genuinely open-minded” and “anxious to learn” in China, but he also notes that they are “yet so up against conditions, that it seems hopeless to make suggestions and preach theories” (9 May 1919 [03903]). At the same time, Dewey witnesses

greater leadership and strength among Chinese university students than he had expected after reading about the demonstrations in China. In a letter to his children, Dewey admits that his preconceptions about the May Fourth Movement as a “college boys’ roughhouse” were wrong, and that the demonstrations are actually very organized and well-planned. In fact, after regarding the demonstrations through the theoretical lens of the students, Dewey is quite impressed and writes to his children, “This is sure some country” (20 June 1919 [10764]). He also points out to his children, “The conservatism of the Chinese” is “more intellectual and deliberate, and less mere routine clinging to custom, than I used to suppose” (4 August 1919 [10799]).

Experiencing the student protests and political policies in China leads Dewey to contemplate the uniqueness, independence, and positive attributes of the political atmosphere there. In a letter to James H. Tufts, professor of philosophy at Columbia University, he writes about his “growing disgust with the ineptitude and remoteness of our student life” and contrasts the leadership roles of the students organizing the protests with “the tepidity of our American students,” which has caused his “aversion” to American university life to increase in China. In a letter to Herbert Wallace Schneider, Dewey’s teaching assistant at Columbia University and later a full professor of religion and philosophy there, he writes that it is “most interesting to see a culture where so many of our prepossessions are reversed” and points out that this experience tends to make our “habits and beliefs . . . shrink” (3 January 1921 [03491]). In the same letter, he mentions how completely he now understands “for the first time what is the real meaning of British Imperialism and how little English liberalism and democracy has touched foreign policies” (23 February 1921 [07207]). When we

consider the fact that Dewey is in his early sixties when he writes this letter, having spent decades as a scholar, professor, and renowned philosopher in the United States, the extent to which he feels so much more deeply educated by his firsthand experiences in China corroborates his own promotion of active inquiry and experience in the attainment of open-mindedness.

The realization that being “other” is only a matter of perspective is an important moment in the acculturation process, and one that both John and Alice convey in their personal correspondence. Never having experienced illiteracy, both go to Japan and China without worrying about their inability to communicate. They soon feel the helplessness that comes with a lack of familiarity with a foreign language, however, and Alice remarks in a letter to the Dewey children that “we can no more make a car driver understand where we want to go than if we were monkeys . . . We can’t read a sign except the few that are in English.” Fortunately, their letters show that they are good-humored about their differences, as in closing, Alice remarks, “It is all so screamingly funny” (10 February 1919 [10735]). Experiencing illiteracy has a profound impact on John and Alice, especially since they are both members of the academic elite in the United States yet are unable to read anything in Japan, and their speaking ability is limited to simple words. Feeling incapable of communicating as “monkeys” surely encourages Dewey to ponder the experiences of immigrants in the United States as they navigate their ways through an English speaking society, their true intelligence perhaps clouded by their surface language limitations (10 February 1919 [10735]). Fortunately for the Deweys, however, English is not as uncommon in

Japan as Japanese would have been in the United States at that time, so they are able to navigate their way without much difficulty.

Dewey writes his own account of China, but after realizing how difficult it is to penetrate the culture without being able to speak Chinese, he writes to Albert C. Barnes, a wealthy student and friend of his, “Its an absurdly pretentious performance in one way, with my short stay here and no knowledge of the language” to write about the psychology of the Chinese, yet as he also tells Barnes, “It will be just as good as most of the stuff travellers put out for the American reader, and a little better than some for it will give some attempt at interpretation from the Chinese standpoint” (15 September 1919 [04103]). Again, living in China regularly reminds Dewey of the importance of seeing the Chinese way of life “from the Chinese standpoint,” a perspective that cannot be gained solely by reading books.

Experiencing social and political events in Japan and China rather than reading news reports about them gives Dewey a new perspective regarding the reliability of the media. In fact, experiencing what America looks like when reported through the theoretical lens of the Japanese and Chinese media prompts Dewey to claim that he will read reports about China more cautiously when returning to the United States. He expresses in a letter to his children his concern that Chinese reporters make Americans look “crazy.” While he believes that America is strong enough to disregard these reports, he also worries about the repercussions of this image (20 February 1920 [03587]). Dewey reports in a later letter to Albert Barnes that the Japanese people are “much more human and less sinister than is sometimes reported to us.” He also points out in this letter that living among the Japanese has made him realize that many of the

reports of the Japanese people have been exaggerated to the American people through the media (23 April 1919 [04083]). Similarly, in a letter to his children from China, Dewey writes about an American magazine article that “told about how cheap houses were in Peking” and how the city was filled with “robbers,” “walls with broken glass,” and “fierce Mongolian dogs,” untrue accounts that Dewey calls “amusing” since in his experience, “Peking is one of the best policed cities in the world” (25 August 1919 [03569]).

Living in Japan proves to Dewey that the individuality of the Japanese is not accurately conveyed in guide books or the media. In a letter to the children, he writes, “Instead of the children imitating and showing no individuality – which seems to be the proper thing to say – I never saw much variety and so little similarity in drawings and other hand work.” In the same letter, Dewey says that he expected the children to “all rise and bow” when foreigners entered the room, but that in reality they “paid no attention to visitors.” He also recognizes with awe the industriousness of the children in Japan, who have to learn over one thousand Chinese characters in addition to many Japanese characters while they are still in elementary school (22 February 1919 [03877]). Every day, Dewey is reminded of his limitations as he is unable to read Japanese or Chinese. Experiencing the dependency that accompanies illiteracy, I submit, imparts on Dewey a much deeper appreciation of the local children’s ability to read such complicated symbols. While Dewey would certainly have seen Japanese and Chinese writing before going to Asia, he might have imagined children learning to read in the way that American children learn to read and write by putting a mere twenty-six letters together to form words. Walking around the streets of Japan and

China, however, and being unable to decode the thousands of Chinese characters that must be recognized in order to be considered literate causes Dewey to wonder how much the schoolchildren have had to study in order to be able to read. Watching European students read French or Spanish would have been more comprehensible to Dewey, as he would have been at least able to read unfamiliar words and look up their meaning in a dictionary. Seeing the Japanese and Chinese children look at hundreds of foreign, meaningless symbols and pronounce words that Dewey is unable to decode or even look up in a dictionary, however, immerses Dewey in the very real, frustrating, and debilitating experience of illiteracy. In this situation, Dewey realizes that despite being a renowned philosopher in the United States, he is reduced to the level of a “savage” when he is among Japanese schoolchildren.

Since so many of his preconceptions are contradicted after experiencing life in Japan and China, Dewey sometimes seems surprised when aspects of the cultures actually align with his expectations. For example, in a letter to his children, Dewey writes, “Those very bright kimonos you see for children are real” (22 February 1919 [03877]). Still, the hundreds of letters that they send from Asia to their children, colleagues, and friends convey far more often that their experiences in Asia prove the need for firsthand experience in better understanding another culture. In a letter to Albert C. Barnes, Alice refers to the significance of their firsthand experiences as “thrilling” and “reconstructive.” She also writes that living in China has taught her that “after all everything is experience,” as she writes,

Having that new world become remote, and this the real one, knowing the ‘dead past’ is not past at all, but simply the base on which we are resting our air

castles, moving not so much in space as in time, having a ricscha man pull you two thousand years into that past in half an hour, realizing that one province here has as many people as the whole U.S. . . . understanding how wealth depends on poverty . . . one can go on indefinitely.” (19 August 1920 [04099])

After one year in China, the Deweys must decide whether to stay for one more year or return to the United States. While John enjoys the slower pace of his life there, he also realizes that there is not much more that he can offer the country. In a letter to his children, he recognizes the difficulty, or even impossibility, of conveying the profundity of his experiences in Japan and China to them. He points out how some have told him that his lectures have “stirred up considerable interest,” yet he compares this to having an influence on Mars while being completely removed from Mars. In the conclusion of the letter, he refers to his feelings as “curious” and difficult to explain to anyone who hadn’t also been through the experience firsthand (1 April 1920 [03593]).

It is clear that Dewey’s earlier philosophy regarding the importance of direct experience is at least enhanced by living in Japan and China. As Dewey explains to his children, a journalist can get information about a place in a few days, but “things have to be soaked in cumulative impressions to get the feel of the thing and the background.” This is a pivotal moment for Dewey, as he realizes that open-mindedness requires *cumulative direct experiences with difference*. He says that he can’t put his knowledge of the culture into words, but that he can *feel* it to his core. (8 April 1919 [03887]). As he points out in a letter to Albert C. Barnes, experience makes a person “wiser to certain things,” which in turn can implement positive social

action (15 October 1920 [04106]). Still, the longer Dewey stays in China, the more he realizes how difficult it is to truly understand the culture, recognizing in a letter to the Dewey children, “One would have to live here so long to begin to get hold of even the most important which are ~~needed~~ needed to understand things, that ~~the~~ it is easy to see how and where the idea of China as an impenetrable mystery came from” (9 May 1919 [03903]).

Politeness

John and Alice write so frequently about experiencing difference related to politeness that a discussion of these letters deserves its own section in this study. Their cumulative experiences with different habits gradually helps them realize that “acceptable” is a relative term defined by individual cultures. Although John and Alice certainly consider themselves to be polite and respectful people, they are nevertheless unprepared for the level of politeness exhibited by the people of Japan. Alice marvels at the way in which the Japanese praise even her most pathetic attempts to speak a word or two of Japanese, saying that “when you pop out an awkward word or two, you are applauded by laughter and compliments on your good pronunciation” (19 April 1919 [10752]). Alice is also impressed by the efforts of the Japanese to make them feel at home, even apologizing for the traditional Japanese toilet (27 April 1919 [03893]), which is an oblong hole in the floor rather than a raised, Western-style seat. Clearly, John and Alice are not prepared for the assumption of difference that the Japanese have towards foreigners. In other words, while the Deweys would have expected foreigners in the United States to speak English or be accustomed to a Western toilet, the Japanese people assume that the Deweys will be unable to speak

Japanese and will be unfamiliar with a Japanese toilet. Being on the receiving end of this assumption highlights the tendency of the Japanese compared to Americans to recognize the foreignness of their own culture to people from other cultures.

The incongruity between American reports of ruthless Japanese business practices and the actual politeness of merchants in Japan also takes John by surprise. In a letter to his children, for example, he explains that when Alice bought three small ladies' pipes in a pipe shop, the store owner gave her a free ladies' pouch and pipe holder as a gift to thank her for her patronage. John comments, "These things are quite touching and an offset to the stories about their bad business methods" (10 March 1919 [10750]). Another time when he and Alice go to the wrong hotel in Japan, they are given tea rather than being turned away, and when they leave, as John explains, he and Alice are "struck by the fact that they asked for nothing . . . and thanked us for coming to the wrong place" (1 May 1919 [03898]). John marvels in another letter at a store owner who bows and thanks them profusely even after they decline his offer to enter his shop. Later, when they return to their hotel, he describes "five maids bowing and smiling to get our slippers and hang up our hats." John adds that the Japanese "are about the most highly civilized people on earth" (22 February 1919 [03877]) and writes, "I shall have to spend the rest of my life trying to make up for some of the kindness and courtesies which so abound here." He goes on to write that the people in Japan are so kind "that they created in us the illusion of being somebody" (13 February 1919 [10736]). After being in China for a few months, John similarly writes that the Chinese "have the world beat in courtesy of manners" (4 August 1919 [10779]). He notes the changes that he and Alice are experiencing as the new culture

seeps into their own expectations of respect and politeness and writes in a letter to their children that they may be unrecognizable when they come home, or at least intolerant of the lack of the same level of politeness in their own culture. As John explains, “Politeness is so universal here that when we get back we shall either be so civil that you wont know us, or else we shall be so irritated that nobody is sufficiently civil that you wont know us either” (22 February 1919 [03877]).

John and Alice are both surprised by the level of respect shown towards the emperor in Japan, yet they have different interpretations of the effects of this respect. While Alice expresses pleasant surprise at the politeness of the children and their respect for the emperor, “with their eyes cast down to the ground” and with such great “reverence” that she can barely hear them breathe when he passes by (1 April 1919 [10745]), John criticizes elementary school teachers for being “fanatical patriots” and points out in a in a letter to their children that “more than one has been burned or allowed the children to be burned while he rescued the portrait of the Emperor when there was a fire” (1 May 1919 [03898]). John also writes about the great respect shown towards the emperor of China, whom he describes in a letter to his children as “the kid who is now thirteen,” and who “is waited upon by the eunuch attendants who crawl before him on their hands and knees” (19 July 1919 [10776]).

The Deweys also witness parents treating their children with greater respect in Japan than they have seen in the United States. In a letter to his children, John compliments the exceptional behavior of the Japanese youth despite the lack of scolding by their parents (with the added quip, “at least not in public”), and he also notes the absence of bullying or quarreling among the children. He attributes this to

the adults, who serve as good examples of cheerfulness and good nature despite the belief of some foreigners that “this is only skin deep.” Actually living among the children and their parents, witnessing their interactions, and hearing their communication, in turn, leads John to reassess his own culture. This contemplation is apparent in a letter in which he wonders, “What would happen say to us if we were to develop universal good manners. It is an important and neglected sociological consideration” (13 March 1919 [03882]).

Experiencing life among the Japanese makes John and Alice realize that behaviors that are considered impolite in the United States are interpreted differently in Japan. Alice, for example, is taken aback by the tendency of Japanese men to slurp their food, as the dining room “resounds with their guzzling.” She writes, “The Italian farmers are models of elegance in comparison with them” (27 April 1919 [03893]). What she must have realized later is that slurping is actually a way to show appreciation for delicious food in Japan. In another letter, while John says that the Japanese are “certainly a good-natured people,” he also notes how they “giggle and bend double” when he or Alice tries to speak Japanese (14 March 1919 [03882]). Although this behavior would be considered rude in the United States, John does not seem insulted but rather amused by it. One month later, he writes about the tendency of the Japanese to stare at foreigners without abandon; again, while he may have found such behavior rude in the United States, he realizes by living among the Japanese that these actions are prompted by curiosity rather than by impoliteness. One letter to the Dewey children best expresses this curiosity, as John describes the Japanese analyzing

an American woman in a way that would be considered inappropriately *gawking* at her in the United States.

You may remember Miss Fales is rather tall for an American woman even. mamma is something of an object to the country people but Miss Fales is a S P E C T A C L E. Curiosity is the only emotion the Japanese are not taught to conceal apparently. They gather around in scores, literally. I don't know how many times I have seen parents make sure the children didn't miss the show. Several times I have seen people walk slowly and solemnly all the way around us to make sure they missed nothing. No rudeness ever, just plain curiosity. I suppose she is about like a giant seven feet high and curiously dressed in our country. (15 April 1919 [03889])

In time, John regards these actions through a completely different theoretical lens as he recognizes that expressing curiosity is not a rude gesture in the Japanese culture. This experience, along with many other references to different ideas about politeness and respect, is another example of one that prompts his intellectual shift towards an embrace of cultural pluralism as he realizes that “acceptable behavior” is a culturally defined concept.

Conscious Control

Perhaps even more significant to Dewey than the physical differences that he experiences in Japan and China are the mental differences and more specifically the differences between the ways in which the people connect their minds and bodies. In the years leading up to his departure for Japan, Dewey had been taking Alexander Technique classes with F. Matthias Alexander. At the foundation of the Alexander

Technique is the connection between mind and body, which Dewey finds fascinating because of the traditional assumption that the mind is affiliated with thought rather than with actions. Described as “unstinting in his praise for the Technique” (Chance 10), Dewey is drawn to the idea of the ways in which human consciousness “affects our physical pain and discomfort, our capacity to breathe, our ability to move, our relationships with others, even our ability to think” (Chance 16). Since Dewey is so fascinated by this technique, it is not surprising to read his references to conscious control in Japan, where he witnesses in the actions of his hosts the graceful use of the human body that Alexander Technique students sought so assiduously in the West.

Dewey is particularly impressed by the mind-body connection displayed in Japanese ceremonies, dramas, and judo. After feeling the audience’s silent admiration for the “absolute sureness of mental control” before the actors, dancers, and athletes move, Dewey reports to his children that he has “an enormous re-respect now for the old etiquette and ceremonies regarded as physical culture. Every movement has to be made perfectly, and it cannot be done without conscious control” (22 February 1919 [03877]). When he watches a traditional Japanese Noh drama, he conveys to the children the difficulty of describing the powerful effect that the drama has on the audience, but he attributes it to the “extraordinary art” and “perfection of technique.” Still, he attempts to describe experiencing both the actors and the audience shift into a different mental state as the audience remains completely transfixed on the subtle movements of the actors. After experiencing this theatrical performance, Dewey writes to his children, “Conscious control was certainly born and bred in Japan” (10 March 1919 [10750]). Dewey is similarly fascinated by the conscious control

exhibited by judo players, as he notes in one letter that “the mental element is much stronger” in judo than in American sports. He goes on to suggest, “In short, I think a study ought to be made here from the standpoint of conscious control” (1 April 1919 [10746]). Reading and learning about the Alexander Technique had helped Dewey become known as an expert on the topic in the United States, and he had even written introductions to books focusing on the technique. Witnessing the seemingly effortless and flawless execution of the mind-body connection by actors, athletes, and dancers in Japan, however, humbles Dewey as he realizes that the Japanese have been engaged in conscious control for centuries in connecting the mind and the body in ways that he had only begun to discover when he was in his fifties. If even quietly and humbly to himself, Dewey must have realized at times like these that he was the “barbarian”—and that his linear historicist thinking about Western superiority was both deeply flawed and parochial.

Getting “Chinified”

After two years in China, Dewey understands that he no longer views China through his 1919 eyes. He realizes that change does not come easily, and that sometimes things that appear to need changing from a distance actually work well at the local level. He realizes that “tolerance,” “comfort,” “respect,” “beauty,” “cleanliness,” and “good” are culturally defined ideas that cannot necessarily be easily transferred from one culture to another. Rather, these ideas must be mentally and physically experienced and understood contextually. Dewey describes his experience in China as a process of becoming “Chinified.” For Dewey, this is the process of becoming open-minded; active participation in the foreign culture, in other words, is

what helps him begin to see the culture through the local theoretical lens rather than through his own. In a letter to his children, Dewey explains why even those who set out to change or “improve” another culture may ultimately fail. In an attempt to explain why he is unable to change China, or rather why he realizes there is actually no need to change China, he writes to his children, “It isn’t much wonder everybody who stays here gets more or less Chinafied and takes it out in liking the Chinese personally for their amiable qualities” (18 May 1919 [10756]). The longer Dewey stays in China, the more he realizes that the ways of China are effective in China. In fact, although he was invited to China to lecture about democracy and otherwise promote change there, he realizes before returning to the United States that *he* is arguably the one who has changed the most.

In a letter to the children, Dewey expresses surprise at his newfound familiarity with Chinese habits such as reaching for food from a common dish that at first seemed odd. When describing a Chinese dinner, for example, he writes, “I dont mind reaing to the middle of the table and helping myself with chop sticks to a bite at a time, its funny how undisgusting eating out of a common dish seems when everyone does it” (5 April 1920 [03597]). Experiences like these arguably affect Dewey’s ideological shift towards cultural pluralism, and in time he ceases labeling habits from other cultures as “barbarian” or “savage,” just as he realizes that eating out of a common dish is something that even “civilized” people do.

Just as Dewey is “Chinafied,” he recognizes how Chinese students who study abroad become Americanized. In a letter to his children, he compares students and teachers in China who have been abroad with those who have not, describing those

who have not been abroad as “sort of helpless, practically” and that “those who have studied abroad . . . have much more go to them” (23 May 1919 [10758]). Like Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands: La Frontera*, Dewey points out that expatriates who return to China live in a space between the two countries, seen as foreign in the United States yet also regarded as different in their homeland. In a letter to his children, Dewey explains the challenges that Chinese university students face when they go to the United States to study; not fully accepted or comfortable in the United States, they also feel like outcasts in China upon their return.

Last weekend we went out about ten miles to Ching Hua College . . . they have just graduated sixty or seventy who are going to America next year to finish up . . . It's a shame the way they will be treated, the insults they will have to put up with in America before they get really adjusted. And then when they get back here they have even a worse time getting readjusted. They have been idealizing their native land at the same time that they have got Americanized without knowing it, and they have a hard time to get a job to make a living.”
(20 June 1919 [10764])

In a similar way, Dewey's firsthand experience opens his mind to difference, yet it also prompts him to reconsider elements of his own culture, appreciating some even more than he had while seeing others as imperfections. During this immersion in otherness, Dewey arguably comes to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the impact of culture on mental and physical habits that surprises even Dewey himself, a renowned philosopher who had spent decades exploring the concepts of experience and diversity.

Dewey writes about this newly gained perspective in a letter to John Jacob Coss, a colleague of Dewey's at Columbia University who was on the committee that drafted the course entitled "Contemporary Civilization." In the letter, Dewey notes how different the West appears after having lived in the East and comments on the "new perspective and horizon in general" that he and Alice have gained by living abroad. He writes that "nothing western looks quite the same an more." Dewey sees this new vision as positive and energizing and writes to Coss that it "is as near to a renewal of youth as can be hoped for in this world" (13 January 1920 [04882]). Although Dewey feels that *he* has been "Chinafied," he predicts in a letter to Albert C. Barnes that the people of China will remain steadfast in their ways despite increased contact with foreigners. He writes, "Many Chinese say that China is now going thru a period of rather indiscriminate admiration of all things foreign after having had so long a contempt for everything foreign, and is in danger of losing its own best things. I dont know of course. The Chinese seem to be very Chinese, and likely to stay so" (30 May 1920 [04095]). Whether Dewey or the Chinese actually become more like the other is ultimately of little consequence to Dewey, however, compared to the need for both sides to become open-minded to difference as a result of the direct contact between them.

Differences Between Dewey's Publications Before 1919 and After 1921

On the surface, the letters that the Deweys send to their children from Japan and China portray a typical American couple experiencing life in another culture. The differences between the food, clothing, education, mental fortitude, political systems, and ideas regarding gender might be expected by anyone traveling abroad. When

paired with John's earlier definition of open-mindedness as active inquiry as well as with his focus on experience in many of his major philosophical works, however, their letters repeatedly reveal how experiencing difference becomes a necessary step in understanding difference and attaining open-mindedness. Actively experiencing rather than passively reading about the physical discomforts of the heat, the style of sitting, and the hard beds; experiencing the separation of men and women; touching, tasting, smelling, and feeling the difference of the local flowers, food, and attitudes; and witnessing firsthand the mental control and mind-body connection of the local people brings sixty-year-old Dewey, revered in his own country as a brilliant philosopher, to a new level of understanding of the need to experience otherness in order to understand and appreciate difference.

Although Dewey's letters have been the focus of this chapter, a comparison of the 1910 and 1933 versions of *How We Think* as well as an overview of relevant major works published in 1920 and post 1921 also show Dewey's increased awareness of the need for experience in becoming open-minded. In the preface to the second publication of *How We Think*, for example, Dewey calls the new edition "an extensive rewriting" with "considerable expansion . . . nearly a quarter more" than the first publication (LW8: 107), clarifying ideas that teachers found difficult to comprehend in the first edition and developing major ideas according to changes in pedagogical trends. Although an in-depth comparison of the two publications is beyond the scope of this chapter, I have noted relevant sections where changes were made to the new edition that arguably reflect what Dewey learned by experiencing life as the "other" in

Japan and China during the years between the first and second editions of *How We Think*.

One example of the differences between the two publications is that in the 1910 version, Dewey expresses the importance of testing hypotheses and preferring conclusions that are based on some kind of proof and distinguishing assumptions from proven conclusions, yet he does not directly state the importance of experience. In the 1933 edition of *How We Think*, Dewey states his thoughts on this matter more directly, actually stressing the futility of considering anything without experiencing it directly. In the 1910 edition of *How We Think*, he writes,

Any inference may go astray; and as we have seen, there are standing influences ever ready to assist its going wrong . . . While it is not the business of education to prove every statement made, any more than to teach every possible item of information, it is its business to cultivate deep-seated and effective habits of discriminating tested beliefs from mere assertions, guesses, and opinions; to develop a lively, sincere, and open-minded preference for conclusions that are properly grounded. (MW6: 202)

In the 1933 publication, he expresses similar ideas but adds a much stronger focus on the importance of combining information *and* experience, in order to understand “*anything*”:

No one can think about everything, to be sure; no one can think about *anything* without experience and information about it . . . With respect to the aims of education, no separation can be made between impersonal, abstract principles

of logic and moral qualities of character. What is needed is to weave them into unity. (LW8: 139)

Dewey's letters from Japan and China reveal Dewey's growing awareness of the erroneous assumption that effective beliefs, morals, and traditions from one culture will necessarily be effective in another culture, particularly if the ideas or practices are not "woven into unity" with the "moral qualities" of the community. Dewey also claims in the 1933 version of *How We Think* that education and experience are synonymous. He asks, "What does having an experience amount to unless, as it ceases to exist, it leaves behind an increment of meaning, a better understanding of something, a clearer future plan and purpose of action" (LW8: 241). As a sixty-year-old, world-renowned philosopher, Dewey would surely have extensively analyzed the purpose of his experiences in Japan and China. Even this great thinker, who had analyzed countless moral, political, education, and societal issues throughout his lifetime, still admitted in his personal correspondence from Asia that he was learning new approaches to life every day by living as the "other."

Additionally, Dewey inserted a new section that is entitled "From the Concrete to the Abstract" into the 1933 publication between "Activity and the Training of Thought" and "Language and the Training of Thought." This section asserts that teachers should not impose one philosophy, ideology, or methodology on all students. Dewey says, "Educators should . . . note the very great individual differences that exist; they should not try to force one pattern and model upon all" (LW8: 299). Although Dewey's major works and personal correspondence before living in Asia reveal an awareness of individual learning styles and the importance of respecting the

contributions of all members of a society, there is greater emphasis on “very great individual differences” in learning styles and consequently different teaching methods in the 1933 publication. I contend that Dewey’s own experiences in trying to sit, eat, and sleep in Japan and China, as well as his experiences trying to implement a system of education that worked well in the United States but was not a perfect fit for China, helped him truly understand these “very great differences” and the futility of trying to impose one on the other.

The 1933 publication of *How We Think* also includes a section entitled “Communication of Information,” which more emphatically states the importance of practical education. In the 1910 publication of *How We Think*, Dewey discusses the importance of experience when he says that “the material furnished by communication must be such as to enter into some existing system or organization of experience . . . Pupils are taught to live in two separate worlds, one the world of out-of-school experience, the other the world of books and lessons” (MW6: 337). In the 1933 publication, however, Dewey adds: “Then we stupidly wonder why what is studied in school counts so little outside” (LW8: 325). Although many factors could have contributed to this emphatic addition, it is clear in his letters that embodying difference in Japan and China convinces him that solely reading or studying about difference does not necessarily lead to an understanding of difference.

Finally, the 1933 version of *How We Think* includes a section entitled “The Evils of Passivity” (LW8: 327), which is not in the 1910 publication. In this section, Dewey emphasizes the need for both a mental *and* physical desire to learn, as he claims, “The ultimate impetus to study, to intellectual activity comes from within.

Mentally as well as physically there must be an appetite” (LW8: 328). The additional focus on the physical is arguably the result of the impact of Dewey’s experiences in Japan and China.

While in China, Dewey honed in on the critical nature of individuality in the 1920 publication of *Reconstruction in Philosophy*. Here Dewey focuses on “communication, sharing” and “joint participation” as “the only actual ways of universalizing the moral law and end” (MW12: 197). Dewey emphasizes the futility of generalizing experience when he asserts, “The waste of mental energy due to conducting discussion of social affairs in terms of conceptual generalities is astonishing.” He then gives an example of a biologist and a physician analyzing respiration as either an individual or as a social phenomenon, finally contending that “each proposition is equally true and equally futile. What is needed is specific inquiries into a multitude of specific structures and interactions” (MW12: 193). Since Dewey was in China at the time, where he faced the potential futility of transplanting Western democracy in Chinese soil and the impossibility of conveying his reality there to his children, these assertions possibly evolved out of his experiences in the foreign culture.

Dewey also updates the foreword to his 1922 publication of *Human Nature and Conduct*, a series of lectures that he had actually given in 1918. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to thoroughly analyze the differences between the 1918 lectures and the 1922 publication, Dewey’s focus on “the importance of culture as a formative medium” is very clearly influenced by Dewey’s experiences in Japan and China. Just as Dewey’s correspondence and major works written prior to 1919 prove

that he did not *initiate* his thoughts about the value of experience while he was in Asia, it is also unlikely that his thoughts about culture as “formative” initiated in 1922. However, Abraham Edel and Elizabeth Flower have argued that Dewey’s experiences in Asia influenced his belief in the effect of culture on individual thought and behavior (LW7: xxii) as opposed to a belief in the existence of a “native human nature untouched by social influences” (MW14: 231). As conveyed in Dewey’s personal correspondence from Asia, living as the other in Japan and China opens his mind to the impact of culture on mental and physical activity. As the later publication of *How We Think* shows, Dewey came to understand that there are too many “different manifestations” of human nature to use *the* rather than *a* when talking about individual characteristics (LW8: 230).

Finally, in the preface to *Experience and Nature*, published in 1925, Dewey suggests that there is an intimate connection between experience as “the method, and the only method, for getting at nature” and nature, which “deepens, enriches and directs the further development of experience” (LW1: 10-11). This idea is unlike Dewey’s earlier understanding of nature as something static that exists whether or not someone experiences it. This preface echoes the message that Dewey’s letters from Japan and China often show as he realizes the depth of understanding that comes from his firsthand experiences there. Moreover, Dewey mentions conscious control in *Experience and Nature*, saying, “Clearly we have not carried the plane of conscious control, the direction of action by perception of connections, far enough. We cannot separate organic life and mind from physical nature without also separating nature from life and mind” (LW1: 225). In other words, Dewey arguably realizes in Japan as

he lives among people who at times seem to demonstrate an ability to unify mind and body that he had been earnestly seeking through the Alexander Technique, that he (like most Americans) has not taken the importance of experience “far enough.”

Before going to Asia, Dewey points out in *Democracy and Education* that “much of our experience is indirect” (MW9: 240). A closer reading of Dewey’s personal correspondence from Japan and China, along with a comparison of his major works written before and after living in Asia, however, provides evidence that he would have later considered “indirect experience” an oxymoron. Dewey realized time and time again in Japan and China that his “indirect experiences” of the two cultures based on media reports and other secondhand accounts did not lead him to the kind of open-mindedness that he gained by experiencing the two cultures directly.

In the spirit of pragmatism, applying what Dewey learned while living as the “other” in Asia to the contemporary composition classroom is an important component of this dissertation. Until now, I have only witnessed teachers introducing comparative rhetoric in their first-year English classes by asking students to read multicultural literature. While undeniably valuable, this exercise does not engage students in a direct, physical experience of otherness. Just as composition students learn how to write direct, linear argument essays by experiencing this approach firsthand, students will arguably understand comparative rhetoric more deeply if they use multicultural approaches to argumentation. In the following chapter, I have translated what Dewey learned from his experiences in Japan and China into a potential assignment for first-year composition students that applies experiential education to comparative rhetoric in an effort to help students attain openness.

Chapter 5

A Deweyan Approach to Attaining Openness in Rhetoric and Composition

Reflective thinking has a purpose beyond the entertainment afforded by the train of agreeable mental inventions and pictures. The train must lead somewhere; it must tend to a conclusion that can be substantiated outside the course of the images. . . . There is a goal to be reached, and this end sets a task that controls the sequence of ideas.

~ John Dewey, *How We Think*

Dewey's personal correspondence from Asia reveals how he came to more deeply understand the ways of thinking and being in Japan and China through firsthand, cumulative experiences, both mental and physical. In addition to this episode of Dewey's life being of interest to historians and Dewey scholars, what can his personal correspondence and experiences living in Japan and China offer composition teachers regarding the attainment of openness? As Dewey himself might ask, of what use is the knowledge gained by reading his letters if nothing is actually *done* with this information? It is my goal in this chapter to outline the ways in which Dewey's interpretation of open-mindedness as active inquiry, which evolved to become increasingly focused on embodied experience while he was living as the "other" in Japan and China, can inform composition pedagogy today.

Unlike domestic students, international students experience using unfamiliar rhetorical approaches to write academic essays in the United States. Students who

venture to the United States for their postsecondary education most likely expect to find some differences in the food, the weather, the sociopolitical concerns, the natural landscape, and the language of the new culture, but they may not be as prepared for the unfamiliar oral and written rhetorical patterns encountered in their new discourse communities. In the typical university classroom, for example, some may struggle with the American emphasis on “process writing,” an indirect, inductive approach that does not always work well with students from other cultures (Atkinson). They may have been considered excellent writers in their own countries and may subsequently be disappointed and even shocked if they receive negative feedback from their American instructors for “plagiarizing,” or for being “unclear” or “repetitive.” Whether or not the rhetorical approaches that they have learned are similar to those that they are learning in the United States, however, all of these students are engaged in an *active inquiry* of what is considered “good writing” in a culture other than their own, and they are writing for a multicultural audience. In other words, they are experiencing what it means to communicate in writing as global citizens.

Since universities claim to graduate global citizens, teachers and administrators should be taking the necessary steps to make sure this kind of experience happens for *all* students. Rhetoric and Composition scholar Maxine Hairston asserts that teachers can help empower international and minority students by teaching them the rhetorical patterns and expectations of the American academy (184). Hairston’s advocacy for these students is admirable and must be supported; however, her argument lacks a consideration of how important it is for *all* students to experience communicating in speaking and in writing across diverse discourse communities in order to deeply

understand and more importantly appreciate the cultural foundations and global diversity of rhetoric and composition. Hairston argues that students who learn the language of the academy will be better able to communicate in the academy; I submit that students who learn that rhetoric is always culturally informed will be better able to anticipate potential rhetorical differences in highly cross-linked international communities.

Increased diversity among student bodies in universities nationwide provides an environment of great excitement and opportunity, but it also tends to increase stress and confusion. Students in some cultures are taught to be indirect, others to have interesting diversions, and still others to use frequent repetition in order to be more persuasive (Boardman xiv-xvi). Teachers may wonder why some students do not have a “clear” main idea, why they use clichés in their writing, or why they collaborate on essays when individual work is expected, without considering that there may be diverse, culture-specific interpretations of these concepts. Similarly, students who have not been trained to favor a direct, linear composition format may question their teachers’ professional knowledge of what constitutes “good writing.” This environment of accusation devoid of understanding is destructive and requires “putting forth of overt energy to modify the environment” (MW9: 357) and calls for a “deliberate reconstruction of experience” (Eldridge 27). Diversity defines the twenty-first century university, so the time to expose all students to comparative rhetoric, and at times even immerse them in it, is *now*.

Universities nationwide are rich with opportunities for exploring comparative rhetoric due to the “greatest multicultural resource” of a diverse student body.

According to Hairston,

Every student brings to class a picture of the world in his or her mind that is constructed out of his or her cultural background and unique and complex experience. As writing teachers, we can help students articulate and understand that experience, but we also have the important job of helping every writer to understand that each of us sees the world through our own particular lens, one shaped by unique experiences. In order to communicate with others, we must learn to see through their lenses as well as try to explain to them what we see through ours. In an interactive classroom where students collaborate with other writers, this process of decentering so one can understand the ‘other’ can foster genuine multicultural growth. (190)

Other rhetoric and composition scholars agree. Victor Villanueva, for example, recalls his personal struggle to “maintain the voice of distance, of objectivity, of the researcher, without race, without a person” when he wrote his dissertation, since he has “Latino-literate, ostensibly oral ways” (115). Pragmatically speaking, it is the act of composing using an unfamiliar rhetorical approach, for an unfamiliar discourse community, that causes him to realize what is necessary in order to successfully and simultaneously negotiate both his Latino discourse community and that of academia. Villanueva argues that expecting “a certain rhetorical manner” works “counter to the cultural multiplicity we seek,” and he calls on teachers to “rethink the whole thing” in order to avoid “cultural flattening” (“Maybe” 183, 188). In the same spirit of

multicultural appreciation, Gloria Anzaldúa exclaims, “And your culture says, ‘That is reality!’ Women are this way, men are this way, and white people are this way.”

Those who operate in at least two different cultures, however, “start seeing behind that reality” and “see the cracks and realize that there are other realities” (276).

Although Villanueva and Anzaldúa see through multiple theoretical lenses as a result of operating in multiple cultures, students who experience only one culture need what Dewey calls “cultivated naiveté” in order to attain open-mindedness. Ideally, according to Dewey, all students would learn like children. Children are curious and open to new experiences, whereas beliefs and habits that become ingrained in growing minds and bodies may eventually cause adults to avert new experiences and knowledge. Dewey’s personal correspondence provides interesting background to his theories about learning, primarily those letters pertaining to observations of his children and students at the Chicago Laboratory School. These groups, Dewey finds, approach new ideas with a freshness and openness of mind uncharacteristic of adults. Dewey later calls this ability to regard the world for the first time “primitive naiveté.” Those who have already adopted cultural habits, however, are unable to regard the world as if for the first time, so Dewey suggests that the best they can hope for in becoming open-minded is to achieve a “cultivated naiveté,” or an ability to analyze the cultural habits that they have developed and recognize their tendency to regard new experiences and other cultures through their own, culturally-determined theoretical lenses. According to David Granger, cultivated naiveté is “Dewey’s personal/cultural hermeneutics: a broad-based interpretive dialectic between self and world that resists closure, where the meanings of things are never final . . . more a hermeneutics of

replenishment than of suspicion . . . expressly conceived to recover and critically renew our relations with the constituents of our experience” (55). In other words, Dewey’s philosophy regarding the individual as a self and as a member of a larger community relies on recognizing the cultural underpinnings of individual beliefs.

In *Experience and Nature*, Dewey explains his concept of cultivated naiveté, which I submit is of critical relevance to twenty-first century composition pedagogy as it provides a framework for the necessary incorporation of comparative rhetoric into composition studies. According to Dewey,

An empirical philosophy is in any case a kind of intellectual disrobing. We cannot permanently divest ourselves of the intellectual habits we take on and wear when we assimilate the culture of our own time and place. But intelligent furthering of culture demands that we take some of them off, that we inspect them critically to see what they are made of and what wearing them does to us. We cannot achieve recovery of primitive naiveté. But there is attainable a cultivated naiveté of eye, ear, and thought, one that can be acquired only through the discipline of severe thought. (LW1: 40)

The idea of cultivated naiveté, I submit, provides an ideal theoretical framework for a curriculum that provides opportunities for students to engage in active inquiry of multicultural rhetoric and composition. Having taught international students for over two decades, and having spent much of my career immersed in issues related to English language learners, I submit that the border between the fields of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) and Rhetoric and Composition needs to be blurred, since all students can benefit from the kinds of discussions, assignments, and

critical thinking related to comparative rhetoric that international students have been experiencing as writers in the United States for decades.

Translingual approaches to writing, thoroughly analyzed and staunchly supported by Rhetoric and Composition scholars such as Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and John Trimbur, have already laid the groundwork for creating an environment in which diversity is understood, appreciated, and respected in composition studies. This approach focuses positively on difference rather than on deficiency, valuing language differences “as resources to be preserved, developed, and utilized” (304) rather than as cause for consternation. While these scholars’ admirable ideas may have materialized in the form of increased support for English language learners, their theory has not translated into courses or assignments that engage *all* writing and rhetoric students in an active, experiential, pragmatic inquiry of multicultural rhetoric and composition. Likewise, the extent to which postsecondary institutions insist on identifying their graduates as global citizens does not coincide with the omission of comparative rhetoric terms and topics in composition courses or textbooks. Out of thirty-seven chapters in the current edition of *The Bedford Guide for College Writers* (Kennedy et al.), for example, there are no assignments that engage students in actually using multicultural rhetorical strategies. Moreover, the terms “contrastive rhetoric” and “comparative rhetoric” are *not* among the hundreds of words and phrases in either the index or the glossary.

It is at least partially the responsibility of composition teachers to “modify the environment” by raising awareness of multicultural rhetorical approaches in order to help students attain openness and develop “character,” which is defined by Sidney

Hook in the preface to Dewey's *Moral Principles in Education* as "attentiveness to and consideration for the feelings, needs, and rights of other persons. . . the desire to be fair to others, in a complex of actions that show kindness, tact, service to the community, sometimes to the point of sacrifice" (MW4: xi). Actually experiencing what it feels like to employ an unfamiliar rhetorical approach to compose an essay, I submit, would shed light on the strengths of diverse rhetorical approaches that would lead teachers and students to answer Horner et al.'s call to "honor and build on, rather than attempt to eradicate" (313) differences that exist among multicultural rhetorics. It is through experience, embodiment of difference, and cultivated naiveté that teachers and students are most likely to find a connection even when their rhetorical approaches may vary. Just as Dewey asserts that "the only way to prepare for social life is to engage in social life" (MW4: 272), I propose that the only way to prepare for communicating in writing across cultures is to *engage* in writing across cultures.

Unfortunately, the first-year composition curriculum mostly still focuses on *the* best way to compose an argument. In working with diverse student populations, some writing tutors have complained that their job is primarily to translate for international students the expectations of the teacher and the new discourse conventions rather than helping students with English itself (Bauer and Picciotto 82). This suggests that teachers may not be presenting rhetorical genres as culture-specific, and that discussions regarding multicultural rhetorical approaches may not be commonplace in composition classes. Students who never study abroad, therefore, are not presently challenged to consider the distinctive characteristics of the rhetorical approaches that they have been taught, or if these approaches are universally effective. American

students are typically taught to begin a persuasive paragraph or essay with an explicit claim and then to prove it. When, however, do these students learn that this linear organization is not universal? Some teachers expose their students to multicultural rhetoric by asking them to read essays written by multicultural authors. Although worthwhile, this exercise does not engage students in the active inquiry of difference that John Dewey contends leads to open-mindedness.

Curricular changes do not happen overnight, but while writing program administrators and teachers work on incorporating comparative rhetoric into the curriculum, there is a way for them to immediately introduce comparative rhetoric in composition studies. That is, in the first-year composition classroom, students can and should step back at least one time from their own writing, “take off” their familiar rhetorical strategies, “inspect them critically” to see where they originated, why the students believe they are effective (or not), and what effect “wearing them” has on the students and their audiences. Dewey argues in *Experience and Education* that too often, “We commit ourselves to . . . blind instinct and impulse and routine” (LW1: 225). Having students *feel* the discomfort of writing in an unfamiliar rhetorical pattern may cause students to feel uncomfortable at first, since “in an unusual situation, a new adjustment is required” (LW1: 235). Ultimately, I submit, this initial uneasiness will be accompanied by a new awareness and “reforming meaning” (LW1: 235) as students realize that there is not *one* definition of “good writing.”

Engaging students in the actual experience of writing according to guidelines and expectations of diverse discourse communities immerses students in the kind of firsthand experience that Dewey asserts is critical for understanding difference. Rather

than simply reading a typical argument essay written for the Chinese university entrance examination (Gao Kao) in order to see what that kind of essay looks like, students should read the essay, research the cultural underpinnings of the rhetorical strategies employed in composing the essay, and then actually, as Dewey recommends, explore and “try on” (MW9: 325) this unfamiliar rhetorical approach by composing an essay according to those guidelines. In doing so, students will reconsider familiar strategies and engage in the epistemic act of writing that will encourage them to think more critically about unfamiliar rhetorical approaches.

Before students can “try on” unfamiliar rhetorical patterns, however, they need to investigate how rhetoric operates in other cultures. Since rhetoric does not remain stagnant in any culture, this inquiry is ongoing and ever-changing. Dewey laments that the common understanding of ‘acquisition of knowledge’ is often “lacking . . . in any fruitful connection with the ongoing experience of the students” (MW9: 352).

Understanding why different cultures have come to value diverse rhetorical approaches, how these approaches are continually evolving, and how students have been influenced by the rhetorical patterns typically followed in their own cultures will help students consider the potential diversity of their audiences when writing for a multicultural audience in university and beyond.

Stephen Fishman appreciates Dewey’s vision of “a post-Darwinian world of evolving mutual enrichment rather than survival of the fittest” (53). Although Fishman recognizes that Dewey has been criticized for being naïve, I also appreciate Dewey’s call and see not only the *need* for it in postsecondary education but also the *opportunity* presented by first-year composition to achieve this goal. Fishman hones in

on the importance of communication between students in promoting openness (49) and highlights Dewey's notion that communalism will be more effective in successfully maintaining a diverse society than individualism (52). Critically considering and connecting their own rhetorical approaches with those of their teachers and classmates will open students' minds to other means of persuasion and communication. Being engaged in difference will more likely teach them how to function within difference and realize the importance of openness, which Fishman and McCarthy have labeled "a hallmark of intelligent thinking for Dewey" (210).

Although studying abroad is arguably the most effective way to experience communicating across difference, I am recommending an assignment that would allow students to experience multicultural approaches to writing without actually going to another country. This assignment would bring some of the benefits of studying abroad into the composition classroom in order to give all students the experience of employing unfamiliar and sometimes counterintuitive rhetorical approaches to write an argument essay. In other words, the assignment calls on all students to research the expectations of student writers in a foreign culture, create a rubric based on those expectations, and finally write an essay according to the rubric. In short, the goal of this assignment is to help students understand, at least on an introductory level, the ways in which culture influences rhetoric (Kaplan) and that texts are not "static products" but rather "functional parts of cultural contexts" (Van De Wege 10-11).

The Assignment

Most of the writing that students will do both in and beyond the academy will be argumentative; consequently, I am proposing the following assignment:

Research the pattern of argumentation in a culture that is different from the one with which you feel most comfortable. In other words, what is considered “good” persuasive writing in a culture other than your own? Some questions to guide your research are the following:

- What are the historical underpinnings of this rhetorical approach in your chosen culture?
- What are some sample writing assignments for high school students in that culture?
- What are the benefits of the arrangement, style, and content of an argumentative essay in that culture?
- How might writers from that culture and your own culture respond to each other’s persuasive writing?

Design a rubric that includes the requirements for persuasive writing in your chosen culture. Finally, compose an argument essay that would receive a high score based on the requirements of the rubric.

In considering these questions, students begin to think critically not only about how they might perceive other rhetorical patterns but also about how others might respond to their rhetorical choices. Facilitating communication in this way will arguably promote cooperation between multicultural members of the university community, an important consideration since “schools more focused on the habits of cooperative living will, in the long run, and with proper teacher training and development, be successful” (Fishman and McCarthy 221).

To preface the assignment, teachers and students can discuss the work of contemporary scholars who have researched the sociocultural foundations and traditional expectations of rhetoric in various cultures (e.g., Bullard 1991; Falk 1999; Clark 2007; Borrowman 2008; Zhang 2011; Pérez-Llantada 2013; Badran 2013). Understanding that repetition in Arabic writing may reflect a historical and respectful imitation of the poetic, repetitive language of the Quran (Borrowman), or that arguing both sides of an issue equally may be how some Chinese students demonstrate respect towards their audience (Zhang), may alleviate misunderstandings between teachers and students from different cultures as they realize that definitions of “good writing” may be culture-specific. Erika Falk advocates for the inclusion of “multicultural conceptions of rhetoric . . . in modern curricula,” as the “continued dominance of Greek rhetoric as the center, origin, and delimiter of contemporary rhetorical studies,” as well as how that rhetoric was developed in Europe and the United States, no longer reflects the multicultural student body of twenty-first century postsecondary institutions (15). Although Falk admits that creating a “culturally inclusive definition of rhetoric” at present is “impossible,” she promotes studying the “goals and methods” of various rhetorical systems in order to better understand that culturally valued rhetoric is often “indicative of the sociocultural environment that gave birth to it.” Greek rhetoric, for example, reflects the values of a society in which debate, persuasion, and “individual influence over others” was paramount, while rhetorical approaches common in other cultures may focus instead on harmony or morality (25).

Finding “harmony in diversity” and understanding that all individuals are “capable of transcending” their cultural beliefs in order to understand others and

communicate successfully in a “pluralistic world” is of critical concern today (Bullard 4, 7). Nevertheless, it has also been argued that native English-speaking teachers may not inquire about the “communicative intentions” of multicultural writers, a type of “neglect” that “suggests that all that counts is the perspective of the hearer” (Berns 26). Rather, English teachers can and should “validate the rhetorical styles . . . around the world” (Berns 27) by encouraging students to research the origin and purpose of these approaches in various cultures.

Following this discussion, students can write a literacy narrative, which promotes an initial exploration of personal experiences with reading, writing, and communicating in their own cultures. As previously discussed, Shannon Carter highlights the need for students to have “rhetorical dexterity” in order to succeed in writing across various disciplines. Carter suggests first asking students to consider their own experiences with discourse communities, an activity that will help students from all countries and cultures consider the sociocultural underpinnings of the writing instruction that they received before entering university. Teachers can ask students to consider the following questions: “What are the activities that make up a community of practice with which you are deeply familiar? How did you learn them? . . . How is who you are shaped by your experience within this community of practice?” (102). According to Carter, these questions will prompt students to consider the differences between non-academic and academic literacies and writing purposes. Expanding on her notion, I submit that these questions will also encourage students from all cultures to reconsider their preferred rhetorical approaches as culturally influenced rather than as universally practiced.

Considering students' personal experiences with literacy serves as a segue to an exploration of the different types of essay organization valued in various cultures. Cynthia Boardman offers visual representations of typical English, Spanish, Japanese, and Arabic essay organization in *Writing to Communicate* (2009), a writing textbook for postsecondary English language learners who are studying English for academic purposes. In these visual representations, the English structure is a straight line (linear), the Spanish a jagged line (linear with diversions), the Japanese a spiral (indirect), and the Arabic a stacked pile of three ovals (repetitive). While these images may be criticized for being overgeneralizations, the majority of my international students have agreed over the years that these visual representations accurately reflect their personal experiences with writing in high school and while preparing for university entrance examinations. Students from some cultures claim that the organization they learned in high school was a combination of two rhetorical patterns; my Chinese students, for example, have learned a combination of the English linear format and the indirect Japanese format. They were taught, in other words, that writers should refrain from stating their main idea until the conclusion of the essay in order to give readers ample time to form their own opinion based on support given for both sides of an argument.

After discussing the cultural underpinnings of rhetorical patterns, facilitated by the literacy narrative assignment, the class can discuss ways in which they use persuasion in their home, school, work, and social lives. Next, students research rhetorical expectations in a chosen culture, honing in on persuasive strategies in that culture. Based on findings, the students create a rubric that could serve as an

assessment tool for an essay written in that culture and compose an essay (in English) according to the guidelines presented on the rubric. Finally, students create a presentation that summarizes their findings, justifies their choices for items included on their rubric, and outlines the essay.

Overall, this assignment will not only help students become more aware of culturally diverse rhetorical approaches but will also engage teachers in the “potentially transformative, and personally risky business” of recognizing that their definitions of good writing are also the result of their own cultural experiences (Fishman and McCarthy 120). What is most important for administrators and teachers today who are working with a diverse student body is to do what was suggested over two decades ago in “New Voices in the Workplace: Research Directions in Multicultural Communication” (1991) by Marlene G. Fine, which is to “begin with a theoretical position that confronts difference directly, recognizing the ‘assumption of difference’ rather than the ‘assumption of homogeneity’ as the organizational norm” (263). That is, rather than introducing the Western linear, direct, Aristotelian rhetorical approach as the norm, teachers should begin with the “assumption of difference” regarding what constitutes an argument across cultures. Considering intercultural rhetorical approaches in the twenty-first century is critical, as “today’s academic and research scenario is clearly characterized by international knowledge dissemination and exchange,” and “research into intercultural rhetoric has identified variations in the use of interpersonal devices such as stance and metadiscourse, modality, agency and identity, and overall argumentation” (Pérez-Llantada 251-252). This persuasive

writing assignment can incorporate these ideas into the composition curriculum with the goal of helping students attain openness.

The Rubrics

In addition to considering these questions and composing an argument essay, students create a rubric for assessing an essay written in the rhetorical pattern that they have researched. Although some (even Dewey himself) might consider rubrics too restrictive for student writers, designing rubrics encourages the kind of critical thinking and active inquiry that Dewey promoted. Determining how an essay should and will be assessed engages students in active inquiry of a discourse community's expectations of writers. In other words, because rubrics provide "informative feedback about the process and products of learning," students who design rubrics will be called on to critically consider where, when, and if a claim is stated, how an essay is organized, and what kinds of support are considered acceptable and expected in different cultures (McGury et al. 6). Engaging writing students in these kinds of writing experiences rather than providing them the limited opportunities of only reading about multicultural rhetoric will arguably lead students closer to "intercultural fluency," which is "not just about knowing but also about a state of being" (McGury et al. 6). In other words, while reading multicultural writing will allow them to *see* difference, actually engaging in multicultural writing will arguably allow them to *experience* difference.

Classroom documents to be found in appendices A, B, and C illustrate the diverse expectations of what might constitute a successful persuasive essay and corresponding rubric in three different cultures: The United States, China, and Saudi

Arabia. While rhetoric and composition scholars and educators are arguably already aware of the historical and theoretical underpinnings of the linear pattern of argumentation, I have outlined the roots and expectations of argumentation in the United States in the following pages in order to juxtapose the Western persuasive essay with common expectations of argumentation in other countries, more specifically in China and Saudi Arabia. Drawing on information gathered from scholars who have focused on rhetorical patterns in the United States, China and Saudi Arabia, the knowledge that I have gained as a graduate student in Rhetoric and Composition, and my personal experience teaching international students for twenty-five years (many of them particularly in the last decade from China and Saudi Arabia), I have created sample rubrics that exemplify the kinds of assessment tools that students might create for this assignment and then use to assess their own essays. Again, rhetoric is not stagnant but rather constantly evolving in every culture and in every discourse community. Still, some scholars have found generalizable tendencies typical of rhetorical strategies of persuasion in the United States, China, and Saudi Arabia.

United States

Although educational experiences of students across an entire country undoubtedly vary, students in the United States are traditionally taught the direct, linear, Aristotelian pattern of argumentation. While rhetoric and composition educators are certainly aware of the expectations of the linear pattern of an essay, it is important for them to keep the fact in mind that this approach is culturally informed and not universal. In the United States, students are taught to state their main idea

directly and clearly in the introduction, leaving no opinion open to interpretation by the reader. They are then taught to clearly support their opinion in the body paragraphs, and to repeat their main idea in the conclusion. As Cynthia Boardman describes in *Writing to Communicate*, English essays from beginning to end should address the following: “This is what I will write about;” “I am writing about it here;” and “This is what I wrote about” (xiv). From another perspective, in traditional Western rhetoric, the introduction of an argument should actually contain the writer’s final point. Stating one’s opinion first and directly is not a rhetorical strategy shared by all cultures, but it is perhaps the most important and most widely taught component of the expository essay in the United States. According to George Kennedy in his introduction to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, “Aristotle’s point...is that it is usually more effective to state the conclusion first and then support it with examples” (164). In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle asserts, “It is ineffective after stating something not to demonstrate it and to demonstrate it without a first statement; for one demonstrating, demonstrates something, and one making a preliminary statement says it first for the sake of demonstrating it” (230).

Guidelines on the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University, a widely used reference for teachers and students of first-year composition across the United States, also stress that the most important component of the essay is “A *clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay* . . . If the student does not master this portion of the essay, it will be quite difficult to compose an effective or persuasive essay” (“The Argumentative Essay”). Mastering the argumentative essay is critical for American students, since persuasive prompts are

common on the national Standardized Achievement Test (SAT); consequently, much practice in junior and senior high school is dedicated to this rhetorical strategy.

Also according to Aristotle, the purpose of argumentation is to argue that which is just. Although a skilled rhetorician should be capable of arguing both sides of a topic, doing so simultaneously would mean to argue the just as well as the unjust, which would be unethical. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle says, “One should be able to argue persuasively on either side of a question, just as in the use of syllogisms, not that we may actually do both (for one should not persuade what is debased) but in order that it may not escape our notice what the real state of the case is and that we ourselves may be able to refute if another person uses speech unjustly” (35). In other words, being aware of both sides of the argument is necessary, but arguing both sides of the issue is not rhetorically strategic. Rather, students are taught to briefly recognize arguments that run counter to their opinion and then refute the opposition.

The focus in American composition classrooms is on process writing and reliable support. Drafting, peer conferencing, getting advice from teachers and tutors, and reworking essays are all considered critical steps in the process. Students are expected to use standard English grammar correctly, and for many this means working with tutors or writing coaches as part of the multi-draft process. Correctly citing outside sources, most often according to the format prescribed by the Modern Language Association (MLA) in the humanities is also an important component of the persuasive essay in American first-year composition classes. Students who use direct quotes or even the summarized ideas of other people must give credit to those sources by citing them with in-text and end-of-text citations. Although this seems to be

common sense to American teachers and students who have been operating under the strict rules of avoiding plagiarism, students from other cultures may not have been taught to cite sources in the same way, if at all. In fact, some students may consider citing sources to be insulting to the audience, as doing so implies that the reader is not intelligent enough to recognize the sources.

A sample rubric that might be used in a first-year composition class in the United States to assess argument essays is included in Appendix A. The rubric serves as a potential checklist of common requirements for a traditional Western, linear argument essay, including clearly stating and supporting the main idea in the introduction, using transition phrases to ensure coherence, including ethical, logical, and emotional appeals to the audience, recognizing but also refuting the opposition, properly citing outside sources according to Modern Language Association (MLA) format, engaging in process writing, and demonstrating the ability to use standard English grammar for academic purposes.

China

Since the 1980s, the number of non-native speakers pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in the United States has increased dramatically. The largest single group represented is from China. The transition from a Confucian-oriented learning environment which focuses on the “pragmatic acquisition of essential knowledge” into a Socratic-oriented environment which focuses on “self-generated knowledge” may explain the sometimes contradictory expectations of Chinese students and their American professors in composition classes (Jinyan 335). While it is difficult to precisely define the rhetorical approach of any culture, scholars have found

that “Chinese writing displays traits of indirectness . . . and the avoidance of opposing to others’ opinions” (Zhang 74).

In a typical Chinese argument essay, students present both sides of a controversial issue in order to demonstrate their understanding of both viewpoints. Students are expected to state their own opinions, but traditionally not until both sides of the argument have been presented. According to many of my former Chinese students, exemplary writing is that which exhibits the writer’s ability to use “beautiful” vocabulary words and the great words of famous people. There is generally no need to cite sources, as it is believed that noteworthy sources should be recognized by an educated audience; in other words, students must demonstrate evidence of “wide reading,” but citing all texts is actually considered to be insulting to an educated audience (Liddicoat et al. 386-387). Use of the personal pronoun is also uncommon in Chinese writing in order to avoid focusing too explicitly on the individual opinion of the writer (Zhang 75).

Students who choose to research traditional Chinese rhetoric for this assignment would discover that recitation was “valued for mental discipline” and “considered indispensable” during the Qing dynasty, or from the middle of the seventeenth century to the early twentieth century (You 154). Historically, Chinese students were encouraged to recite rather than create; in other words, they were discouraged from expressing original thoughts and opinions in favor of reciting points of view expressed by “professionals” (You 154). In the late nineteenth century, composition pedagogy in China experienced some changes that more closely aligned it with European pedagogical and rhetorical trends. After losing two wars in 1842 and

1860 to powers from the West, reformers in China looked to Western countries for ideas about how to escape the country's national crisis and founded foreign affair schools in which students were introduced to Western subjects and Western rhetoric:

As many textbooks were imported from abroad, students in those schools had the first contact with Western rhetoric...Scientific rhetoric as manifested in the science textbooks was featured by the wide use of syllogistic and inductive logic, and a plain style with the Aristotelian ideals of clarity, brevity, and appropriateness applied to report objective observations and experiments. (You 154-5)

During the early 1900s, the most common modes of Anglo-American discourse were adopted in both public and private schools in China (You 157). The rhetorical genre most commonly taught in the schools was the argumentative essay, although assigned topics were often beyond the cognitive capability of the students and forced students to memorize answers to common essay questions in order to attain high scores (You 160). Moreover, students were taught to present both sides of an argument equally and conclude with their opinion. In fact, Chinese students who are currently studying argumentation in high school continue to learn "equal support for both sides in most cases" (Hsieh). Although "the formation of modern Chinese writing instruction...was conceived in the conflation of Chinese and Western rhetorical traditions" (You 161), the tendency to present the main idea in the conclusion is one major difference between the Chinese and Western patterns of argumentation. Aristotle says, "Having a starting point, it is easier for one to find proof" (Aristotle 244); in contrast, Chinese

students might say, “Having proof, it is easier to persuade the audience of one’s main point.”

Chinese argumentative speeches or essays traditionally conclude with a new question or a proverb. In the past, for example, due to the political strife between China and Taiwan, students were often required to end their essays with a standard political expression. Michael, who grew up in Taiwan but was taught to write in the traditional Chinese style, notes, “When I was a student, the last sentence for a writing was always ‘Long Live President Chiang Kai-Shek’ no matter what topic it was. For example, if the topic was ‘a bear and his friend a pony,’ then I had to think out what was its connection with Chiang Kai-Shek” (Chuang).

Grammar is also an important consideration for Chinese students. Millions of Chinese students take the annual national exam, or “Gao Kao,” in their final year of high school in order to compete for the limited number of seats in university. In fact, only slightly more than half of the millions of students who take the exam will be able to enter university, so the Gao Kao is “regarded as one of the most important life events for test participants” (Jing 28). In order to prepare for the Gao Kao, students learn about punctuation and spelling as well as new Chinese words throughout their school years. Since there are thousands of Chinese characters that combine to make different sounds and words, students spend much time in elementary and middle school learning new words. In high school, students focus on using these words to write, answering “what?” “why?” and “how?” for given topics (Li).

Based on this information, students might create a rubric for a persuasive essay in China similar to the one in Appendix B. This rubric focuses on balance, facts both

supporting and disclaiming the controversial issue, correct word forms, famous quotes and proverbs related to the main argument, proper punctuation, and a conclusion that includes a credible opinion.

Saudi Arabia

Second in number to Chinese students at many American universities are students from Saudi Arabia, which explains why there remains a call for increased attention to understanding the particular characteristics of Arabic rhetoric in Western universities (Clark 385). In “Arabic Rhetoric: Main Idea, Development, Parallelism, and Word Repetition,” Eastern Washington University Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language candidate Melissa Van De Wege explores the cultural underpinnings of the rhetorical tendencies of Saudi Arabian students. Van De Wege notes that Arabic rhetoric is “repetitive and non-linear,” as ideas are analyzed “from different angles” (2). Religious references are also a “prominent characteristic of Arabic rhetoric,” according to Van De Wege, so “tying the rhetorical prose to Islam and the language of the Qur’an,” the holy book of Islam, is an important consideration for students in Saudi Arabia (26). Although Arabic rhetoric stresses logical reasoning, emotional appeal, and established credibility of the writer, emotional appeal, particularly through the use of poetic language with religious overtones, is particularly important. This rhetorical approach reflects the “seamless relationship between religion and culture” in Saudi Arabia, where there is no separation of church and state (Van De Wege 27-29). Moreover, as Arabic has a primarily oral tradition, Saudi students are often encouraged to use poetic, oral prose as the best way to maintain the attention of the audience (31-32). Saudi Arabian students in my own writing classes

generally claim to feel more comfortable speaking rather than writing in English. They have explained that this preference is due to a focus on oral communication in their high school English classes as well as the fact that Arabic writing moves from right to left, so many feel as though everything is backwards when they write in English.

Although essays in Arabic focus more on the beauty of the language and words rather than on the main idea itself, the main idea is nevertheless repeated several times throughout the essay. Elaborating on an idea, in other words, means restating it in several ways using poetic language, as in the Quran, in which the exclamation “He is God,” for example, is followed by the paraphrase “There is no God but He” (40). Parallelism in the form of repeated phrases and clauses at the beginning of each paragraph (as opposed to simple transition words) is considered a skillful way to “connect the paragraphs together and to create a poetic balance to the entire message” (43).

Differences between rhetorical approaches within the Arab world certainly exist, yet Arabic rhetoric in the past generally focused more heavily on emotional, creative, and aesthetic elements than on logic, primarily due to an overall emphasis on theological issues. Trying to prove the truth of anything religious implied doubt about the existence of God and was therefore considered blasphemous (Badran 70-71), so rhetoricians valued repetitive, indirect, and elaborate discourse that did not acknowledge a counterargument. Like in all cultures, however, rhetorical tendencies have changed in the Arab world, and reliance on logical reasoning as well as recognition of opposing viewpoints have become common components of modern Arabic argumentation (Badran 72).

Although Saudi Arabian students must study spelling, punctuation, grammar, and cursive handwriting, there is “little to no emphasis on composition in Saudi high schools,” and there is no requirement to use outside sources. Since Arabic grammar is “vast and complex,” emphasis is placed on grammar instruction from kindergarten through high school, primarily because grammatical misunderstandings could lead to a misinterpretation of the Quran. In fact, students are often tested on their ability to grammatically analyze verses of the Quran (Abuabdallah).

Since “Arab scholars . . . studied [Aristotle’s work], reconciled its paganism with their own monotheism, and transmitted both the original texts and their responses to those scholars who followed” (Borrowman 346), there are both similarities and differences between the sample English and Arabic rubrics that I have created. The rubric in Appendix C is an example of one that a student might create for this assignment to assess an Arabic argumentative essay, as it focuses on subtlety, parallelism, repetition, poetic language, grammar, and references to Islam.

Towards a Pragmatic Comparative Rhetoric

It is easy for universities to list “global citizenship” as a major objective, or for openness to be listed as a critical habit of mind in the “Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing,” but rhetoric and composition educators must consider what these goals look like, practically speaking. As Dewey says, “It is a commonplace to say that the development of character is the end of all school work. The difficulty lies in the execution of the idea” (MW4: 287). A question that is ubiquitous in *Moral Principles in Education* is whether or not the school gives students the opportunity to practice ideas in action. In my experience, first-year composition may include reading

multicultural writing but does not include an assignment that calls on students to compose in multicultural rhetorical approaches.

Engaging students in comparative rhetoric in first-year composition classrooms makes sense. As Naoko Saito explains, “Deweyan education for global citizenship begins at home by cultivating the attitudes of open-mindedness, friendship, and sympathy, and it then expands outwards towards the distant” (105). The “home” of composition studies is first-year composition, and it is in introductory classes where teachers should follow Shannon Carter’s recommendation and teach *all* writers to value their rhetorical tendencies and to understand how and why they attained them (100). Carter asks the following critical questions, which I believe teachers of first-year composition should ask themselves and their students:

(1) How do I put literacy to use in my own life among people that matter to me in places I know and understand, especially in those places and among those people where I am taken most seriously, as a meaningful member with ideas that matter?

(2) How can I reuse (and reclaim) these strategies in new places and for new people who may have different needs and expectations? (100)

Dewey’s letters from Japan and China reveal how Dewey had to rethink his strategy, both mentally and physically, in order to successfully communicate with and live among those who had different ways of thinking and doing. During this process, his mind and body progressed from shock, to acceptance, and finally to appreciation of otherness, as his personal correspondence demonstrates. Similarly, Carter argues that teachers should give students “the tools they need to *experience* literacy differently”

and to better understand how literacy operates in their lives so that they can open their minds to difference when it is encountered. The goal, she says, is not only to meet higher literacy standards but more importantly to “develop a *flexibility* and *awareness*” (103). Carter wants students to consider what the rules are in various literacies, where the rules came from, how the rules are learned, and how they change in different contexts (105).

Writing activities that engage students in writing as “the other” can arguably help students attain what Carter calls “rhetorical dexterity” and open their minds to the different ways that literacy operates in diverse cultures. Venturing into multicultural discourse communities in this way will likely help students “develop a meta-awareness” of literacy as a cultural phenomenon (106). Students who can rise above their own literacy to see the larger community of literacies of which they are members will more likely approach new writing situations with confidence, and will be better prepared to negotiate “unfamiliar rhetorical spaces” (117) in the future.

Education about multicultural rhetorical approaches in composition studies, I submit, has the potential to open the minds of teachers to the myriad rhetorical backgrounds of their students—a shift that would arguably allow for more open conversations regarding what constitutes “good writing” across cultures. As Jessica Ching-Sze Wang notes, “In his look towards the future of China, Dewey was willing to remain a sympathetic observer and an eloquent defender, rather than an authoritative expert (70). Likewise, as increased diversity will continue to define first-year composition classrooms nationwide, educators can more honestly claim that they are contributing to the cause of graduating “global citizens” and helping students

attain “openness” if they give students opportunities to actually experience the rhetorical approaches of other cultures.

A Pragmatic Call to Action in Rhetoric and Composition

As a result of shifting my own composition pedagogy in order to introduce the Western linear, direct argument essay to my international students as culturally informed and dating back to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, I have experienced the benefits of approaching first-year composition through the multicultural lens of comparative rhetoric. I did not always teach international students this way, but they are undoubtedly more receptive to the assignments and my expectations when I stress that I am teaching them *one* way rather than *the* way to compose an argument, and that it is most likely the pattern that their American professors will be anticipating. Based on positive results in my own classes, I am confident that a similar approach would be beneficial for students from many cultures and with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds.

More than simply being beneficial, however, exposure to and experience with comparative rhetoric is necessary for postsecondary students. Universities recognize the objectives of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project in “The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing” and claim to graduate global citizens; nevertheless, they continue to neglect the inclusion of comparative rhetoric in required writing courses. While multimodality, writing and rhetoric in the disciplines, and technical writing have developed alongside advances in technology and recognition of the importance of written communication in arguably all fields, comparative rhetoric has

not even made its debut in typical undergraduate Rhetoric and Composition programs. Decades ago, scholars questioned this deficiency in the field, and with this dissertation I have resurrected their seemingly unanswered questions. I have also joined current conversations in the field regarding the need for greater awareness of multicultural rhetorical approaches by suggesting a pragmatic incorporation of comparative rhetoric into composition studies. As previously mentioned, Marlene Fine asserted more than two decades ago that schools need to recognize difference rather than homogeneity as the norm, and that multiculturalism is not only a topic but rather an approach to encountering the world. We have a wealth of resources to tap into when students from different cultures come together in the composition classroom; as Dewey says, “every incident of school life [is] pregnant with moral possibility” (MW4: 291). Dewey, I contend, has already extensively considered the attainment of open-mindedness, which is why I see the potential of Dewey’s ideas to serve as a framework for this movement in Rhetoric and Composition.

The attention devoted to diversity, pragmatism, active inquiry, experience, and open-mindedness in Rhetoric and Composition substantiates my claim that Dewey’s ideas are relevant to composition pedagogy today. As the “Framework for Success” has identified openness as one of the eight critical habits of mind necessary for success in college and beyond, postsecondary administrators and teachers *must* make a concerted effort to ensure its attainment. While it is unreasonable to expect rhetoric and composition teachers or administrators to disavow traditional standards, it is not unreasonable to expect them to offer opportunities (like the assignment that I have recommended) for all students to experience multicultural rhetorical approaches.

There are clearly new trails to be blazed in the twenty-first century multicultural university setting, yet remembering what Dewey has already extensively contemplated will prevent contemporary scholars from “running in circles while seeking new paths” (Villanueva 75). John Dewey’s extensive consideration of the importance of firsthand experience in the attainment of openness towards difference both before, during, and after living as the “other” in Japan and China, in other words, provides a foundation and justification for the incorporation of comparative rhetoric in composition studies.

It is time not only to consolidate discussions of Rhetoric and Composition scholars regarding the need for greater awareness and appreciation of multiculturalism but also to determine practical applications of these ideas into the composition curriculum. Doing so is not a simple task, as teachers may resist the shift from a traditional curriculum that focuses solely on teaching students the Western rhetorical approaches needed to meet the expectations of the American academy. Implementation of comparative rhetoric will require teacher training, continual modification of pedagogy, and a willingness on the parts of both teachers and students to experiment with otherness. In order to foster what Dewey calls “the consciousness of mutual interdependence” (MW1: 81) in both international and domestic students, teachers must give students a chance to engage in and think critically about comparative rhetoric.

Rhetoric and Composition scholars and educators need to delve into research related to open-mindedness in order to guide their students through the pragmatic, active inquiry of practical assignments that facilitate the attainment of openness. The field needs qualitative and quantitative studies regarding students’ and teachers’

experiences with writing in diverse cultures; which kinds of assignments best assist students in attaining openness; and the effect that experiencing multicultural rhetorical approaches has on speaking and writing across difference by providing students and teachers a larger pool of rhetorical choices to draw from when communicating in international communities.

The assignment presented in this final chapter is one example of the ways in which teachers and students can actively explore how culture has affected their writing approaches, their teaching, and their learning. Practicing writing in the preferred rhetorical approach of an “other” encourages “rhetorical listening,” which in turn promotes “receptiveness” and “humility” and allows students and teachers to become less self-centered and more “other-centered” (Schneider 206). This experience, I believe, will help students and teachers realize that we need a model for composition studies that “treats difference as an asset, not a liability” (Bizzell 165) and “would seek . . . a serious and educative engagement of one culture with the traditions of another” (Stroud 364). In short, John Dewey’s analysis of open-mindedness, experience, and embodiment of cultural differences provides the philosophical foundation for including comparative rhetoric in composition studies in order to prepare students to communicate successfully across difference in university and beyond.

Incorporating the assignment that I have outlined in this chapter is a start, but ultimately students would be even better served by experiencing cumulative, direct experiences with diverse rhetorical approaches throughout university and across the disciplines. In fact, the foundation that Dewey provides will also enable students to

expand the ideas of multicultural rhetoric to other fields. Students who study science, for example, can actively explore rhetoric and writing employed by scientists in other cultures, just as marketing students can explore advertisements from other cultures and actually engage in creating them based on their understanding of the rhetorical and cultural considerations of effective marketing in diverse cultures. These experiences, I contend, not only encapsulate the primary goal of rhetoric and composition scholars, teachers, and administrators, but are also theoretically aligned with Pragmatism and John Dewey's ideas about the active inquiry and experience required in the attainment of open-mindedness. Students who engage in writing across difference in first-year composition will arguably be better prepared for such assignments in myriad disciplines.

Engaging students in assignments like the one that I am suggesting may be regarded with suspicion by traditional composition teachers. Dewey warns that it is human nature to become irritated by troubles that arise when habits are modified; progress can be made by readjustment, but readjustment requires patience (MW9: 362). Dewey acknowledges this point when he says, "Men still want the crutch of dogma, of beliefs fixed by authority, to relieve them of the trouble of thinking and the responsibility of directing their activity by thought" (MW9: 348). Yet, Dewey goes on to echo John Stuart Mill's idea that because of this tendency, "the schools . . . are better adapted . . . to make disciples than inquirers" (MW9: 349). Although most if not all postsecondary composition teachers would say that they aim to make "inquirers" rather than "disciples," they are also facing significant pressure to prepare students for writing in professional settings. First-year composition teachers, therefore, need to

prepare students for doing the kind of writing that their primarily American teachers—and, later, employers—will expect. The exclusive focus on the Aristotelian, direct, linear pattern of argumentation and expository writing, however, neglects the fact that this approach is not universal. When international students come to the United States and learn how to write to communicate in a typically Western linear, direct pattern, while the American students are practicing the same skills that they have most likely been taught since elementary school, most of the burden of connecting falls on the international students. If all students are supposed to graduate as global citizens who have attained “openness,” then this pedagogy calls for an update.

Some composition teachers may feel unprepared to introduce comparative rhetoric into the traditional curriculum that focuses on Western rhetoric. William Hare points out that embracing open-mindedness by reconsidering ideas in which time, energy, and trust have been invested may be an exasperating process (“Helping” 17), which may at least in part explain why comparative rhetoric remains primarily a theoretical consideration rather than a practical application in composition studies. However, incorporating assignments like the one that I have outlined in this chapter does not require expertise in the area of comparative rhetoric but rather a basic understanding that culture plays a role in determining definitions of good writing and an interest in giving students opportunities to explore ways in which it does. Teachers do need to have a meta-awareness of their own preferred rhetorical approaches and definitions of “good writing,” and they must be models of open-minded thinking for their students in order for this assignment to be successful. This may require some professional development, and it certainly requires self-reflection, but understanding

their students is almost impossible if they do not understand themselves first.

Although teachers would ideally spend years abroad as John Dewey did in order to learn by cumulative direct experiences with difference that their own mental and physical preferences are culturally informed, sending all teachers abroad is not a possibility. Instead, teachers who have been trained in teaching writing to speakers of other languages can provide in-services on campus in which teachers are encouraged to experience diverse rhetorical patterns and to deeply consider the ways in which culture has influenced their own understanding of rhetoric and composition.

Some educators might fear that highlighting differences between diverse rhetorical patterns will alienate individual students or otherwise make them feel uncomfortable. Frances A. Maher warns that these “pedagogies of difference” or “positional pedagogies . . . encourage the excavations of privilege in the classroom” (“What” 103). Rather than a negative focus on “excavating” privilege, however, I recommend focusing on more positively *appreciating* diverse rhetorical approaches. In doing so, teachers and students can begin to look at their own and other valued rhetorical approaches as historical, creative, and purposeful. Rhetoric and Composition scholar Rebecca Lorimer Leonard has recently conducted studies that focus on “how literacy travels – how it moves with writers who themselves move” (89). As students from diverse cultures move into composition classrooms in the United States, they bring their familiar rhetorical approaches with them, which I submit adds texture to what has arguably become the flat landscape of the traditional direct, linear, five-paragraph essay. Maher contends that “the increasing diversity of our populations makes for far richer and more complex classroom environments”

(103), which if channeled properly can promote connection and help students attain openness. Most importantly, teachers must recognize that it *is* possible to pay attention to diversity without being discriminatory or negative (Allwood).

Others might argue that students in the United States need to focus on learning Western rhetorical expectations of the academy before they begin to learn about rhetorical strategies in other cultures. However, students will continue to have several opportunities in first-year composition and beyond to practice traditional Western rhetorical approaches. Some administrators might argue that untrained teachers should not be burdened with the responsibility of teaching multicultural issues when there are entire fields dedicated to these topics (Reid); however, the focus is not as much on the content of the multicultural issues as it is on the rhetorical expectations of diverse societies.

Perhaps the greatest objection to focusing on comparative rhetoric is the threat of essentialism. In other words, trying to define the ways in which American, Chinese, or Saudi Arabian students have been taught to compose an argument implies that there are essential characteristics of societies that are constant and definable. As long as teachers and students discuss the goal of this assignment as one which calls on students to research and practice approaches to writing that have been used at one time during the constantly evolving rhetorical history of each culture rather than being fixed definitions of the culture, however, this writing experience has more potential to open the minds of students to multicultural rhetoric and prepare them for global citizenry than it does for harm. As Diana Fuss asserts in *Essentially Speaking*,

The authority of experience . . . not only works to silence students, it also works to empower them. . . The idea that empirical facts are always ideological productions can itself be a useful fact to introduce to students . . . It may well be that the best way to counteract the negative, often hidden effects of essentialism in the classroom is to bring essentialism to the fore as an explicit topic of debate. (119)

As long as teachers introduce differences in rhetorical discourse as culturally influenced, as something to which everyone can contribute and from which everyone can learn, students will likely approach this assignment with the positive focus on the strengths of diversity associated with comparative rhetoric rather than the negative focus on deficiencies associated with contrastive rhetoric.

Rhetoric and Composition scholars Suresh Canagarajah, Victor Villanueva, Paul Kei Matsuda, Bruce Horner, Maxine Hairston, Linda Flower, Stephen Fishman, and many others have dedicated their careers to raising awareness of multiculturalism throughout the increasingly diverse landscape of universities nationwide. While students from all cultures and all backgrounds must learn the rhetorical expectations of the academy (just as all of the previously mentioned Rhetoric and Composition scholars have done in order to ensure that their voices are heard by their target audience of teachers and writing program administrators), it is time to include comparative rhetoric in the composition curriculum in order to give students opportunities to explore the ways in which culture has affected the rhetorical expectations of diverse discourse communities.

In short, I aim to join Paul Lynch in his assertion that students who test theory by engaging in activities can gain “experience-as-equipment-for-living” (75, 79). I submit that students who engage in an active inquiry of multicultural rhetorical approaches and actually follow the requirements of an unfamiliar rhetorical pattern to compose an essay will not only understand that their way of writing is *a* way but they will also have a better appreciation of the “equipment for living” required to live as global citizens who will need to communicate across international communities in university and arguably in any career that they pursue. In order to promote critical thinking, Lynch recommends creating situations within the classroom that allow students to experience other cultures firsthand. While Dewey calls these experiences “disruptions,” Lynch calls them “occasion design” (82) and highlights their ability to promote critical thinking by challenging what students consider to be “good” and “correct” (84). Lynch calls on teachers to analyze their experiences in the classroom in order to enhance their teaching and asserts the need to start speaking openly about what is *not* working in composition studies (135). I contend that traditional first-year composition programs are not engaging students in writing that will help them understand that the direct, linear, Aristotelian rhetorical approach is not universal, which is a disservice to students who plan to join a global community of speakers and writers.

What is needed in Rhetoric and Composition, then, is a pragmatic application of courses and assignments that engage students in writing and speaking across difference. As John Dewey stresses in *Democracy and Education*, successful methods in education are those which “give the pupils something to do, not something to learn;

and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking, or the intentional noting of connections; learning naturally results” (MW9: 161). The assignment outlined in this chapter serves as a starting point for the introduction of comparative rhetoric in composition studies. I call on my fellow Rhetoric and Composition educators to join me in the pragmatic effort to create additional assignments, materials, and courses that engage students actively in experiences that lead to the critical attainment of openness in Rhetoric and Composition.

Epilogue

Dewey's idea of discovery has been defined by Stephen Fishman as “a unifying passion bringing together previously disparate experiences to yield personal reconstruction” (“John” 8). According to Dewey's idea, my study has undoubtedly been one of discovery, as my experience teaching composition to English language learners both at home and abroad, my letters from Japan, my concept analysis paper focusing on open-mindedness, and my exposure to Dewey as part of my graduate coursework are personal experiences that have occurred over a span of three decades but that have ultimately converged to yield this dissertation.

Fishman also points out how Dewey's words sometimes have the ability of “fashioning that special angle where reader and writer meet” and where we and Dewey “recognize one another” (9). As I have mentioned, Dewey's definition of open-mindedness in *How We Think* as active and experiential first caught my attention three years ago and has not let go since. Fishman and McCarthy mention Dewey's books, articles, addresses, reviews, and encyclopedia entries (15) but not his letters; it is within the void of that acute angle that I saw a perfect space for my own scholarship through this close examination of his letters from Japan and China.

During the process, I have come to know Dewey as a teacher, colleague, lover, husband, father, and son in a way that is impossible to glean from his published works alone. I have also realized the pain and the rewards of the drafting process itself—an experience which I am confident will make me a more empathetic writing teacher. What I have not been able to do within the scope of this project, however, is to *prove* that immersing students in the actual composition of persuasive writing in a foreign

rhetorical pattern will in fact help them attain openness more effectively than simply reading multicultural rhetoric. However, it is my sincere hope that this dissertation will lay the foundation for further research that focuses on multicultural students' past experiences with writing, multicultural rhetorical methods of critique, and the degree to which engaging students in the assignment that I have suggested would help students become more open-minded.

When I embarked on this dissertation process, I imagined a definable beginning, middle, and end. I had a question that originated with Dewey's definition of open-mindedness as something different than empty-mindedness, and I believed that my job was to find the answer to that question. In a way, I did find an answer to my question, as I now know that although Dewey wrote extensively about experience, diversity, and the concept of open-mindedness before going to Asia, his experiences as the "other" in Japan and China enhanced his understanding of the importance of both mentally *and* physically experiencing difference in order to understand and appreciate difference.

I also now realize, however, that my exploration of the concept of open-mindedness in Dewey's major works and personal correspondence from Japan and China has led to further questions and ideas for research, which leaves me feeling as though I have opened more doors than I have closed. While I have learned a lot, I have also realized that I have a lot to learn. In the spirit of Pragmatism, I can now see that my journey from inquiry to discovery and back to inquiry is just where my initial hunch should have led me.

Appendix A: Argument Essay Rubric (United States)

Essay Structure (40%) _____

Title (5 points)

Hook/Background information (3 points)

Direct, clearly stated thesis statement in the introduction (5 points)

Topic sentences that reemphasize the main idea (10 points)

Sufficient, relevant supporting details (10 points)

Transitions and connectors that provide coherence (3 points)

Summary of main idea and major supporting details (2 points)

Final thought (2 points)

Persuasive Components (15%) _____

Ethos (ethical appeal), Pathos (emotional appeal), Logos (logical appeal) (10 points)

Recognition (but not support) of the opposition (2 points)

Refutation / Strong, valid arguments against the opposition (3 points)

MLA Format (20%) _____

Appropriate use of direct quotes, paraphrases and/or summaries (5 points)

Correct in-text citations (5 points)

Works Cited page with at least two outside sources (5 points)

MLA format throughout paper (5 points)

Process Writing / Revising & Editing (10%) _____

Peer conference (5 points), Tutor or Writing Coach Conference (5 points)

Grammar & Mechanics (15%) _____

Punctuation (5 points)

Sentence structure (no comma splices, fragments, choppy sentences) (5 points)

Narration: pronouns and verb tenses (5 points)

Appendix B: Argument Essay Rubric (China)

Essay Structure (45%) _____

Title (5 points)

Background information (5 points)

Brief introduction of the controversial issue (5 points)

“Pro” supporting details (10 points)

“Con” supporting details (10 points)

Scholarly tone (10 points)

Persuasive Components (20%) _____

Recognizing and factually supporting both sides of the argument (10 points)

Taking a stand / Presenting and justifying one’s own opinion in the conclusion (10 points)

Intertextual References (20%) _____

At least three quotes or paraphrases from famous written or spoken works (5 points)

Awareness of cultural competence of intended audience (5points)

Artistic manipulation of original into own text (Liddicoat 385) (5 points)

References to Chinese culture and history (5 points)

Grammar & Mechanics (15%) _____

Frequent use of ornate, academically advanced vocabulary (5 points)

Punctuation (5 points)

Appropriate word choice and word forms (5)

Appendix C: Argument Essay Rubric (Saudi Arabia)

Essay Structure (30%) _____

Title (5 points)

Main idea obvious but not stated directly (10 points)

Poetic balance and parallelism used for coherence (5 points)

Repetition of key words and main idea from many perspectives / angles (10 points)

Persuasive Components (40%) _____

Credibility (ethos) (5 points)

Logical reasoning (logos) (5 points)

Emotional appeal (pathos) (10 points)

Poetic language and oral prose of the Quran (10 points)

Recognition of opposing viewpoints (5 points)

Creativity (5 points)

Intertextuality (10 points) _____

Argument tied back to Islam and the Quran (10 points)

Grammar & Mechanics (20%) _____

Correct use and formation of subjects, objects, adjectives, verbs (10 points)

Correct formation of letters, words, cursive (5 points)

Punctuation (5 points)

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