

## 【論文】

# Storms of Lead: The History Essay Goes to War

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## 鉛筆のカカフォニー

— 「アメリカと戦争」について考えてもらうためのエッセイ演習 —

ジェームズ・グラハム

要旨：英会話の商品化を物語るキャッチフレーズ「駅前留学」は効果的な宣伝文句ですが、「留学」そのものの奥深さは物語られていません。文教大学の42名の英米語・英米文学を専攻している3年生の学生のために「留学体験」をするような試みを授業の中で行ないました。エッセイテストの受け方に重点を当てて、時間制限内にどれほど書けるのかというチャレンジを4回体験させました。英文の纏め方と「アメリカと戦争」というテーマについて考える一挙両得の機会でした。留学する意志の有る学生も、その意志のない学生も、両方がこの授業を受けました。結果としてエッセイテストの難しさがよく分かってもらうことができ、そしてテーマそのものについて受講する前より理解が深まりましたが、文教大学という教育的な環境では本格的な留学に近い経験をさせることは極めて難しいことです。その上、留学における英語が単なるコミュニケーションの媒体に過ぎず、語学と無関係の多彩な知識や分析力を包括するのも留学の本質だという真実を学生に伝えました。

キーワード：war, testing, skills, writing, history

## Background to Mission Impossible

This paper is a narrative account of a class taught in the spring semester of 2006 for third-year English majors at Bunkyo University. The course title was

*Eigo Enshuu* III (Applied English III). Its goal was two-fold. One was to portray American historical wars against a rich tapestry of contending viewpoints from both primary and secondary sources, thereby introducing to students a complexity of precedents and a fertile foundation for cultivating informed opinions about current U.S. military involvement in the Middle East. This is the element I like to think of as *shiminzukuri* or 'molding citizens.' The other goal meshes with my main professional obligation as an instructor of English: teaching writing. Unlike the standard teaching approach, however, this focuses on developing skills useful in producing acceptable quantity and quality under a time limit for an essay examination. The class material was derived in large part from dusted off readings and exercises used in the defunct *Beikokushi* (American History) class for sophomore English majors.

I had been teaching American history to English majors mainly in the English language at Bunkyo University, Koshigaya campus, for over ten years until a curriculum change made the class a history issue in its own right. Only anecdotal evidence survives in memory as a subjective measure of the class's success, as no hard data were gathered for gleaning meaningful conclusions from its crests and troughs. It should be noted that two sophomores who took the class went on to study American history at a graduate level (both at Doshisha) and one is at present preparing to become a professional historian. These are, however, the glowing exceptions. Generally speaking, a student might tell me in retrospect that some aspect of the class was "good" or that passing it gave a "feeling of accomplishment," but feedback consisted mostly of sighs of relief the class was finished and the credits gained. I was constantly changing teaching methods and expectations due to the daunting and unfamiliar nature of the subject, presented largely as a string of unsavory events, whether genocide, slavery or war, war, war. At the very worst, I had reached a point where I was struggling to find ways of making it easy and palatable enough for the majority of unmotivated students

to pass and thereby avoid the administrative nightmare of mass flunking. Yet despite these efforts, the class was notorious throughout its life, spoken of in groans of apprehension or exhaustion. It was just too tough: too much to read and too much to write.

My subject switched to more practical (and appealing) media-based themes and studies in propaganda for about three years, when suddenly circumstances conspired to resurrect the history class under a new moniker. My former approach, i.e. requiring a 'heavy' study load relative to other classes, had been repackaged as *Ryuugaku Eigo*, (English for Studying Abroad) and, as such, demphasized 'history' for its own sake, allowing for a generous degree of 'severity' since the whole point was to approximate classroom learning and testing on a standard resembling expectations of a college in the English-speaking world.

If facial expressions and positive class participation are reliable indicators, the students showed enthusiasm for the concept at least. One reason for this is invariably that there are no upper classmen around to tell their horror stories about how grueling the old history course was. Another reason may be the small but growing number of *kyuugakusha* who take off a year to study abroad in the United States or Australia and return to graduate from Bunkyo a year behind their classmates. (Credits earned overseas are unfortunately not applicable towards graduating from Bunkyo.) The existence of these role models proves that it can be done, though how well is another matter. Even so, studying abroad remains a distant dream for most, whether because of ability or expense; but providing a sample, however modest, of that experience here in Japan plays to natural curiosity and the challenge of testing one's mettle.

This discussion documents the way I taught the class and the responses of the students (in the forms of essays, presented here uncorrected, and a survey). A few things need to be said from the start for those readers unfamiliar with the unique characteristics of Japanese universities. English as a subject in Japanese

schools has traditionally been taught for success in passing college entrance examinations. Skills in actual application of the language for use outside the country are honed only when the student possesses the self-discipline and motivation required for that task, and such students are exceptional both for their drive and their chutzpah. (It is not unusual for some to even be teased for excelling in English. It's okay to be good at it, but perhaps not too good.) Secondly, now as in the past, higher education in Japan places a heavy emphasis on the socialization process and other non-academic factors in promoting an enriching college experience. Put bluntly, academic standards themselves are constantly compromised to accommodate the bottom line for both schools and whoever is paying tuition; the dwindling population of youth makes this true more than ever. Students who can do only the bare minimum for passing classes in a Japanese college would not survive for long in the greater universe of 'higher learning' even if their English level met the TOEFL requirement. These realities are two glaring differences with universities in the English-speaking world and should be kept in mind as landmark features of the mental landscape.

While on the surface *Eigo Enshuu* Ⅲ seeks to reproduce a certain mood of studying abroad, there are clearly other obstacles to full authenticity. An obvious problem is that everyone in the class has Japanese nationality and, as such, Japanese is the 'official' language of the class despite efforts to make it English. Another is a lack of nervous tension which can be channeled constructively toward improving academic performance; each student is attending with at least one person who is not just a fellow classmate, but a friend as well. Students also know they can use Japanese with me during or after class to get answers to questions. Many of them have taken classes from me in previous years and are familiar with my style of class 'presence' - so the full impact of a completely new and grueling learning environment where the Japanese language is useless can only be remotely replicated if at all.

Nevertheless, American history is a perfect subject for the teacher who sees his or her work with a sense of mission that goes beyond building language skills. One reason is that, among Japanese youth, a solid grasp of nuts-and-bolts issues in the American experience is rare. McDonald's, Coca Cola and All Things Disney are poor substitutes for knowledge, though to their credit students are well aware of their own ignorance. (The problem is many aren't bothered by it.) Another aim is to introduce history in general as a subject that is deserving of their time and attention beyond the classroom as a lifelong interest. A passion for history naturally incorporates a hefty dose of reading, writing and the preliminary all-important thinking process. As a mental exercise alone, it offers a sporting challenge, particularly when measuring understanding with the yardstick of the in-class essay.

## Materials

Preparation for the in-class essay begins with reading a short but complete textbook. Longman's Illustrated History of the USA by Bryn O'Callaghan is 144 pages of basic introduction to issues in American history written with the non-native English speaker in mind. (The textbook is used, for example, in the introductory course on North American history at the Università ca' Venezia, although the course is mainly taught in Italian.) By the third week of the course students are expected to have read the entire text. This requirement reflects to some degree the relatively heavy reading load that is typical in overseas universities.

O'Callaghan's book is extremely limited and inevitably overlooks an array of crucial issues such as women's rights. It devotes a considerable amount of its 33 chapters to the plight of the "Amerindians," but at the same time properly devotes a full chapter to U.S. - Latin American relations. Seven chapters are specifically about America's wars, with others being indirectly useful in explaining causes

and background to war. The language is plain and easy to understand, as it should be given the readership O'Callaghan had in mind.

A 50-question test based on the O'Callaghan textbook is given to measure student mastery of basic facts which are the vocabulary of the 'language' of American history. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence? What happened between 1861 and 1865? Who was president during World War I? etc. Another 50 questions pertain to the map and labeling the states correctly. Examinations that test rote memory are nothing new to Japanese college students whose school years are heavily invested in cultivating such 'skill' for passing admission tests to high school or college. Students cannot get credit without passing this test and must retake it until they do pass. Out of forty-two students, seven failed this test, although most scored well above 60 percent, thanks largely to the map section which was fifty of the one hundred points.

A short-essay test is also scheduled for later in the semester which deals with questions in slightly more detail and thus requires answers in full sentences. Sections of the textbook are divided up among students who in turn write their own five essay questions based on the assigned chapters. I then choose the best questions from each section, e.g. What were the three groups of colonies and their unique characteristics? What was President Woodrow Wilson's plan for the world after the Great War? What did the Alliance for Progress achieve and why was it started? etc. (A report on the result of this test is included in Appendix D.)

Although O'Callaghan studiously avoids bias (i.e. leftist America-bashing or rightist paeans to 'freedom,' etc.), the sparseness of his presentation begs for supplements. In addition to this core text, students are required to read one of five different packages of articles on designated in-class essay topics which are as follows: 1.) Christopher Columbus, 2.) The American Revolution, 3.) American Expansionism, 4.) The Atomic Bomb - and 5.) The Vietnam War. In an American university the students would be responsible for reading

everything on a reading list, i.e. every article concerned that is introduced by the instructor throughout the course. (To demonstrate this I show the reading list for a Columbia University introductory course on U.S. history.) Rather than force an unreasonable burden on students with limited language abilities, I circulated a wide *variety* of articles (25 in total with five per package) among the forty students so that each individual will be responsible for material different from the other four classmates in a five-member study group. The objective was to make the student think about the reading, summarize it and communicate that summary in an information-exchange exercise based on five comprehension questions. This exercise also was intended to show the folly of relying on a single standard 'textbook' that can tend toward sanitizing, distorting or omitting for purposes other than promoting an intelligent understanding of the past.

Finally, selected video material in Japanese was offered to supplement English language lectures. I had made generous use of video in the history and propaganda classes for sophomores, but since it rarely played a part in history studies in my own college education, I used the video very conservatively here in order to keep it from becoming a crutch. Still images played a bigger role, as did facsimiles of actual letters, documents, etc. such as those made available by Jackdaw Publications.

### Paradox and Memory

Someone educated mainly in Japan but with a foreign degree may in many ways be more suitable to the task of teaching a course aimed at preparing students for studying abroad. My formal education was entirely made in the USA, but then again, that is where I was born and raised. While I did spend 20 months in a preparatory school affiliated with a university in Taiwan in my early twenties, I drew from my memories of college in the pre-Microsoft,

pre-Starbucks 1970s at the University of Washington in Seattle for conveying information to students about 'what it's like' to study in a 'foreign' country. I assumed that the key elements of the experience remain the same, especially where reading and testing are concerned.

Not only is the reading load far heavier in American universities, but the cost of textbooks is far higher in that students are required to buy more than just one or two (even if availability of used books helped keep the price somewhat manageable). This is especially true with history, though there were obviously no on-line sources thirty years ago when I was a university student and photocopying technology was still in the developmental stages. I tried to impress upon students this key difference. For example, in an introductory course on modern East Asian history, I recall having to read five or six complete books, including the core tome which was written by the main lecturer himself, Dr. George Taylor, an old China hand. The teaching assistants conducted workshops for discussion on Tuesdays and Thursdays while the professor gave lectures on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Lectures and workshops were fifty minutes each (if memory serves me right), far shorter but more intensive than the hour and a half allotted for my class at Bunkyo. The strategy for testing I applied came mainly from what I observed in this East Asian modern history class. The impression has lasted profoundly, probably because it was my first quarter of my first year at university, and I was paying my own way through school.

For the final exam, we were told to bring bluebooks to class, the equivalent of Bunkyo's *touanyoushi*, standard procedure for essays. However, we were given the questions in advance for preparation - about seven in number - and informed at the same time that only one of the questions would actually be asked for the examination. Obviously, we were not told which one it would be. That meant that the test would contain no surprises, but at the same time demanded focus and allowed no excuses for failure. (Prior to the test bluebooks were collected and

redistributed in order to discourage and uncover any incident of cheating where a student had written the essay in advance.)

In describing this approach to students, I offered the following essay questions, telling them that ordinarily they would have to prepare all of them for an exam as they would not know which question or questions would ultimately be asked.

1. Discuss the way the Spanish conquistadors played one nation of natives against the other to gain advantage in the New World.
2. Contrast the French, Spanish and English approaches to the natives in the New World and summarize the reasons for the differences.
3. Explain the role of the Catholic church in establishing a European presence in the New World.
4. Analyze the propaganda techniques used by the Spanish in maintaining 'profitable' relations with the natives.
5. What caused the mass depopulation of indigenous peoples after the 'discovery' of America, and what was the effect of this decrease?
6. Interpret the writing of Bartolome de las Casas? What were his motives?
7. What is Christopher Columbus's proper place in history?

I have in past classes required that all questions be prepared in the strict 'American style' as there appeared to be more students capable of meeting the challenge. It was an extremely unpopular idea even then. Reality dictates that a more watered-down approach is the only reasonable alternative with today's Bunkyo English majors.

### Christopher Columbus: The Lecture and the Outline

The twenty-five study questions were distributed to all the students. (Questions

and summaries for each article appear in Appendix B.) Each student found the five questions which corresponded to his or her article and ideally had the answers prepared for the class session dealing with the exchange of information and ideas. They were given two days to have their article read and their answers ready. In a full 90-minute period, students found the answers to the twenty other questions from classmates and in either English or Japanese wrote the answers down in a format of their own choosing.

The question to consider was: What is Christopher Columbus's proper place in history?

Ideally, students would break into study groups of five members each to flesh out the answers to all questions. In the next class session, I go over the answers in the form of an outline, written on the board, that forms the basis of an essay answer to the question of what Columbus's 'proper place in history' is. This is the opportunity for presenting both a standard lecture and tips on answering the question.

I first call attention to the question and the operative words within it. Typically, essay questions can contain such words as 'compare' and 'contrast,' 'discuss,' 'define,' 'defend,' 'summarize' and 'evaluate' to name a few. They are told the varying nuances of each. Failure to appreciate the meanings of these terms could result in a wasted effort and little or no credit. Once it is established that wording is imperative, I offer a few additional pointers, being careful not to overwhelm them with a complexity of rules. I urge them to avoid sentimentality, as there is a tendency to overuse exclamation points. Also, I caution them not to be too conversational in their style. It is perfectly acceptable to get straight to the point without windy introductions. Arguably, their essays are being written for anyone with an interest in the subject matter, and not just me, the instructor. Consequently, they are obligated to present a balance of contending ideas where applicable to show familiarity with the arguments. I do not expect arguments

will be brutally extremist, but at the same time I do not welcome the notion that somehow 'agreeing with the teacher' is an acceptable or desirable path to follow in essay writing.

The outline on Columbus is written on the board as follows:

I. Introduction: Stating the Problem

- A. 1992: 500th Anniversary of the 'Discovery' of America by Columbus
- B. Eurocentrics v. the Politically Correct

II. The Columbus Personality

A. Hero

- 1. Textbook evidence
- 2. Christian virtue

B. Villain

- 1. Lies of omission in textbooks
- 2. Motives of greed
- 3. History exploited for molding citizens

C. Who Really Discovered America?

III. 500 Years Since Columbus: Good or Bad?

A. Mostly Good

- 1. The 'birth' of Europe
- 2. Transoceanic exchange

B. Mostly Bad

- 1. Slavery
- 2. Genocide
- 3. Disease

#### IV. Is Vilification of Columbus Fair?

A. A Man of His Time

B. The World in 1892

C. Oversimplifications

#### V. Conclusion

I pass out an essay sample based on the above outline, 'meat to go with the bones' as I like to call it, which is in effect a written out form of the lecture given on the topic. Names in parentheses are those of the writers of articles used in the information exchange exercise (see Appendix B).

##### *What is Christopher Columbus's proper place in history?*

The controversy over whether or not to 'celebrate' the life of Christopher Columbus was especially heated during the 500th anniversary of the 'discovery' of America in 1992. The clash is between the 'Eurocentrics' who recognize Columbus as something of a hero and the 'politically correct' who think the standard interpretation of history should be revised.

Was Columbus a hero? Those who believe the traditional history books would have learned that he had vision, courage, intelligence, keen leadership skills and a deep faith in God. He attempted to convince the intellectuals of his time that the earth was round and that he could reach the Orient by sailing west rather than east. He also cleverly kept a frightened and quarrelsome crew from spoiling his dream (Loewen).

Even Eurocentrics would agree that it was already known that the world was round. The politically correct believe Columbus was an evil slave-driving man who started a pattern of rape and murder of the Indians while stealing their land.

His crew was not foolish at all, but made to look bad in history books so that Columbus, the 'boss' figure, would look good (Loewen).

As to the 'discovery' of America, it was not Columbus who did it. Obviously, the Native Americans had been there long before - from as early as 70,000 B.C. The first European in America may likely have been Leif Ericson from Iceland who arrived five centuries before Columbus (Loewen).

What makes 1492 so significant, then? It was the beginning of an enormous transoceanic exchange. Food from the New World such as corn, potatoes, chili peppers and peanuts helped make possible a greater sustainable population in Europe. To the New World went horses, domestic livestock and wheat - as well as beads for trading with the Indians. Land was replaced by gold as a basis of wealth and status. Significantly, too, the awareness of a 'New World' naturally spawned the 'idea' of Europe (Loewen).

Of course, there was an enormous human cost as well as a benefit. Indian communities were 90 percent destroyed by diseases new to them. Indians were enslaved and many killed themselves to avoid enslavement. Later millions of slaves were imported from Africa (Loewen).

The year 1492 came at a time when bigger guns were being developed and paid for with tax money collected by bureaucracies. Maps and ships were better than before and the invention of the printing press meant more information being processed and consumed. There was a new curiosity about the world in general. If Columbus had not 'discovered' America, someone else would have (Loewen, Schlesinger).

Was it appropriate to celebrate 1492 in 1992? It depends on the frame of reference. Unlike in 1892, 1992 followed a rise in Asian (i.e. non-white) power, resentment toward imperialism and a civil rights movement (Schlesinger).

America has meant hope and freedom for millions around the world for five centuries. It has helped fight tyranny abroad in our own century (Krauthammer).

Yet problems of unemployment, alcoholism, poor health and land rights among its native peoples remain unsolved to a significant extent (Harjo).

America surely is not all bad, just as Indian civilizations were not entirely good. Both sides of the issue demonstrate a tendency toward simplifying history for their own political gain. Human sacrifices (Aztec), ecological mismanagement (Maya) and contempt for individuality (Inca) are not fondly remembered as a part of the Indian legacy, yet emphasis on the negative aspects of European civilization in America is widespread. On the other hand, European Americans have historically ignored the sufferings of the Indians. Eyewitness accounts of Indian torture under the Spanish, for example, have often been missing from textbooks (Krauthammer, Schlesinger, las Casas).

Regardless of viewpoint, all are Americans. The year 1492 should be recognized at least as an extraordinary year in human history. If there is a celebration at all, it should be one of hope for a stronger unity through mutual understanding among diverse peoples.

J. Graham

The above exercise is intended as a 'walk-through' of what is expected. I tell the students that for the next essay, a mock test, they will be in control. At this point, however, some clear and expected problems already emerge.

### Foreseen Hurdles

One problem I soon perceived about writing an essay of this length within a 45 to 50 minute period was getting substantial quantity, not to mention quality. Many college students are unable to write cursively which in theory would seem to be a major drawback when competing with those who can. (It is no surprise

that those who cannot write it are not skilled in reading it either.) I do not care to speculate on why this skill is no longer taught widely in Japanese schools (or even in American ones for that matter), but those who do have the skill are growing fewer through the years. Not teaching it, I had thought, only contributed to raising the language barrier even higher for those keen on using their writing skills in an English-speaking academic environment. I devoted a special class entirely to cursive writing which was greeted with enthusiasm by students who desired the skill. The purpose was not so much to promote 'penmanship' or attractive writing, but merely to increase writing speed through the joining of lower case letters. A homework assignment was given requiring the opening paragraph of the Declaration of Independence be copied and submitted in cursive writing - as well as a transcript in block letters of a handwritten letter written by Harry S. Truman to his wife in 1958 about the future of the atom. The feedback on this session revealed that while it was 'fun,' the students already adept at writing cursively said they actually wrote faster in block letters anyway. I moved on and dismissed the inability to write cursively as a barrier to progress.

A far more nagging problem, altogether avoidable and all too typical, was simply lack of preparation. In assigning five different articles to a five-member study group, a diversity of viewpoints is demonstrated. The whole point is lost when a student lacks the sense of responsibility for having the article read in advance and reasonably understood for the group study session. Some students read the article during actual class time which was scheduled for discussion. Walking about the classroom I caught others literally starting out 'on the wrong page' altogether. Pointing this out to the various offenders drew laughter which, I could only hope, was an expression of embarrassment.

English education in Japan has produced an intriguing but unfortunate irony that is yet another problem: the fact that although students are English majors, a number of them view the language more as a dead organism than a living one,

poking and probing to understand its anatomy and the names of its parts for scoring well on exams, while missing, as it were, the miracle of life. (Teachers who are native speakers are at least reminders of that 'miracle' by their mere physical presence.) Most students don't read English for personal pleasure. And because English tends to be seen as strictly an exercise in mental gymnastics, the 'fondness' expressed for it is due more to the fact that other fields of study such as mathematics have been eliminated because of their difficulty, with English the 'winner' by default. The articles I assign are not generally heavy-laden with academic jargon, but written by scholars with the general public in mind on a reading level matching that required for understanding a common newspaper. Students ordinarily do not read English language newspapers in a spontaneous and natural way, only giving them consideration when newspaper articles are required reading for a class such as this. Even 'serious' students have confessed to me that the only English book they ever read is a textbook. Therefore, when hardworking students go to the trouble of meticulously looking up words they do not understand in their dictionaries, they may easily miss the full impact of the message, the result in part of lack of fluency practice outside the classroom.

So with diligent students lacking full confidence and less hardworking students having not a clue, the essay topic becomes the American Revolution. Despite the abovementioned hurdles, the simple fact that virtually everyone is approaching the task with a handicap of some kind is heartening enough to proceed with some degree of interest and enthusiasm.

### The American Revolution: What the Students Are Told

What were the causes of the American Revolution, and just how 'revolutionary' was it?

Admittedly, the subject is one to which entire books have been devoted,

never mind a paragraph or two written within a mere fifty-minute time limit. Despite the inevitable broad brushstrokes necessitated in even the best answer to a question of this nature, it leads students to think about not only what the American War for Independence was about, but about the nature of revolution itself.

Students were encouraged to turn to primary sources for appreciating the meaning of the American Revolution. Two obvious documents were the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, reflecting two important but different stages of the transformation. It was emphasized that what took place in the colonies was something unique in modern history: a country without a monarchy that established a government deriving its powers from the consent of the governed who in turn pledged a portion of their property in taxes to guarantee protection of the remainder of their property (the social contract). More profoundly, the revolution was a recognition that governments can not and should not play God, that "all men are created equal," and that there are "unalienable rights" of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." These ideas are the stuff of a national identity. Unlike Japan or even Great Britain, the United States defines itself on the bedrock of the democratic principle. There is no blood lineage binding a people to each other or a shared and sacred past.

War is a deliberate and violent instrument of change, although unlike Latin American revolutionaries, the North American transformation began with businessmen and lawyers, erupting in military conflict only when every other option had been exhausted. It was the enormous cost of fighting for dominance in North America in the French and Indian War that the British felt compelled to levy taxes on the colonists who up to the middle of the 1760's had pursued livelihoods generally unfettered by the rules of mercantilism. Prior to this period British authority did not want to alienate the colonists with interference in their regular business of ignoring the rules of mercantilism.

Ever aware that colonial assistance against the French would be a requirement for winning a war on the continent, the British were content to let trade regulations go unenforced ('salutary neglect') until they felt it time to exploit American prosperity to pay a whopping war bill. I try to compare the indignation expressed by colonial merchants with the reaction that might come from professional pachinko players who, if suddenly told they could no longer convert their winnings of lighter flints or rice crackers into cash in those darkly concealed exchange booths, would rise up in protest. Since they cannot convert their buckets of little metal balls directly into yen and must first receive the commensurate harvest of worthless prizes, and since the booths are deliberately designed to be as inconspicuous as possible, we have a situation somewhat resembling the non-enforcement of the Navigation Acts to which colonists had happily grown accustomed.

Furthermore, the taxes were imposed by Parliament which consisted of members who were not chosen through fair and democratic elections to represent the colonists. This perceived 'tyranny' was exacerbated by the dispatching of occupation troops sent to 'protect' the colonists with the understanding that the troops would be fed and quartered by appreciative subjects of the king. Every effort was made to try to correct these so-called injustices over a decade-long period without severing ties with the mother country to which the majority of Americans still felt an allegiance. It was only when the British were perceived as unreasonably aggressive in enforcing their demands on the colonies that war became inevitable.

Contrary to what many students would expect, the United States has not always been a major military power in the world. In fact, from the late colonial period, a popular resentment of standing armies has been deeply engrained in the American character (which in part explains the enigma of the Second Amendment) and begins with resistance to the obligatory quartering of British

occupation troops. Even after the Civil War, the American army was basically a large "national police force," with a reasonably fitted navy patrolling the two vast oceans that protected the continent (Anderson and Cayton 320). (It was the rise of fascism in the early 20th century and the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor that helped create the armed leviathan that is the U.S. armed forces today [Cooke 335-38].) The notion, therefore, that the United States emerged immediately as some formidable influence in the world after winning its independence is only viable to the extent that it inspired other peoples - most notably the French - to assess their lot in terms of self-determination. This was not the beginning of any overt crusade to convert the world to American-style democracy.

Just how 'revolutionary' was the American rebellion against royal taxation policies and military occupation? Unfortunately, there is no fixed answer as the disagreement among historians reveals. Being an abstraction requiring mental processes that transcend memorization of mere facts, the meaning of 'revolution' is not well understood, especially when history classes promote the view of the past as a pageant of heroes struggling to achieve brighter tomorrows. An intelligent comprehension of the concept of revolution and its social implications can only come from being reasonably well read in sources other than standard textbooks, something most students are not. The readings I supplied them were an attempt to fill in those gaps, although it became clear that many students had trouble comprehending them due to either a lack of concentration or an obsessive-compulsive use of the dictionary in looking up definitions to single words without attempting to grasp hints of their meaning in the context.

### The First Mock Test

Previous to conducting the first essay test, I informed students that the

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) now has a twenty-five minute essay section which an MIT professor has estimated requires at least 400 words for passing. As incredible as it may sound, the professor says he is confident that test graders are less interested in quality answers than in sheer quantity. The professor claims that when shown a test paper from a distance far enough that he cannot read what is written, he can estimate the score based solely on the quantity of words with a fair amount of accuracy. On top of this he asserts there are a significant number of factual errors that are allegedly dismissed by the graders without much pause (Wertheimer). I reminded my students that, unlike the College Board, I am also interested in quality, and if in the United States a 'good' speed is 400 words in twenty-five minutes, then 800 words in fifty minutes is the target to shoot for. It is a feeble attempt at humor while throwing in an interesting tidbit of information about test-taking overseas.

In the fifty minutes of test-taking, the room filled with a low staccato of dits, dots and pops, the storm of lead raining down on paper, reminding me of the sound of coffee percolating. The point of sparking this chorus was to give a feel for what it was like to write under pressure physically as well as mentally, for the need for speed and the importance of keeping thoughts. I do not insist the answers be memorized at this stage, and allow use of notes and photocopied materials. The hope was that they would be able to synthesize their various sources into a single voice they could call their own, a result of prior thought and preparation.

The result was mixed as expected. I classify each essay into categories of good, adequate and inadequate for organization of argument. Does the introduction connect smoothly with the conclusion? Does the answer actually address the question? After making that classification, I counted points raised, placing a check in red pen on key words, names, places, dates, etc. The overall score is expressed as a plus for 'good,' a check mark for 'adequate' and a minus

for 'inadequate' with the number of points. This form of scoring allows for people to get higher scores for good organization than for simply packing lots of facts into a narrative.

Lower marks were due to the usual lack of preparation which does not necessarily reflect a lack of interest, but rather an assumption that mere physical presence and politeness in the classroom will somehow merit college credit, an annoying assumption that is extremely common.

Problems in the essays appear to stem from a lack of familiarity with the general tone of history writing. Some were quick to inject personal bias with words like "crazy" or "wonderful." One particularly good narrative packed a bizarre conclusion about American slavery ("gradually died out" after the Revolution) and about America itself ("I doubt it is a country."). A number of papers wasted precious pencil power on lame and unnecessary transitions: "And now I want to talk about what happened after the war." A more endearing oversight was labeling the 1773 anti-British raid on cargo by disguised members of the Sons of Liberty as "the Boston Tea *Ceremony*," an entirely understandable error for Japanese to make.

The lowest marks were zeroes for two students who copied text material verbatim for their essays (despite warnings not to) without quotation marks or a single original sentence. I would emphasize that others did not do this, though less brazen instances of plagiarism were also observed where phrases or single words appeared without quotation marks, suggesting that there was something 'in the culture' that tended to lighten the weight of moral baggage Westerners associate with theft. (A special class about the hazards of plagiarism is included in the schedule to deal with this perennial problem, particularly where it relates to writing the term paper.)

A two-page report for students outlining problems in organization and errors in content was handed out as a reference for preparing the next essay in hopes

that the same kinds of problems were not repeated or are at least reduced in frequency. There was no revision required of essays, a general feature of standard writing classes, given the time limit factor.

I did not give a 'good' mark (plus) to any of the essays this time. There remain a number of English majors who even in their third year do not indent paragraphs. Of the majority who do, there are a large number of students lacking a feel for what paragraphs are beyond simply indenting. An intelligent use of paragraphs is a major requirement for a 'good' score. In addition, many of the better essays were strong on narrative, but weak on analysis, leaving the question only half answered. This is due in part to the time limit, but also arises from an inability to summarize in a meaningful way; thus my writers got mired in details that could be expressed in fewer words. Also, as the question is an academic one, some indication they are familiar with the contending arguments of the experts would have been welcomed with their being mentioned by name. Of the forty-two who took the test, sixteen received a mark of 'adequate.' Of those, the top score was 39 for points raised. About five essays were of this quality more or less.

With hopes that errors made in the first mock exercise would not be repeated in the second, we proceed to the nineteenth century, an age of expansionism, wars of subjugation and the reach for global empire. How this aggression was reconciled with the spirit of the American Revolution is the subject of the next essay.

### The Age of Expansion: What the Students Are Told

The second essay is another wide open topic which spans an entire century. Its subject asks the student to consider the meaning of the American Revolution's legacy and how it was reconciled with the apparent contradiction of expansion

and its accompanying subjugation of peoples who were themselves engaged in a liberation movement against colonial masters. I introduce some of the contradictions in a lecture that traces the various land grabs that follow the Revolution, particularly those directly involving warfare.

I begin by demonstrating what is, in Herbert Joseph Muller's phrase, a 'use of the past.' George Washington is mentioned in two of the readings as a model to which Cuban and Philippine leaders could easily aspire. Even the Confederacy, for all its allegedly fascist elements, used George Washington in its official seal. Indeed, Washington's birthday was the day of inauguration for President Jefferson Davis. There was even the suggestion that the Confederacy be called the "Republic of Washington" (Vodrey). The affinity for the first president undoubtedly arose from his being a native Virginian and the fact he owned slaves, though the first president expressed a personal hope that slavery would eventually disappear. (Washington wrote in his will that his slaves should be freed and taught to read and write prior to manumission [Vodrey].) Despite firm evidence that Washington was solidly committed to a strong federation of states, the Confederacy was confident that its commitment to the preservation of property rights, i.e. slavery, reflected the original meaning of the Constitution, a document that ceased to ring true for the South with growing isolation stemming from the North's hostility to the expansion of slavery into the territories. Even in Lincoln's immortal Gettysburg Address, a dramatic reaffirmation of the Declaration of Independence, "government of the people, by the people and for the people" resonated in Southern ears as approval of the principle of self-determination (Cooke 214).

The spirit of the Revolution was not only an issue of protecting property, but embraced the idea that governments exist to benefit the governed and that their legitimacy is based on the consent of those governed, that citizens are not royal subjects, but reasonable (propertied and male) beings possessing 'equal rights'

for government participation, and that they enjoy such rights and freedoms guaranteed in an amendable constitution designed to guard against the tyranny of central authority through an established separation of powers.

Can these principles be reconciled with the great land grabs of the 19th century that seemed to deny other people what Americans claimed as their birthright? One notion of a national mission famously expressed in the tidy phrase of "manifest destiny" was responsible for violent acquisition of Texas and the Mexican Cession, and the saber-rattling that resulted in gaining from Britain the land that today comprises the states of Washington and Oregon. Coined by John L. O'Sullivan in an article entitled "The Great Nation of Futurity" in *The United States Democratic Review* (1845), "manifest destiny" described a mission "to establish on earth the moral dignity and salvation of man" in the form of "the great nation of futurity" which would span from ocean to ocean. Meanwhile, native peoples were forced off the lands of the ancestors and a large percentage of a neighboring sovereign country was made a part of the United States.

Texas was responsible for two bloody wars, one for its own independence, and a greater war between the United States and Mexico triggered by Texas's entry into the Union. Texans were Americans who had originally been welcomed by the Mexicans to help settle a desolate region. The irresistible opportunity for free land attracted a large number of settlers from the American South who were not amenable to Mexico's ban on slavery, its Catholicism, and its growing desire that Texans acknowledge they were Mexicans and not Americans by learning Spanish and converting to Catholicism. Even though Texans were exempted from Mexico's anti-slavery law, and even as President Andrew Jackson offered in vain to "buy" Texas from Mexico, Texans declared their independence after losing patience with the presence of unwanted Mexican troops in their midst, a situation closely resembling the "intolerable" conditions suffered by American colonists sixty years earlier. Violent confrontation with the Mexican army

under the command of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna occurred tragically at the Alamo in San Antonio on March 6, 1836, where the holed up Texan 'heroes' were eliminated to the last white male defender. The tide was reversed 46 days later at San Jacinto with the humiliating defeat of the Mexicans and the decisive success of the "Texan Revolution." Texas, therefore, played out in many ways as a reenactment of the birth of the United States, richly imbued with the rhetoric of self-determination and freedom.

Mexico was plagued by internal strife, wounded pride and fear of a ripple effect where other states might attempt secession following the Texas example ("Texan Annexation Question"). It never formally recognized Texan independence and banked on hopes that North American civilization would collapse in due time (Anderson and Cayton 272); it protested bitterly when after nine years as a republic Texas was annexed by the United States. A disagreement over the Texan border became a major issue, and American soldiers dispatched to the disputed area were fired upon by Mexican troops, thus launching a war that resulted in a 17 percent increase in the size of the United States. It was a war of naked conquest, although the land was bought off Mexico at gunpoint for \$15 million. Yet unlike the Japanese who to this day are expected to hang their heads in shame over past aggression in Manchuria and China proper, the Americans scored a complete victory over an enemy similarly treated as racially inferior and weak. What the war with Mexico did above all was set the stage for the Civil War, for the issue of whether or not to permit slavery in the newly acquired lands, if settled in favor of free labor, would politically isolate the South and call into question the usefulness of its continued membership in the Union.

The Civil War does not assume a prominent place in this course about America at war because it was an internal affair that did not involve loss of foreign blood. Arguably, the American Revolution was a civil war as well, but it bears the seeds of the American ideal and for that much cannot be ignored. Attention leaps

across the national turmoil of the early 1860's to an era of reconciliation where Blue and Gray find themselves fighting together again on the battlefields of Cuba and the Philippines in struggles tied to a whole new interpretation of 'manifest destiny'

Ironically, the *causus belli* of wars of the late 19th and early 20th century run counter to the subjugation of native peoples in the West, the 'redskins' whose land was craved for its gold or the potential wealth it posed as farmland. After the Civil War, the army's main mission was to bring these 'tribes' under control. The notion of external threats was virtually non-existent. However, stirrings for independence from Spain among neighboring Cubans were given sensational banner headlines by major American newspapers eager to increase readership. Genuine concern about the future of the area was rooted in business and trade interests as well as ambitious plans for a canal across Central America that would ultimately bring the East and West closer together. Spain was typified as the villain in the struggle, and the colonized Cubans were hailed as valiant revolutionaries in the spirit of George Washington (Stavans 55-6). When an American battleship sent to protect American interests in Havana mysteriously exploded, the blame was placed squarely on Spain and war was eventually declared. Just as with Columbus whose initial praise of native peoples was transformed by 'cognitive dissonance' into contempt when they failed to give him the gold he wanted (Loewen 68), Americans began to see the local Cubans as "niggers" who were incapable of governing themselves or intelligently managing their natural heritage (Stavans 55-6). With Spain defeated and removed from the Hemisphere, Cuba was effectively made an American satellite. Here the spirit of 'manifest destiny' a half century earlier trumped any revolutionary principles of self-determination.

The first major victory in the war with Spain took place on the other side of the world in Manila Bay with Admiral Dewey's spectacular and overwhelming

victory against the Spanish fleet. Despite this effective show of American force, navies of Britain, France, Germany and Japan show up to assess the vacuum left by the Spanish (Pike). The United States becomes a reluctant imperial power by failing to hand over the Philippine Islands to their rightful owners, the Filipino people, who had hoped against hope that the Americans would prove to be their liberators. The islands were 'purchased' from the Spanish for \$20 million.

Instead, a guerrilla war raged between American soldiers and equally cruel Filipino fighters. A racist element came into play with Americans who were already seasoned by long years of Indian fighting. Add to that the panic and anxiety that result from encountering the unfamiliar, not knowing friend from foe and susceptibility to tropical diseases, all extreme disadvantages when numbering 126,000 against a population of 7 million. Atrocities in these circumstances occurred and sparked loud outcries of injustice in the United States, most notable among them was a voice of protest belonging to Mark Twain.

Yet despite the protests, the American occupation of the Philippines was a 'success' in a number of ways. Aguinaldo, leader of the independence movement, could not get foreign help through the navy blockade - and had failed to rally his people effectively against the Americans who were better disciplined and had actually managed in moments of boredom to get to know the locals well enough to understand them. The American Congress prohibited large landholding among American citizens in the Philippines and further promised the people of the archipelago that independence would eventually come. Those who cooperated with the American authorities found it personally profitable, while those who resisted were treated harshly.

The country that is the Philippines today owes its democratic institutions to American input, whether for better or for worse. Nevertheless, students need to ask themselves if the principles of the American Revolution were betrayed in this forgotten war and in the various land grabs that preceded it under the banner of

'manifest destiny.'

Test results on this theme showed a difficulty in keeping focused on the meaning of the 'spirit' of the American Revolution. Parrotting passages of the textbook was common, and much of the organization was haphazard, sprinkled with chattiness, inappropriate exclamation marks, misspellings, and first names in place of surnames. Confusing 'their' with 'our' is typical and done in a manner that made 19<sup>th</sup>-century American history sound like it was something more personal than it could possibly be.

Stereotyping was also prominent, with assumptions made about the cruelties of slavery that defied common sense. Wholesale slaughter? The United States was consistently singled out for its colonial 'evils' even though it was competing with European powers in an imperialist game that was prominent in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as was true with Meiji Japan for that matter. The tendency to moralize without facts in the answers was heavy, and would even be harder to suppress in the next topic, the atomic bomb.

### The Atomic Bomb: What The Students Are Told

I included this topic because it had been successful in the past in other classes for generating a high level of interest among all varieties of students, from generally serious to the not-so-serious. The reasons are obvious. Here Japan and the United States combine to make world history in a unique, intimate and terrible way. Everyone knows about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Everyone has something to say about it. The lesson calls on them to reassess or reaffirm opinions that are invariably based in a dense foundation of propaganda and raw emotion.

On rare occasions I have had students in class who actually came from the

cities that were bombed, but generally Japanese students view the atomic bomb attacks as horrific tragedies bringing unprecedented damage and suffering to countrymen; they show they are also able to distance themselves from the atomic bomb in a manner not possible for those who grew up in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nevertheless, students possessing knowledge of the reasons for President Truman's decision, however misguided they may think it was, are few - and those who independently seek an intelligent understanding of it are fewer still. A student who I'd classify in the "not-so-serious" category came to class completely unprepared and asked me what the lesson was about. When I told her it was about the pros and cons of the atomic bomb attacks on Japan at the end of World War II, she wondered what there was to discuss, adding that it was "a matter of course" that she, as a Japanese, would find President Truman's decision repugnant. My reply was that the purpose of the whole class was to question things that might be described as "a matter of course" (*kimatteiru*). Seeing issues as cut-and-dried frees a person from having to think, and there are many who do not particularly enjoy thinking about anything. The student slept through much of the lesson.

Naturally, the complexity of factors that led Truman to make his decision cannot be summarized in just a few articles. It was up to the teacher to introduce other factors involved.

There was, for example, no mention in the study materials of the Battle of Okinawa, an 83-day campaign that resulted in the deaths of over 12,000 Americans (a very low estimate, and that is not to mention 120,000 Japanese). Okinawa weighed heavily on Truman's mind given an invasion of Japan's home islands was believed to entail a repeat of this bloodbath on a far grander scale. Japanese soldiers and civilians, indoctrinated into viewing surrender as a form of profound shame in such manuals as the Senjinkun, were resolved to defend

the homeland to the bitter end if need be. General Anami Korechika, who was counting on "the decisive battle," pledged that Japan would fight to the finish. Already American sailors had observed the desperate and horrifying suicide dives of 10,000 airplanes piloted by Japanese youngsters, and it was not unreasonable to expect similar behavior should an invasion of Japan proper be initiated. That invasion, if executed, was believed likely to provoke the slaughter of over 100,000 American, Australian, Canadian and British POWs who were dying slow deaths in Japanese custody from malnutrition, disease and even vivisection (Hal Bruno interview with Allen and Polmar). On the diplomatic front, Japan was observed to express contempt for the surrender terms (Potsdam Proclamation) that were offered, rejecting it outright without request for clarification even as a guarantee for retention of the Emperor was provided. The entry into the war of the Soviet Union was not the "shock" that would bring it to its knees, nor were the bombs any kind of surprise to the Soviets whose atomic spies had already revealed their existence. It was the bombs that ended the war decisively; they further prevented the Soviets from gaining a say in Japan's postwar occupation (in a fashion that could conceivably have followed a North and South Korea pattern). All in all, it was better that the bombs had been used to stop a war rather than end one. The fact they have not been used since is ample evidence of their particularly horrifying efficacy. The use of the atomic bombs against Japan were, in Paul Fussell's words, "the most cruel ending of that most cruel war" (2).

But what if Truman had been wrong after all? Could it have all been a simple misunderstanding that contributed to the Allied interpretation of the Japanese response to the Potsdam Declaration as "curt and discourteous" (as described in Truman's letter to Tsukasa Nitoguri). Due to pending negotiations with the Russians and the fact terms had been delivered informally over the radio, Prime Minister Suzuki made the remark that no decision had been made on Allied demands. He used the term *mokusatsu* which can mean "no comment" or

literally, to "kill with silence." Translators assumed the latter. And why hadn't the Allies been more forthcoming about allowing the Japanese to keep their emperor, which is what happened anyway? Wouldn't that have been an ample cause for the Japanese to surrender and save face? Furthermore, as concluded by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey in 1946, "in all probability prior to 1 November 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated" (qtd. in Shenkman 103). Russia was surely the excuse Japan's leaders were waiting for to formalize surrender. Yet Truman insisted on using the new weapons he himself had only just learned of and which Roosevelt had appeared far more reluctant to exploit (Lifton, 208). General Dwight Eisenhower and Admiral William Leahy considered using the bombs a tragic mistake. Indeed, leading scientific advisers such as Leo Szilard who contributed to the bomb's development were opposed to its use; Szilard even remarked that had the Germans used it first those responsible would have hanged as war criminals (qtd. by Raico). It would appear that the bombs were political tools for intimidating the Soviets and showing critics that Truman was prepared to take a firm stand against the Japanese. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were raw revenge for Pearl Harbor, and at the very worst holocausts rooted in racist hatred.

The question posed to the students, therefore, was this: How did Truman and his supporters justify the use of two atomic bombs against Japan at the end of World War II? Do you agree or disagree with his decision? Give reasons for your answer.

As always, students were strongly encouraged to examine both sides of the issue and to save the emotional face of opinion for the end of the essay. I assured them that understanding an opposing viewpoint did not mean abandoning one's own, but it was intellectually irresponsible to dwell on one side of an issue, particularly one as prone to the distortions of raw emotion as this one.

## Closed Book Test: Judging Truman

This time students were only allowed the use of a book-form dictionary during the test. (Electronic dictionaries tend to be too encyclopedic.) Several students expressed a wish to have access to one, though outside of looking up spellings it is doubtful a dictionary would have been of any genuine use. More to the point, they required some kind of mental outline from which to develop their answer. Again, they had only 50 minutes.

Of the forty-two who took the exam, 23, slightly over half, wrote that they could not support Truman's decision to use two atomic bombs against Japan. Another two suggested the first bomb dropped on Hiroshima might have been justifiable, but not the second one dropped on Nagasaki. Only three did not fault Truman and agreed with his choice. The other 14 did not state opinions clearly enough to indicate one way or the other if they agreed. While this may appear wishy-washy on the surface, it at least reveals that the student weighed both sides of the issue and recognized its complexities.

While unavoidably subjective, grading tended to be more generous with this topic because students had already established familiarity with it in previous classroom experiences, though anecdotal evidence suggests those experiences were largely visceral and manipulated for generating public consensus about Japan's 'victimhood' during the war. An answer that received a 'plus' grade (good) was well-organized and contained a balanced amount of information for and against Truman, as well as information supplementing what was introduced in class by me. A 'check' (satisfactory) included a basic understanding of why Truman had the bombs dropped, although the essay may have been lacking in balance and/or information. A 'minus' (unsatisfactory) was given to essays with heavy (and expected) anti-Truman bias that ignored any conceivably reasonable

justification for the bombs or read like a list of preachy platitudes about the evils of war, i.e. an attempt to get credit for having an (uninformed) opinion. I gave minuses to slightly less than a third of the class.

I could not help but wonder if this was the first time some of the students ever even gave serious thought to why Truman ordered the bombs dropped. An essay test requiring them to list main points about Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the English language and then offer brief opinionated analysis within a time limit, was a unique experience for all of them. To top it off, the instructor was someone from the Baby Boom generation whose nationality happened to be American. Winning their confidence in my own objectivity was something of a challenge as raising points in favor of Truman for the sake of the exercise would suggest a bias. Consequently, trust was an important factor in a way that was quite different where other topics were concerned. In urging them to think of points they may have been disinclined to consider, I found myself inevitably arguing Truman's case.

A number of simple problems became apparent in the third essay. Language errors were consistent throughout, ranging from an unnecessary and awkward use of the passive voice (e.g. "Hiroshima and Nagasaki was dropped bombs by the U.S.") to a high level of incorrect use of large numbers (e.g. "It was predicted a thousand servicemen would die in an invasion of Japan."). Severe stylistic problems were revealed in chatty accounts of movies seen in school about the dropping of the atomic bomb - or mention of family members who had died in the war. While this is all very compelling in its proper context, it demonstrates that some students even at this late date did not understand what the essay exercise was about, or if they did, were incapable of producing what was expected due to lack of will or ability.

The more complex trouble areas dealt with the balancing act that was required in organizing the essay. It was difficult for the vast majority of students to

say anything sympathetic regarding Truman, although a significant number acknowledged that Truman believed he was also saving Japanese lives by using the bombs. What everyone ignored was the fact that this was actually a world war and people were dying every day in Asia and the Pacific - and every day spent when quarrelsome Japanese leaders debated "unconditional surrender" was another day of death and destruction; focusing only on the devastation suffered by Japan at this time diminishes the sufferings of other Asians. The British were spared the horrific task of taking back Malaya, for example, by the timing of the war's end which traditionalist thinking links to use of the bombs ("Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki"). Yet the weapons being used were, by implication in these essays, somehow not as terrible as nuclear weapons because, as one put it, they have no "hangover." (The long-term effects of radioactivity were something Truman had no way of knowing in full detail [Shenkman 103].) The horrors of conventional warfare are virtually unknown among today's Japanese students, a sign of *heiwaboke*, or a state of dull-mindedness induced by knowing only peace.

While it is hard to argue anything is really wrong with *heiwaboke*, a lack of imagination in appreciating conventional warfare handicaps one's capacity for forming an intelligent opinion about what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This is illustrated by the fact that few students mentioned what happened in Okinawa or the firebombing of Tokyo which together took many more lives than those lost in Hiroshima and Nagasaki put together. Truman did not want an invasion that would have meant more Okinawas (Hal Bruno interview with Allen and Polmar). Students also tended to see the U.S. rivalry with the Soviet Union as something petty, but a reason for Truman's desire to show off American power and gain "control" of Japan. This is a common argument made by those who criticize Truman for being bomb-happy, but it remains an historical fact that the Soviet Union did not advance into Hokkaido and through the timing of the

war's end Japan was spared the fate met by Korea, a divided state. The point of whether the atomic bomb is to thank for this or not was not raised.

The complexities of peace negotiations are too intricate for a brief discussion of this nature, but a number of students assumed that any gesture toward peace from Japan should have been acceptable to the Allies if the Allies were indeed intent on ending the war as soon as possible. The divisive nature of Japanese politics is completely ignored, not altogether unexpected given the tendency to oversimplify (and the restrictions of a time limit). The crucial issue of being able to retain the emperor system was kept deliberately vague by the Allies at the time and was highly controversial, though in retrospect it would appear that it should have been made obvious to the Japanese at the time. It was not. Students generally did not consider the inefficient decision-making process of Japan's leaders in the concluding days of the war or the fact that the country was essentially perched on the abyss of internal strife. The very idea that some Japanese in power were actually happy that the bombs were dropped, thus providing an excuse to end the war, only occurred to one student. And only one student mentioned that Hirohito's surrender broadcast made mention of "a most cruel bomb" as a face-saving excuse for concluding hostilities.

Easier for students to comprehend and write about were the alleged racist elements of the decision. Ultimately, it has to be proved that Truman was a racist since the decision belonged to him and him alone. He certainly could be heard saying the word "Jap," but that by itself does not suggest intent to commit genocide. Indeed, the cultural jewel of Kyoto was spared, and using a third bomb for Truman was an excruciating prospect because of "all those kids" (qtd. by Noel Griese in "Truman Doubts"). He ordered it not be used without direct presidential authorization. Truman went so far as to fire General MacArthur during the Korean War for the general's suggestion that fifty atomic bombs be used on the Yalu River to create a poisonous belt of radiation ("The Korean

War"). Finally, Truman is noted as being the president who desegregated the armed forces, another momentous decision which cost him politically among true racists in his party. Students who did not bother to learn on their own about Truman would not know these things. Instead, several used their nationality as a reason to condemn Truman. This "I-disagree-with-Truman's-decision-because-I-am-Japanese" rationale begs the question of why some Americans also believe Truman did the wrong thing; does that make them 'Japanese-Americans'?

A number of other students emphasized that Japan was the only country to be attacked with nuclear weapons. While true, it was not clear what point they were trying to make with this obvious statement, especially considering that as many as 22,000 Koreans also perished in the blasts and nuclear accidents would occur elsewhere in the world. At the very least the attacks are exploited as another feather for the cap of Japanese 'uniqueness' - but the point could well have been developed beyond that to highlight the fact the bombs have not been used since, and for that the world may have been spared even more horrific nuclear holocausts with bigger bombs in, for example, Korea. This, however, would imply that some good came of the horrors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and students are unable or unwilling to view these tragedies in the context of a broader positive trade-off because of the "being Japanese" frame of reference.

The revenge factor was cited by many as a reason for the dropping of the atomic bombs. The Japanese navy's attack on Pearl Harbor is still seen by Americans as an act of treachery as no widely known formal state of war existed between the U.S. and Japan at the time. The raid killed over two thousand military personnel and 68 civilians. It was because of this surprise attack that many Americans did not feel pangs of guilt for Hiroshima or Nagasaki, although characterizing Truman's decision as naked revenge for Pearl Harbor overlooks the fact that even with Japan's initiative in striking the United States, long campaigns followed of horrible battles fought in places of which the average

student has only vague, inaccurate or non-existent knowledge. The chronology between Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima is a black hole to the mind of the typical student, but had everything to do with Truman's decision to end the war as soon as humanly possible.

As for who was worse than whom during the war, few students were bold enough to single out the United States as the major offender. A large number of students admitted Japan was guilty of unspeakable atrocities, most infamously the Nanking Massacre and Unit 731 which experimented on live bodies in the name of medical science in Manchuria. Many mentioned the ill treatment of 100,000 Allied prisoners-of-war which I pointed out "could not be over-emphasized" as a factor in hastening Truman's decision to use the bombs. Only one student mentioned that Japan's military itself was trying to make an atomic bomb, a glaring fact that is a major annoyance for those bent on exploiting Hiroshima and Nagasaki as symbols of Victim Japan. If anything, the atomic bomb brought the U.S. down from its moral high horse and placed it on a par with its enemies by resorting to mass indiscriminate killing, although it is painful for a victor nation to admit that much. Worse yet, in exchange for Unit 731 data the United States worked to cover up Japanese crimes of human vivisection, etc. in a bid to gain advantage over the rival Soviet Union in germ warfare (Harris 223).

In summarizing, students were content to write that they believed a mutual acknowledgement of errors would be a constructive means of learning from history. No student expressed any open hostility toward Americans as a people because of the atomic bomb attacks.

One indication of the general temperament of the class is the frequency key issues were mentioned, however briefly, in the essays:

Acknowledgement of Truman's 'reasons'

37

Bomb used to intimidate Soviets	21
Mention of Pearl Harbor	18
Mention of Japanese war atrocities	14
Mention of Potsdam Declaration	7
The atomic bombs as 'experiments'	5
Total no. of essays	42

These data have been tallied from direct mention and not from reading between the lines or deciphering the rambling opinions that some students will typically mistake for an informed essay. While it is a relief that Truman was acknowledged by the vast majority as at least having had 'reasons,' however ill-founded, for dropping the bombs, less than half were inclined to grope about the detailed morass of war history for signs of Japanese wrongdoing.

### The Vietnam War: What the Students Are Told

The next essay question: How was it possible for a small poor country like North Vietnam to defeat a major superpower like the United States? Discuss America's motives and why it felt the sacrifice made was worth it for as long as it did.

First, the goals were outlined for the war on the blackboard. The U.S. sought to 1.) secure an independent Vietnamese state in the South and 2.) end general communist aggression in Southeast Asia, an action prompted by adherence to President Eisenhower's 'domino theory.' The North Vietnamese, on the other hand, sought to overthrow the puppet regime in the South, install a government 'of the people' and oust the foreign imperialist intruders.

Much of my information came from a taped lecture given by Lt. Col. Robert E. Morris of the Defense Intelligence College. The viewpoint of the professional

soldier, apart from the anti-war protests of newly returned veterans (which were shown in video), is a crucial element that the textbook and supplementary readings do not dwell on in a meaningful way. Just who fought the Vietnam War? The burden was carried largely by working class Southern whites, with middle and upper middle class males frequently serving in the high risk role of pilot. Morris states that soldiers in the Vietnam War were the best educated of any American war up to that time, with 79 percent of them being at least high school graduates. The average age of a soldier according to the Combat Area Casualty File (CACF) was 22. The same source places the average age of a combat victim at 21 years old or younger with a total number of war deaths at over 58,000. Contrary to what is often claimed about blacks having an inordinately high death rate in combat, 12.5 percent of those who died were African American, a rate commensurate with their percentage of the general population. The number lost on the Vietnamese side is harder to bring into sharp focus. The communists lost at least a million, a number which Morris claims is four times greater than South Vietnamese dead.

Although 2/3 of the soldiers who fought in World War II were drafted, the Vietnam War is more frequently considered the war that brought conscription into a negative light. Morris states that only 1/3 of those serving in Vietnam were actually drafted, although that is still a high number given American battle strength at one point was well over half a million. The act of avoiding the draft was conspicuous in the public eye, whether legitimate enrollment in college, or illegitimate escaping to neighboring Canada (Morris).

Battlefield behavior is another aspect of Morris's soldier profile. Officers were inexperienced and inconsistent. Frequently they did not really know who was in or out of their unit thanks to a rotation system that occurred every six months which made it difficult for soldiers to get accustomed to their work. Morris sees the year 1968 as the beginning of a general downhill trend in morale, with

serious problems of corruption, racism, theft, drugs and 'fragging' (murder of loathed comrades-in-arms in the peak of battle). Perhaps even more shocking than these often cited examples of decadence was the sheer overwork done by some personnel. Those flying helicopters put in 240 days a year of combat time which sharply contrasted with the average of 40 combat days for all of four years when fighting the Japanese during World War II. Battle wounds in Vietnam tended to be far more crippling than those of a generation before as well (Morris).

The war itself was waged in a clumsy and misguided manner. Mutual ignorance was a major factor which mitigated against scoring successes. The South Vietnamese did not understand their American allies, nor did the Americans understand the South Vietnamese. There was a patronizing attitude prevailing in American dealings which craved gratitude and obedience that were not always forthcoming. The notion of revolutionary warfare was an even greater enigma both for those fighting in the field and those calling the shots in Washington where civilian leaders made uninformed decisions about where to target (Morris). Soldiers meanwhile were mired in a war with no fronts or rears, a condition of popular nationalist warfare that had not been experienced since the Philippine Insurrection in the early 20th century.

Errors in strategy were abundantly apparent when President Lyndon Johnson, emboldened by a congressional response to a dubious attack on the U.S. Navy in the Gulf of Tonkin, sent in hundreds of thousands of soldiers and dropped millions of bombs to no avail. As Johnson asserted in his address of April 1965, there was a great fear of communist China dominating Southeast Asia. Morris points out that the fear was unfounded by the fact that the rail connection with North Vietnam turned out to be an insignificant one and, far more importantly, the Chinese did not want a repeat of the Korean War where they lost hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Given the internal strife of the Cultural Revolution which was flaring at the time, it is doubtful the Chinese could have been useful even if

they had wanted to be. Another problem was 'limited warfare' which prevented the Americans from invading the North or bombing roads and harbors in a timely way. The heavy troop strength was not fully expended toward combat, with only 60,000 of a peak 542,000 doing actual fighting. A lack of decisive action was partly due to the fact that Johnson's advisers did not enjoy telling him bad news, thus decisions of the commander-in-chief were ill-informed. Over-confidence in new war technologies may have also contributed to disappointing results, and the low-tech resiliency of the enemy in making astonishingly quick repairs to bombed infrastructure cannot be ignored as a factor working against U.S. 'victory' in Vietnam (Morris).

Students were introduced to the major premise of historian Barbara Tuchman's The March of Folly in a reading exercise earlier in the month. (They were given 30 minutes to read excerpts and summarize them in one or two simple sentences. Only one student in forty succeeded.) Despite the handicaps listed above, the policymakers did little to rectify them, instead resorting to actions that served only to escalate a bad situation into a worse one. Thus they demonstrated what Tuchman calls an "addiction to the counter-productive," an addiction that is supplied by the apparent support of a reasonably intelligent public that wishes to believe its leaders somehow know more than they do and are making wise choices. This combination of wishful thinking and self-destructive irrationality form the basis of 'folly.'

The role of the media in communicating or, as some argue, undermining the war effort is a major factor in considering the nature of 'folly' and 'defeat.' Morris supports Elegant's contention that a great deal of war news was packaged for a sensationalist market that was manipulated by ratings. He also supports Elegant's claim that some of the war's 'cruelties' against civilians, etc. were not spontaneous, but manufactured to deepen the news consumer's growing anxieties about the brutality of armed conflict. The Vietnam War was much like any other

war in the past, but because it was made intimately accessible and commodified for consumption by television audiences, its initial mission in stemming communist aggression grew increasingly dubious and the overall effort no longer seemed worth the cost. Even as the American military won victory after victory during the Tet Offensive onslaught of 1968, it was the shocking scene of combat taking place just outside the U.S. Embassy that convinced the public that the war was lost. Little focus was placed on the mass killings of civilians in indiscriminate communist rocket attacks or execution of anti-communist intellectuals. Instead, any ambiguity or weakness apparent in the American side was exploited for maximum effect in supporting a growing anti-military bias. It was not only television that took part in this effort.

Student attention was called to a handout featuring a series of photocopied photographs, nearly all of them prize-winning, from the Vietnam War era (see Appendix B). Each in some way illustrated the importance of a caption and how, taken only at face value, it might generate misunderstanding that would in turn serve the anti-war bias.

The war is also discussed in terms of social class. As earlier noted, most of those who served were white working class Southerners, often described as the only ethnic identity that has eluded the fashionable protection of political correctness. Given that they were merely following the orders of "the best and the brightest" civilian policymakers in Washington, it defied logic to pin the blame for the war's horrors and failures only on the soldiers. Yet they were either ignored or reviled on their return for having taken part in the Vietnam War, their reputation as "baby killers" acquired in large part through battlefield reports which were sifted through the elitist editorializing of the college-educated class. This is, of course, a stereotype, as public personalities no less illustrious or sophisticated than failed presidential candidates Al Gore and John Kerry served

in Vietnam with the average grunt. It was the election to the presidency of the telegenic anti-communist hardliner Ronald Reagan that helped win for Vietnam veterans the overdue recognition for service to "a noble cause" and an end to self-righteous indignation and rancor.

But the legacy lives on. Jane Fonda will not live down her ill-advised trip to North Vietnam that read like treason even to those feeling sympathy for the anti-war movement. Veterans continue to live desperate lives and commit suicide at alarming rates in the popular imagination, even when statistics actually tell us that anywhere from 70 to 90 percent of veterans had no regrets about serving in Vietnam, even when 85 percent make a successful adjustment to civilian life, even when nearly 90 percent of the American public have been polled showing support and respect for the veterans (Bacon).

And while we are told that the United States was defeated in this war, it was in reality the South Vietnamese who lost. Whether it was fought in vain can also be debated given that after the fall of Saigon no ASEAN nation at the time fell into communist hands. The killing fields of Cambodia that followed, the one-sided 'free' elections, the nagging poverty of Vietnam in the late 1970s and its recent growing prosperity through state capitalism all suggest the communists were morally and economically misguided. Likewise, the sheer statistics of expense in blood and treasure reveal that Americans were tragically overzealous in fighting communism's advance.

Why did the U.S. persist in Vietnam despite the obvious fact it was acting against its own best interests? It may have been they were hoping to overwhelm the communists with a show of "shock and awe." It may have been that munitions manufacturers were too influential and too eager to profit from the war. It may have been that there was a genuine fear of losing prestige and respect from other nations engaged in the effort to contain communist influence.

The failure to produce positive and satisfying results in Vietnam would take

form as the 'Vietnam Syndrome,' an excessive reluctance and fear to become involved in foreign wars again. Such caution long evaporated in the halcyon years of Reaganesque patriotism and the very real threat of terrorism in the 21st century.

The last in-class essay was an answer to a fairly straightforward question. Many successfully tackled the narrative angle, but too few ventured to answer the more perplexing second half which asked why the U.S. government behaved counterintuitively regarding its own interests. (The selected essay in Appendix C comes closest to hitting the mark.) A few of the answers were based on haphazard impressions of the current war in Iraq, i.e. the war in Vietnam was a war to liberate the North from communism rather than to defend 'democracy' in the South. Not surprisingly, these misinformed answers tended to groan with anti-American bias throughout. About half did not acknowledge that America's military involvement in Vietnam was a chapter in a long saga of struggle that began with the French. (Mention of Japan's wartime occupation of Vietnam is nowhere to be found in the essays. As far as modern history is concerned for many the world began in 1945.) The war is even addressed as one that "broke out" in 1960, though no mention of what the initial spark was that triggered the 'explosion.' (If anything, it would have to be the questionable Tonkin Incident of 1964.) Disappointingly, no attempt is made to compare the Vietnam quagmire with the war that took place in the beginning of the 20th century in the Philippines, a conflict involving guerrilla warfare that bears some striking similarities to the Vietnam War.

Interestingly, students were divided on Kennedy's role in the war. Some put the blame squarely on JFK while others suggest he would have saved the day had he not been assassinated. This is a genuine historical mystery and one that can only be speculated about. Far less ambiguous is Johnson's role as a major

escalator of the war. Yet few students were able to get any of the presidents straight in a meaningful way; no one attempted to discern any subtle differences in presidential approaches. This is in part due to the time limit, no doubt, but is also indicative of the stereotyping of the U.S. as a single-minded personality.

An additional test pertaining to the photographs was given after completion of the 50-minute essay. Predictably, a significant number of the students read the images exactly wrong, i.e. assuming the executioner is an American soldier, that the children in the "napalm girl" photo are escaping from American soldiers, that the helicopter on the rooftop is filling up with American soldiers running for their lives. Despite my best efforts to explain these photos and how they have been misinterpreted over the years, many brains immediately clicked into the preconception mode - and no amount of convincing otherwise could pry them loose from their rock solid prejudices. I almost think it would have been better not to have shown the photos at all.

Numbers and dates left a number of essay writers feeling lost, it appeared, especially (again) where it came to large numbers. There are big differences between 5,000 and 58,000 dead - or a cost of \$15 billion and \$150 billion. One student even wrote the cost of the Vietnam War in Japanese yen, not wanting to take the trouble to figure out the equivalent in dollars. Why bother?

Writing Asian names is understandably confusing, though 'confusion' is an advanced state of thought for many students who are happy to simply guess with spelling; sources of information referred to by students are more often in Japanese than English. The katakana syllabary does not always convert phonetically into correct English spelling. One paper had Ngo Dinh Diem's name written out as Go Din Jem. It is never clear here where to write the surname, especially when writing in English, so it is hard to fault them for not writing the name as Diem Ngo Dinh, especially when the name rarely appears this way in English. Less forgivable is the trend to glibly write or say 'Mo Takuto,' the

Japanese pronunciation for 'Mao Zedong,' as if it has some kind of international currency. Here again, students simply do not read much in the English language (even when required to), and the lack of contact reveals itself in guesswork of this kind.

### Conclusion: Speaking Out

On the final day of class I pass out my own personal questionnaire (as opposed to the official Bunkyo one) which asked the following:

1. What grade do you expect to get in this class (AA, A, B, C, or D)?
2. What percent of your overall study time was taken up with this class?
3. Do you expect you will ever study in America or another English-speaking country?  
Circle one. Definitely. Maybe. Not likely. Absolutely never. Explain.
4. Are you taking this class out of interest in history, just for credit, or both?
5. What do you do in your free time to improve your English?
6. Did this class help you to improve your English in any way? Check yes or no.
7. Did this class make you want to learn more about American history? Check yes or no.
8. Did you learn anything new in this class? What, for example?
9. Would you recommend this class to a classmate? Why or why not? Check yes or no.
10. Were the requirements and assignments in this class reasonable? Check yes or no.
11. Were the presentations given reasonable and balanced? Check yes or no.
12. Were the group-work assignments useful? Check yes or no.
13. Which lesson was the most interesting?

14. Which lesson was the least interesting?
15. What was the best part of the class in general?
16. What aspect of the class could be improved?

I went over the questionnaire first to explain the purpose of each question, and was careful to add that they were welcome to answer in Japanese even though the questions were in English.

To tell the truth, as a rule I don't hand out questionnaires after completing a course. The reason is simply that I have always thought there are not enough mature and dedicated students to make a questionnaire meaningful from a strictly educational point of view. Students who are not hard-working by nature may heap praise on classes that are not demanding. Others may complain bitterly when they are expected to expend more effort than that to which they are accustomed. Questionnaires can be little more than a marketing scheme aimed at shaping a 'customer' profile, a reference point from which classes can be designed to be 'attractive' and 'appealing' to students who may really have no idea what they are supposed to be doing in college in the first place. For these reasons I have always taken the result of any student questionnaire with a barrel of salt and tend to avoid them in general, finding other ways to gauge the classroom pulse.

However, giving the students a voice in this discussion is vital if any compelling observations are to be made about how the class rated in terms of its effectiveness and specific purpose. Since it was at least nominally geared toward those interested in studying abroad, it made perfect sense to ask some obvious questions. Were there, after all, any students seriously thinking of studying abroad?

Of forty students, five circled 'definitely' where asked if they planned to study at college level in the English-speaking world, suggesting an interest in long-term enrollment. Eleven circled 'maybe,' but like those remaining who circled

'not likely' and 'absolutely never,' they cited lack of money and time as factors conspiring against realizing a dream of studying abroad. Interestingly, only a few mentioned lack of language ability as a reason for not considering advanced education in a foreign country, a subtle suggestion that education exists in some minds as a commodity that can be acquired with money rather than effort.

If English is truly the important key to success that it is cracked up to be, it should have a robust life outside the classroom, if not in actual application, then at least in theory. A significant number of respondents said they studied for the TOEIC which, being a standardized test, is an end in itself making perfect sense in the examination-oriented culture of Japanese education. Others mentioned learning English in the context of personal enjoyment, i.e. watching English-language movies without subtitles or listening to songs with English lyrics. NHK radio courses are ever popular with students, and some of them manage to practice English with foreigners either in their personal lives or in English conversation schools. One person answered that he/she actually practiced English in the train with Japanese friends on occasion.

As for the class itself, where asked what percentage of study time was dedicated to this class, only four answered less than half. Two answered 95 percent. The most frequent percentage mentioned was 80 percent (8). Clearly, the class consumed the majority of study time for the serious and the non-serious alike. The questionnaire did not ask how much actual time students spent studying in total, casting some doubt on the significance of 95 percent if it is 95 percent of ten minutes per day. Many students simply don't study much at all.

The 'most interesting' topic of the five discussed in this class, as indicated by eighteen out of forty, was the one devoted to the atomic bomb. I included this subject in the course precisely because it involved Japan and was the classic "shock and awe" tactic. 'Interesting,' of course, has different meanings to different people, and is frequently taken to be synonymous with 'fun.' In

the case of the atomic bomb lesson, 'interesting' could mean students may have felt relieved of the labor of inquiry since it is a subject covered in high school for obvious reasons. One reply went as far as to say that the lesson was *not* interesting precisely because of this. There was 'nothing new' to learn in what was apparently for this person a rehash of familiar material. This is quite remarkable if true, but could also mean that what the person really meant was that his/her opinion was not changed by the exercise. This came from one who circled 'definitely' for plans to study abroad and was the one student in forty who stated he/she expected an 'A' in the course. (Ten expected B's, the rest C's.) Another student was glad to hear 'the foreigner' point of view, not just on the atomic bomb issue, but oddly about all of the topics. (There's a 'Japanese' position on the American Revolution?) Vietnam was the second 'most interesting' with twelve votes, perhaps because it was still fresh in their memory at the time they filled out the questionnaire, although one wrote it was an 'insignificant' war and thus not worth serious attention.

For 'least interesting,' the Columbus, expansionism and Vietnam lessons were virtually tied at nine, ten and eight votes respectively. Certainly, no one thought the expansionism lesson was interesting. I have to admit that it was the most difficult to teach as it required the imagination to appreciate various ironies and interpret uses of one past within another, not easy to explain in simple English, and a few students were quick to suggest that writing about these subjects in Japanese would be challenging enough. One respondent enigmatically listed the lesson on the American Revolution as both 'interesting' and 'not interesting,' suggesting either a Zen sense of humor or an inability to comprehend what the questionnaire was asking. Only three listed the American Revolution lesson as 'interesting,' with four finding it the least inspiring.

Another challenge figuring prominently in the course was the research paper (not discussed in the scope of this paper). It was one reason that a student

remarked that the last topic, the Vietnam War, was 'not interesting.' This was not so much because of the nature of the subject per se, but rather because the Vietnam lesson was concurrent with the flurry of activity required to get the research paper written by the deadline (which ultimately I extended). Students have to write reports for a considerable number of classes, and one wrote on the questionnaire that it would have helped if only the in-class essays were required. The point of the research paper, however, was to show that it was a different process of writing than the in-class essay and was an opportunity for students to tie in their newly acquired understanding of America's war history with the news. (Research paper topics all deal in some way with Iraq.) The real problem seems to be that the vast majority of students do not know how to budget their time well, or are too busy with their other lives, to fit it all in painlessly. Procrastination compounds tasks and the ability both to recognize it as a problem and do something about it is a welcome sign of maturity.

A perennial and unhappy contradiction in the business of teaching a subject in English in Japanese colleges is hearing one voice call for more explanations in Japanese on one hand, and another voice asking for 'only English' on the other. The latter, again the student who 'definitely' plans to study abroad and expects the 'A,' regretted there wasn't more communication in English between the teacher and students since we'd "already come this far." (Ironically, this comment was written in Japanese.) The student has a perfectly legitimate point, but the difficulty of the subject matter and the characteristically low level of English conversation ability are such that any effort at conducting the *entire* class in English would render well over half of those in attendance into a comatose state, particularly in the increasing humidity of the rainy season. Indeed, English-only would have been perfectly authentic, but ultimately disastrous, especially if all the videos had been switched to English. Roughly one fifth of the class was conducted in Japanese, either when I was explaining material to individuals or

student groups during the in-class exercise, or when showing video material to supplement lectures.

Comments on the group activity were mixed. A few respondents complained that members did not have their articles read and were ill prepared, something that did not take a questionnaire to find out, although it is significant when the observation is made by students and not their fifty-year-old curmudgeon teacher. One student wished that everyone had to read the same article rather than each a different one as that would have enhanced understanding of what it was he/she was supposed to be explaining. (That would have also flatly negated the idea of introducing a variety of viewpoints which was the whole purpose of the exercise.) Many wrote that the group activity was 'fun' and that they actually did learn something from it, though some wrote with candor that they talked about anything but history much of the time, or even sat in silence staring down at their unread texts.

As for whether this class was worth recommending to a fellow classmate, students were divided right down the middle. Nineteen answered an unqualified yes, while the rest either checked 'no,' circled both 'yes' and 'no,' wrote a question mark or simply left the question unanswered. Reasons for answering 'yes' could be interpreted as a positive endorsement of the class, the version I naturally prefer, or less likely a sinister means of inflicting pain on personal enemies. A number of expected complaints emerged about the excessive difficulty of the class which was a nightmarish hurdle for those desperately in need of the credits. One student did not like the unconventional essay grading which was basically pass/fail. Do plus, check and minus equal A, B, and C respectively? As expected, several students complained that the general pace was too fast, although they expressed appreciation for my being "well-prepared" with useful videos in the Japanese language.

If I were to feel guilty about any of this, it would be for the impact that this

allegedly rigorous class work had on the sleep time of serious students. One respondent wanted me to realize that the quality of work in other classes was adversely affected to some degree by the quantity of work required in this one. The same student had misinterpreted *Ryuugaku Eigo* to be some kind of conversation class and was distressed to find it was anything but. This is very possibly due to how outrageously successful advertising copywriters have been in reshaping the way people think about learning English in this country, assigning the appealing and exotic label of *Ekimae Ryuugaku* - or 'Study Abroad in Front of (Your Local) Train Station' - to 'corporate chain English conversation school as ubiquitous as McDonald's.' Such schools are noted for their high profile polish, the direct result of expensive and extensive advertising in all mass media. They are staffed by teachers that conform to the stereotype of the cheerful 'hi-how-ya-doin' Caucasian native speaker under thirty. Many are apparently fresh off the plane from North America. A lesson is sharing a room with one of these pink-cheeked poster children for internationalization, and it did not surprise me to find at least one student say on the questionnaire that he/she enjoyed my class because "foreigners (*gaijin-san*) are cheerful and funny." That despite all the daunting class work I assigned and my being two decades past thirty.

Use of the O'Callaghan textbook is another area where some students had hoped for a little more guidance from the teacher. The textbook was required as a reference resource, but never was it actually featured as a centerpiece of lectures. Students are generally accustomed to textbooks receiving more in-class attention. As it was the textbook served as the basis for two examinations, one for general information and the other for (very) short essays, but it was not incorporated into class activities nearly to the extent that the five readings were.

The chorus of complaints about too much work is ample proof that the class succeeded in conveying some sense of what it means to study in a college outside Japan. The ambiguity about naming of the class is a point to consider in

the future when describing course content. The class was as much about showing what it *means* to study abroad as it was preparation for *qualifying* to study abroad, two separate concepts. Forty is a rather large number for such a class when only a third at most entertained any inkling of ambition about attending a foreign university in the future. The failure of the group work to garner overwhelming support among students is telling testimony that some of them could have reaped twice the benefits of the group exercises if class size had been cut in half at least, leaving only the more motivated as full participants. It makes a big difference when it is a given that everyone comes prepared rather than have a class where signs of life are spotty at best and the teacher has the choice of either being resigned to this frustration or playing the tedious role of Officer Grumpy, classroom policeman. Many teachers choose the former as 'getting angry' consumes too much emotional energy and breeds hostility. It probably doesn't help that a lot of students are passed who really don't deserve it (including those who fail to hit the mark despite best efforts), thus many think they can get away with sleeping in class or having lively conversations about matters unrelated to the lesson.

There are other possible reasons for laziness and lack of drive which are institutional rather than individual. Where education is concerned, students have grown up in a society that supports hundreds of thousands of livelihoods through promoting the extraction of wealth from competition, the desire for advantage over others, and the gratification of ego. This means a flourishing textbook publishing industry and an abundance of cram schools touting helpful but pricey strategies for passing entrance exams to prestigious universities. There is nothing unusual about exploiting vanity for profit, but once the goal of entering university has been reached, too much of the momentum for learning is spent; and what examination knowledge has not been completely forgotten has shriveled almost overnight into irrelevance. The first stage of the game, brimming with profit

opportunities for others, gives way to the second stage where students must make important decisions for themselves. If the student is not feeling totally exhausted after examination 'success,' he or she may wind up overcompensating for a lost childhood by total immersion in anything but academics, be it club activities or part-time job. Japanese society not only condones this, but makes a bad situation worse with a calendar bursting with holidays (e.g. Golden Week) and a considerable list of other 'legitimate' reasons for not attending class: Freshmen Sports Day, social volunteer work, student teaching, job-hunting, club activities, school festival, Founder's Day, etc. Implicit in this is the hint that maybe classroom time is not that terribly important, and while that might not put a dent in the morale of many professors who prize their research time, it may encourage students to feel less guilty about missing classes, even when they cost considerable money to attend. Proposing the abolition of all these excuses for canceled class and customized absenteeism, including observance of Golden Week, is akin to asking the world to give up television or ice cream. It will never happen. At best the variety of excuses will stabilize in number; if it doesn't the shape of higher education will look less like the donut, and more like the hole.

Given the flaws in the system, it would appear that the only way to get a full and rigorous college education in Japan is be unusually self-disciplined. The other alternative is to study overseas in another language which, most commonly, is English. Any class about 'studying overseas' therefore must have a semblance of severity lest students get the wrong idea. And command of English is only half of it, if even that much. Bunkyo students need to use English creatively and think critically to succeed abroad, and the written work of a number of students already indicates latent ability. No 'easy conversation class' can even remotely develop these skills; but presenting key issues in American history most definitely could and, to some extent, I believe did. It is a new and challenging subject for virtually all students.

## Storms of Lead: The History Essay Goes to War

I'd like to express my thanks to the dear students for their cooperation in preparing this paper and wish them the best for their future studies and civic lives. I hope they now have an informed appreciation of how hard studying can be as a regular matriculated student in a foreign university and, at the very least, possess some sense of accomplishment for having completed the course once the pain has subsided.

### Appendix A: 英語演習Ⅲ (留學英語) The Class Schedule

April	11	Introduction (Video: BBC's Tragedies of American Indians, Part 1)
	14	Topic: Christopher Columbus (Group Exercise)
	18	Topic: Christopher Columbus - How to Write an Essay (Teacher)
	21	Compiling the Short Essay Questions and Speed Reading Exercise
	25	Background to Colonial America
	28	Topic: The American Revolution (Group Exercise)
May	2	TEST ONE: Basic Facts about U.S. History and Map Test
	12	Topic: The American Revolution (Teacher)
	16	TEST TWO: IN-CLASS ESSAY on the American Revolution (w/ notes)
	19	Reviewing Test Results and Intensive Cursive Writing Exercise
	23	Topic: 19 <sup>th</sup> -century Expansionism (Group Exercise)
	26	Topic: 19 <sup>th</sup> -century Expansionism (Teacher)
June	30	TEST THREE: IN-CLASS ESSAY on the Legacy of the American Revolution and 19 <sup>th</sup> -century Expansionism (w/notes)
	2	Reviewing Test Results and Speed Reading Exercise
	6	World War I, Neutrality and Isolationism (Video: ABC's "The Century")
	9	How to Write a Term Paper

- 13 TEST FOUR: SHORT ESSAYS ON U.S. HISTORY (based on *An Illustrated History*)
- 16 Reviewing Test Results and Speed Reading Exercise
- 20 Made in USA: Anti-Japanese Propaganda (Video: "Know Your Enemy")
- 23 Topic: The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb (Class Exercise)
- 27 Topic: The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb (Teacher)
- 30 TEST FIVE: IN-CLASS ESSAY on the Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb (no notes)
- July 4 Reviewing Test Results and Speed Reading Exercise
- 7 The Vietnam War (Class)
- 11 The Vietnam War (Teacher)
- 14 TEST SIX: IN-CLASS ESSAY on the Vietnam War (no notes)
- 18 Conclusion (Term paper deadline.)

## Appendix B: Discussion Questions and Supplementary Materials

What follows are comprehension and discussion questions for each of five articles relating to the five respective topics presented in class: the Columbus controversy, the American Revolution, expansionism, the atomic bomb and the Vietnam War. The summary of each is based on hoped-for answers to the questions.

Supplementary materials are also explained for the last two topics.

### Christopher Columbus: What the Students Read

I. "Hail Columbus, Dead White Male" by Charles Krauthammer

1. How does the National Council of Churches look upon the 'discovery' of

America by Columbus? Who else is vilifying the Columbus legacy and how has that vilification polarized certain Americans?

2. What is meant by "political correctness"? Eurocentrism?
3. In what two ways does Krauthammer categorize the attacks on Columbus?
4. How does Krauthammer defend Columbus from the first attack?
5. How does Krauthammer defend Columbus from the second attack?

The journalist Krauthammer takes a conservative approach by arguing that the quincentenary is still worth celebrating despite the brutalities inflicted on native peoples throughout American history. He notes that the National Council of Churches has blasted the "discovery" as "an invasion" accompanied by "genocide." The Association of Indian Cultures plans to "sabotage" the 500th anniversary in Madrid. Protestants and Catholics find themselves at odds, with the former being anti-Columbus and the latter defending him. Political correctness naturally takes the position of the weak, i.e. the Native Americans, whereas the standard view of Columbus as hero is Eurocentric, i.e. emphasizing the European point of view. Attacks on Columbus are two-fold. One accuses Columbus of being a murderer. The other magnifies the crimes of Columbus by romancing the cultural accomplishments of his victims. Krauthammer argues that the result of Columbus's discovery, America, has been a saving grace for the modern world itself, and that the ruined native civilizations lamented by the politically correct were fully capable of their own brand of barbarism.

## II. "Columbus - From Hero to Fall Guy" by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

1. List several reasons why it is awkward to insist Columbus "discovered" America.
2. Why does Schlesinger believe that despite all the misgivings about Columbus as discoverer, 1492 is still a crucial year in American history?

3. What, from Schlesinger's remarks about the current portrayals of Columbus, can we safely assume about the manner in which he was regarded in 1892? How has the world changed since then?
4. Where does Schlesinger appear to agree with those who condemn the European intruders?
5. What does Schlesinger suggest those who condemn are also ignoring about pre-Columbian history of the Americas?

This prize-winning historian addresses a Japanese audience with a balanced and informative explanation as to why a man once venerated as a symbol of vision and bravery had transformed into a villain over a period of 100 years.

America, he emphasizes, was not at all "discovered" by Columbus, but by "people trickling across the Bering Straits from East Asia." The year 1492 is still "legitimately remembered as the year that opened up the Western Hemisphere," though America could have easily been "found" by someone other than Columbus given the "dynamism, greed and evangelical zeal" of Europe at the time.

Part of today's controversy about Columbus is rooted in the enormous changes of the world in the past century, namely the rise of non-white civilizations such as Japan, the resentments of former colonies in the Third World, and a reaction "against modernity itself." Schlesinger acknowledges that it is indisputable how advanced American civilizations existed previous to the arrival of Columbus and that Europeans were brutal in their treatment of natives. On the other hand, native civilization is sentimentalized as some kind of utopia that did not in fact exist, possessing disastrous ecological policies and inhumane customs such as "constant warfare" (Maya) and "ritual torture" (Aztecs).

III. "Modern Attacks on Columbus Are Justified" - an interview of Suzan Harjo by Barbara Miner and Michael Dorris.

1. What 'good' thing came of the European invasion of America? Was it worth it?
2. To whom does Suzan Harjo vent most of her anger regarding the European invasion? Why?
3. What does Harjo mean by "a cotton-candy version of history"?
4. What is an "ivory tower"? What is multi-culturalism?
5. How does Harjo suggest the United States might be able to make amends for the past 500 years in the next 500 years?

From the *Opposing Viewpoints* series (Greenhaven), this article presents the 'Columbus-as-villain' argument as articulated by Suzan Harjo, a Native American political activist. According to Harjo, if anything good came to Native Americans from their encounter with the West, it was the introduction of horses and beads. That's it. Harjo is angry at Christianity for seeking to celebrate 1492 as a year of evangelism yet neglecting that it killed those Native Americans perceived as rejecting Christ. A "cotton-candy version of history" refers to a history that seeks to glorify the deeds of Columbus and his cronies. This history lingers in the present day and it is time that all people, including the elite academics ("ivory tower"), recognize the folly of making false issues out of fashionable multiculturalism (various cultures coexisting together) and start taking action to right a profound wrong. The blueprint for that corrective action exists in honoring the treaties that have been made with Indian nations.

IV. "The Conquistadors Were Murderers" by Bartolome de las Casas.

1. How does las Casas describe the way the indigenous people of Hispaniola live (food, clothing, etc.)?
2. Describe the rate of depopulation in the Indies as mentioned by las Casas.

What reasons does he give for this?

3. What acts provoked the Indians to counterattack?
4. What specific atrocities does las Casas refer to?
5. What were the famous last words of the cacique Hatuey before the Spaniards burned him at the stake?

An ardent defender of Native American rights, Bartolome de las Casas witnessed firsthand the degradation of indigenous peoples at the hands of the Spanish. (This is the one primary source included in the package.) Las Casas describes the natives as being "the most guileless" people whose food is sparse and clothing virtually nil. Yet their numbers have been radically reduced through slaughter and enslavement. He cites the "sixty islands" of Lucayos as an example: more than a half million people eradicated, mainly out of Spanish greed for gold. Once natives witnessed the rape of the wives of nobles, they felt they had to take action. Yet their efforts to resist were hopeless against the better weapons of the Spanish. The Spanish responded by brutally massacring natives, including pregnant women and children. Las Casas writes of Hatuey, a cacique who, just before being burned at the stake, stated he would prefer to forever burn in Hell than spend eternity in Heaven with Christians.

V. Excerpt from Lies My Teacher Told Me by James Loewen.

1. List the apparent lies told in textbooks to make Columbus look like a hero.
2. How did Columbus treat the Arawak Indians at first? How is "cognitive dissonance" used to describe Columbus's changing attitude?
3. What was the slave trade's most sordid aspect?
4. How did slavery of Indians and the discovery of gold have an impact on African history?
5. What was the impact of Columbus's 'discoveries' on the European mind?

Basing his thesis on careful examination of twelve widely used high school textbooks, Loewen argues that Columbus is presented from a Eurocentric viewpoint that largely lionizes his place in history while paying little if any attention to negative evidence, particularly as revealed in primary sources such as the writings of Bartolome de las Casas.

The supposed heroism of Columbus is presented in textbooks as a profile of the 'boss figure,' i.e. an authority whose wisdom should not be questioned. Thus we have discussions of near mutinies by foolish crew members and exaggerated hardships (e.g. rough seas). As for the native Arawaks, Columbus was quite taken by them at first, but later treated them brutally when they failed to bring him gold. (His perception of the natives changed completely in order to conform to his ambitions, an example of "cognitive dissonance.")

Not having succeeded in locating a bounty of gold, Columbus initiated trading in Indians as slaves instead, and the women were given as presents to officials for sexual purposes. Thousands of Indians perished this way out of heartbreak and desperation. In later years when far greater amounts of gold were found in Central and South America, Africa, which had traded in gold to accrue wealth, was no longer able to compete, and turned to selling slaves instead.

In Europe, Columbus's 'discovery' triggered a great deal of anxious and excited reassessment of the meaning of civilization. Native Americans were celebrated for their simple 'nobility' on one hand, and on the other, the nations of the Old World evolved a new self-consciousness. The 'discovery' of America was also the birth of Europe.

## The American Revolution: What the Students Read

I. "The War for Independence Was Not a Social Revolution" by Howard Zinn

1. What does Zinn suggest the American leadership was really trying to do by

fomenting rebellion? What were the essential elements of conflict?

2. What does Zinn's discussion suggest about the upper class's relationship with the lower class? What technique was used to enlist support for the 'revolutionary' cause?
3. Describe the success and appeal of Thomas Paine's Common Sense. What ideas of Paine's sounded subversive to conservative aristocrats like John Adams? According to Zinn, where did Paine's true allegiances lie?
4. What is misleading about the popular historical interpretation of the Declaration of Independence? What social injustices did it ignore?
5. How does Linda Grant Depauw calculate that "only fifteen percent of Americans gained freedom"? (Depauw's article is presented as a brief inset.)

By fomenting rebellion the wealthy class of American colonists was able to seize property and power from the British Empire. By skillful manipulation of public opinion through speeches and other forms of effective propaganda, they were able to get working class colonists to support them. Thomas Paine's idea that government was "a necessary evil" was a worry to the upper class, but even Paine did not want the lower classes to become too powerful. The freedoms implied in the Declaration of Independence were not gained by Indians, black slaves, women, children or white males without property.

## II. "The War for Independence Was a Social Revolution" by Gordon S. Wood

1. What is the American view of revolution today? What was the 18th century view of government according to Wood?
2. How does Wood describe the fifty-year period between "insignificant borderland provinces" and the "continent-wide republic" that had been "thrust ... into the vanguard of history"?
3. How did America become 'modern' before modern technology?

4. In what ways was America a seemingly unlikely place for a 'revolution' to occur?

What, then, did start the revolution?

5. What point does Wood make about Southern aristocracy and Moses Cooper of Rhode Island in supporting his assertion that the American Revolution was not a collision of social classes?

Americans do not like to think of their Revolution as a radical one. In the 18th century social and economic problems were blamed on the government. By destroying government - or the monarchy - Americans believed they were changing their society. The Revolution had transformed America from a frontier to "the most modern people in the world" by giving respectability to ordinary people and promising an equal opportunity for getting rich. The fear of losing wealth or the opportunity for wealth was great enough to drive them to seek independence. It is true that freedom was not attained by all Americans, but the framework for future liberations is secured.

III. "America Must Seek Reconciliation with Britain" by Charles Inglis. (Primary source.)

1. Review the points made in the excerpt from Common Sense in Shiryō ga Kataru Amerika (p. 31). (This is an excellent text of primary sources translated into Japanese to which I frequently have students refer.)

2. What are the immediate advantages to ending the war with Britain and reaching reconciliation?

3. What event in English history does Inglis cite to support his contention that republicanism in America may lead to despotism? Why does Inglis think republicanism is unsuitable for America?

4. How does Inglis seem to think other colonial powers will respond to American

independence?

5. Does Inglis think it is too late to turn away from the radical notions put forth by Thomas Paine? What opportunity does Inglis feel may be ruined should the colonies form a republic?

Peace should be made. Great Britain can provide the best and cheapest protection of American trade with her navy. English goods are the best in the world. We need peace so that more people will populate America and make it richer. Democracy cannot succeed because America is too big. A republic has already failed once in England. Independence would be too expensive and war will put Americans in debt. Besides, no European country would ever take American independence seriously for fear of making Great Britain angry. America is needed in case Great Britain must someday move its capital across the sea.

IV. "The impact of the Revolution on social problems: poverty, insanity, and crime" by Melvin Yazawa

1. How did the classical definition of civic virtue contradict at times with that of the Founding Fathers? How did the Revolution alter the poor's own view of their condition?
2. How did treatment of the insane in the early republic era mesh neatly with the ideas of the Enlightenment? Give some examples of how insanity was actually treated.
3. How did the Revolution change the nature of crime in Massachusetts? Why was this and how did the Enlightenment influence the concept of punishment, particularly capital punishment?
4. What was the new approach to prisoners in the years of the early republic? How was this approach difficult to put into practice?

5. How great, then, was the impact of the American Revolution on social reform?

The Revolution stressed the virtue of hard work over the classical notion of personal sacrifice for the group. Almshouses stressed a disciplined routine to help the poor overcome their condition. A scheduled series of remedies for the insane in managed isolated asylums was fostered by revolutionary American thought. The insane were those who had lost their reason and ability to control passions. They were treated with bleeding, emetics and cold water. Theft and property disputes replaced moral crimes. Republican virtue meant less severe punishments and crimes punishable by death were reduced. While real problems of overcrowded prisons worsened, the spirit of reform was born with the Revolution.

V . Excerpt from The Free and the Unfree by Peter N. Carroll and David W. Noble

1. What reasons are offered for the extreme cautiousness that characterized the Articles of Confederation? What were the states afraid of?
2. What basic problems did the newly formed United States face? What attempts at solutions failed? What ones succeeded?
3. How did the land ordinances in the early period of nationhood reflect and reinforce "principles of republicanism"?
4. What political group was most adamant that the Articles of Confederation be revised?
5. What was Shays's rebellion about? What did this incident prove to American "people across all social and economic classes"?

States had finished fighting one central authority. They did not want to struggle with another. The weak Articles of Confederation omitted an executive or

judicial branch of government. The war was paid for by revenue from the states and foreign loans, but more significantly with new lands called the Northwest Territory acquired through negotiations with Great Britain. It was understood these lands would become full states free of slavery. However, navigation rights on the Mississippi were given up under the loose union - and a farmers' rebellion protesting taxes and heavy debt in Massachusetts posed possibility of anarchy. A stronger national government was necessary after all.

### The Age of Expansion: What the Students Read

#### I . Excerpt from Latino USA: A Cartoon History by Ilan Stavans

1. What element of Cuban society initiated the spirit of independence? How long had Cuba existed as a Spanish colony by the end of the 19th century?
2. How did Americans initially respond to the stirrings for independence in Cuba? What image did Spain have in the public imagination?
3. What Cuban heroes are mentioned? What do they have in common besides being 'heroes'?
4. How did the perception of Cuban fighters shift in the American press and why? What is this kind of journalism known as? Why was it so effective at that time?
5. What American hero came to the fore during this war? In what ways is it suggested his deeds in Cuba were watered down and why?

This is the only secondary source in the package. It is history presented in a 'manga' form, although rather crude by Japanese standards, that is common in popular literature and thus for a typical student more approachable than academic sources. The tone of the discussion is heavily biased against the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant male.

Stavans highlights in a stark economy of words how the stirrings of independence in Cuba, a Spanish colony since 1511, began largely through poetry by men such as Jose Marti and Ruben Dario. Americans were very sympathetic to this struggle, at least at first, due in large part to their newspapers in which they read sensationalized articles ("yellow journalism") about the brutalities of Spanish rule in Cuba.

Stavans writes that at first the Americans saw the fight for freedom in Cuba in terms of their own revolution of "inexperienced but heroic" rebels, but radically shifted their sympathies when it became apparent that Spain was genuinely weak and incapable of maintaining its authority. Cubans were suddenly characterized as "yellow bellies" or "mongrels" by Americans who seemed in need of rationalizing their own domination over the island.

Theodore Roosevelt, the quintessential American hero, known as the leader of the Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War, waters down his role in the horror of the war so as to promote his political ambitions and electability.

## II. William McKinley's War Message

1. According to the Constitution of the United States, which branch of government possesses the power to declare war? Whom, then, is McKinley addressing?
2. Simply list the four reasons for going to war with Spain. Upon which reason does the president put the most weight and why?
3. To what "tragic event" does McKinley attribute the main war motive? What words does he use to describe it?
4. How does McKinley lift the tone of his rhetoric beyond the obvious goal of protecting American interests in Cuba?
5. What indications do you find in the message that suggest McKinley does not want war?

Formal declaration of war is the constitutional responsibility of the United States Congress. The war message is aimed at lawmakers and is reluctantly given by a war hero president who carries vivid battle memories of the Civil War.

McKinley outlines the reasons for going to war with Spain as 1.) a humanitarian effort for aiding Cuban rebels in freeing themselves from "barbarities, bloodshed, starvation, and horrible miseries ... right at our door," 2.) extension of protection to American citizens in Cuba, 3.) intervention for protecting business interests from instability, and most importantly 4.) an effort to secure future peace.

The explosion of the "noble" battleship Maine is the needed excuse for going to war. The 258 sailors and marines who died have brought "sorrow to the nation" whose heart is pained with "inexpressible horror." McKinley believes that war must be waged "in the name of humanity [and] in the name of civilization."

McKinley concludes by assuring Congress that he has "exhausted every effort to relieve the intolerable condition of affairs" short of war.

### III. The Nonpareil (newspaper editorial)

1. What is the purpose of a newspaper editorial? Does it always serve the best interests of the truth?
2. Is the editorial completely confident in the American ability to manage another country's affairs? Explain.
3. What is the meaning of the "new epoch" referred to here?
4. What selfish apprehensions lie at the heart of the reluctance?
5. How is the American endeavor in Cuba characterized (insofar as its successes may be beneficial in promoting better government for Americans as well)?

The Nonpareil is a small town newspaper in Central City, Nebraska, America's heartland, a fair distance from the fevered pitch of yellow journalism based in

New York. Ideally, an editorial expresses a particular opinion without resorting to name-calling, innuendo, hyperbole, or other blatant propaganda techniques.

The editorial, dated July 21, 1898, calls on the reader to consider a crossroads, or "new epoch," in American history. The United States will actually be at the helm of a foreign government (Cuba) for the first time. Convinced that the American form of government is "the best the world has known," the writer portrays the occupation of Cuba as an opportunity to make a fortune - and for political experimentation from which benefits might be reaped for application at home.

The United States, for better or for worse, has taken its place on the world stage in a new role that transcends the original meanings of its national purpose as articulated in the Republic's most sacred documents.

#### IV. Excerpt from "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" by Mark Twain

1. According to Mark Twain, who are the "proper and rightful owners" of the "Archipelago"? To what extent was the United States doing the right thing in the Philippines?
2. Who is the "Master of the Game"? Who is Aguinaldo?
3. How does Twain suggest the "American plan" differs from the "European plan"? What does this tell you about how Twain sees the Europeans? Which plan did the Americans execute?
4. When did the Americans "show [their] hand"?
5. What was the pretense by which the Americans commenced war with the "patriots"?

Mark Twain was one of the more vocal and best known of the members of the Anti-Imperialist League who opposed the apparent American betrayal of the Philippine people in their struggle for independence from Spain.

Twain acknowledges that had America's leaders acted according to the American "tradition," the military would have removed itself from Manila after Spain's fall and allowed the Philippine people and Aguinaldo, their "George Washington," the opportunity to "set up a government of their own devising." Instead, McKinley, or "Master of the Game," sends in the army, revealing a strategy more European in character than American. The independence movement is fooled by the apparent cooperative tones of American 'assistance' which fade when the local patriots are no longer useful. In fact, only a transfer of power from Spain to the United States is taking place.

Cited is the firefight that took place in downtown Manila where a Filipino soldier, "crossing the ground where no one had a right to forbid him," was shot at by the Americans, an act which launched a jungle war of cruelties committed by both invader and the invaded that would last for years.

V. Sixto Lopez (from a letter to Major-General Joseph Wheeler)

1. What does Sixto Lopez state is the only thing people in the Philippines could understand about why the United States was there?
2. How does Lopez suggest the United States is being hypocritical?
3. How is it suggested that the people of the Philippines misinterpreted American motives in declaring war on Spain?
4. How does Lopez suggest the United States is being unreasonable in the manner by which it seeks a resolution to the conflict in the Philippines?
5. Who was Mr. Agoncillo?

Sixto Lopez, an activist for Philippine independence and a former secretary to lawyer and diplomat Felipe Agoncillo, writes in a letter to the New York Evening Post (Oct. 17, 1899) that the people of his country were completely unaware that the United States intended annexation. Their belief had been that the United

States was there to help put "an end to the intolerable misrule of Spain." Instead, they find themselves fighting a puzzling and "meaningless aggression" against another "professedly civilized, Christian nation." Lopez further states the call for "unconditional surrender" by the United States defies human nature, where dying honorably is preferable to a loss of honor or self-respect.

### The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb: What the Students Read

The five selected readings all come from regular U.S. newspapers, all but one syndicated and carried in the domestic English-language The Daily Yomiuri. All were written on or shortly before the fiftieth anniversary of the bombings. Two make mention of the ill-fated Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian which was cancelled when veterans objected to its 'one-sided' emphasis on the bombs' horrors, without mentioning Japan's war atrocities. The readings are as follows:

I . "Considering the A-bomb beyond the Smithsonian flap" by Gar Alperovitz

1. What did the U.S. Strategic Bomb Survey conclude about Japan's surrender timing? What would have satisfied Japan's "pretext" to surrender without the bombs?
2. Who were some of the respected American military men who thought the bombs unnecessary?
3. What does Alperovitz say about the number of American soldiers who would have died in an invasion?
4. What does Alperovitz think Truman was actually trying to do with this decision?
5. What factor does money play in the decision to use atomic weapons against Japan?

Gar Alperovitz argues that the bombs were not necessary. He cites the Strategic Bomb Survey of 1946 and the negative opinions of military authorities no less illustrious than General Dwight Eisenhower and Admiral William Leahy. (Leahy characterized the bombs' use as belonging to "an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages.") It was clear that Japan was utterly crippled by the onslaught of conventional bombing and was waiting for a "pretext" to surrender nobly. That pretext would be the Soviet Union's declaration of war in early August 1945. Alperovitz dismisses the American deaths that would result from a possible invasion of Japan as a "small number." The point of using the bomb, he claims, was for scoring propaganda points rather than military ones: looking tough to the Japanese and intimidating Stalin. If anything, the bombs were used simply because they cost so much to make.

## II. "Time to Admit Our Nuclear Error in Pacific War" by Stewart Udall

1. Who is Stewart Udall? How does Udall characterize the victims of the atomic weapons?
2. What does Udall accuse Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson of doing?
3. Does Udall think Americans can claim moral superiority over their enemies? Why or why not?
4. What does Udall want America's leaders to do? (At this writing there was one more year to go before the 50th anniversary of the dropping of the bombs.)
5. What does Udall think Japan's government should do?

Stewart Udall speaks as a former member of Congress (D) and former Secretary of the Interior (Kennedy administration). He says the people who were killed in the devastation caused by the atomic bombs were "innocent citizens." American children have been taught that the bomb saved lives, but Udall accuses Stimson of "turning his back" on a surrender offer just so that the bombs could

be put to use. The United States therefore cannot claim moral superiority over its enemies whose atrocities go undisputed as acts of cold-hearted brutality. Admission of the moral error would be a way for the United States to set an example for Japan and other nations in showing how to deal with disgraces in their respective pasts.

III . "Hiroshima: Exempt from Criticism?" by Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar

1. Who was Edward Teller? What did he think should have been done before using the atomic bombs against Japan?
2. List at least two reasons why some thought Teller's idea was unfeasible.
3. What is there "no known precedent" for in warfare?
4. What would have been lost had Teller had his way?
5. How is it argued that the atomic bombs helped Emperor Hirohito save face?

Edward Teller is the famed Hungarian-born American Jew known as "the father of the hydrogen bomb" and an early member of the Manhattan Project. He argued there should have been a demonstration of the bomb so that Japan's leaders could see what might be unleashed on their people if they did not surrender. The idea was seriously studied, but nixed, because 1.) it was feared Japan would intimidate the Americans by transporting Allied prisoners-of-war to the demonstration site, and 2.) the demonstration bomb could fail to explode. Allen and Polmar claim there is "no known precedent" for demonstrating a new weapon to an enemy in war, and that the very nature of war renders a demonstration on this scale virtually impossible. By demonstrating the atomic bomb, it is claimed, precious time would be lost as Japanese leaders engaged in debate without resolution about how to surrender. Meanwhile, Allied captives would perish in Japanese prison camps. It was better to use the bombs as soon

as possible, thus saving lives and giving Hirohito the one excuse he needed for surrender, in his words "a new and most cruel bomb."

IV. "Bomb Was a Necessary Shock" - Letter to the Editor (Pacific Sunday News)  
by Paul Zerzan

1. According to Zerzan, why was there a chance that Japanese militarism could continue even when the home islands had effectively been destroyed?
2. How might the bombing of Kyoto actually save lives even if it destroyed cultural artifacts?
3. What does Zerzan cite as evidence that even the atomic bombs were not enough to stop militarists from surrendering?
4. What does Zerzan say about the military applications of the civilian population in Japan?
5. How was the atomic bomb used as a "psychological weapon" according to Zerzan?

Paul Zerzan is the college roommate of this writer, an educator and a local activist in Guam. He is an amateur historian and his opinion is presented here as one "man-in-the-street" viewpoint. Zerzan writes that the idea of Japan caving in under the full force of U.S. military might ignores the real possibility that Japanese militarism could simply transplant itself in China where the war was far from lost. Not bombing Kyoto, the ancient imperial capital, ran counter to the main goal of saving lives, as sparing it created the impression among Japanese that it was somehow endowed with a mystical immunity to destruction. Even after Nagasaki had been targeted and destroyed, military fanatics tried desperately to stop Hirohito from making his war's end broadcast. Japanese civilians were fully engaged in the war effort by producing materiel for destruction of the Allies. Therefore, he believes, the bombs were a necessary way

of shocking the Japanese into capitulation, with a quick and decisive one-two punch.

V. "War and the American Psyche" by Gaddis Smith

1. List the factors that stimulate reassessment of the atomic bomb's role in history according to Smith.
2. Summarize the two contending arguments about why the bombs were used.
3. What do the majority of American war veterans think of the atomic bomb?
4. What does Smith speculate about what Truman would have done even if U.S. relations with Stalin had been completely friendly?
5. What does Smith caution us about how we see this controversy?

Yale history professor Gaddis Smith argues with sober objectivity that the bomb's place in history (in 1995) connects with a series of postwar changes in the American temperament brought on by 1.) documents made public revealing a previously unappreciated complexity of factors that contributed to Truman's decision, 2.) a general cynicism toward government triggered by the Vietnam War debacle, 3.) disgust with the Cold War arms race, and 4.) a rising sensitivity to race issues inspired by civil rights activism. The debate over the use of the atomic bombs at the conclusion of World War II pits the majority of American war vets belonging to "The-bombs-saved-our-lives" camp with those contending they were "used to send an intimidating signal to the Soviet Union" and, at the same time, eliminate tens of thousands of members of what was viewed to be at the time a particularly pernicious race of people. As for the Soviet Union, Gaddis asserts that Truman may have made the same characteristic "quick decision" even if relations with Stalin had been friendly. As it was, Truman wanted to keep the Soviet Union out of an occupied Japan. Gaddis argues that Truman does not deserve vilification and that both sides of the atomic bomb debate can gravitate

toward oversimplified extremes.

Supplementary materials about the atomic bomb (facsimiles of actual documents)

As is the case above, the numbered questions are included in the student study package. Everyone receives the supplementary materials. Questions are followed with my suggested answers.

1. Propaganda: What are the ways Japanese are depicted? Which caricatures were made during the war? Which after?

Startling caricatures of Japanese generally looking very simian comprise this collage of war era propaganda images. A rampaging gorilla (wartime) and a tamed monkey resting on a portly American soldier's shoulder (immediate postwar) stand out. Japanese as humans are satirized as diabolical, rapacious or clownish. One especially repulsive cartoon shows a Japanese as a louse (*Louseous japonicas*), confirming without the tiniest ambiguity how denying an enemy his humanity facilitates the unpleasant business of killing him.

2. What reasons does Sen. Richard Russell offer for his apparent hatred of the Japanese?

How do you think President Truman responded to this telegram?

Unsurprisingly, the senator cites "the foul attack on Pearl Harbor" as the "first blow" and the reason for the war, and as such he has no sympathy with Japan, "Shintolism (sic)," or Hirohito who, he argues, "should go." He believes the "contemptuous answer of the Japs to the Potsdam Ultimatum" warrants "sterner peace terms," which he suggests should include a steady destruction of the country with more atomic bombs. The Japanese have earned the cruelty being dealt them with the way they themselves have so cruelly treated captive American soldiers.

Truman's reply to this message states that he does not believe in killing

innocents.

3. This is Albert Einstein's letter to President Franklin Roosevelt dated August 2nd, 1939, which eventually led the president to initiate the Manhattan Project. It is the beginning of the end for the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What reasons does Einstein cite for why making this bomb might be a good idea?

Einstein tells Roosevelt that uranium may become a new energy source in the immediate future and that the energy could be contained in a bomb transportable by ship. To make the bomb, good uranium ore must be had. Some can be found in Canada. Czechoslovakia is another source, and the Germans have stopped exporting it, most likely because they are also exploring its military applications.

4. Note the African country of Gambia has issued a commemorative stamp of Truman's hydrogen bomb announcement. Note, too, the announcement that the United States would issue a stamp about the atomic bomb - one stamp of many in its 50th anniversary World War II commemorative series. On the reverse you will note that despite this announcement, there is no 'atomic bomb stamp.' Why not?

Gambia issued a commemorative souvenir sheet featuring the wrinkled face of President Truman announcing before a microphone that the hydrogen bomb had been successfully detonated. Curiously, outside the stamp's perforated area is a domestic scene of a white married couple, presumably Americans, enjoying a quiet moment in their living room. As he engrosses himself in newspaper, and she with her knitting, a mushroom cloud can be seen through the window, rising in the distance. While the hydrogen bomb is not a World War II development, it is interesting because the United States Postal Service had planned to issue an atomic bomb stamp in its series commemorating the 50th anniversary of major events that transpired in World War II's final year. Students may not know or remember that the plan raised such an outcry in Japan, much to the surprise of the Postal Service, history buffs and stamp collectors, that President Clinton

himself stepped in and put the kibosh to the idea, substituting instead a picture of Truman announcing the Japanese surrender (Purdum). The bombs are mentioned in a simple written statement in the map area of the souvenir sheet outside the stamp perforation area.

(It was hoped that students would look at this with a critical eye, realize that the stamp image that illustrated the newspaper announcement could not be found on the photocopied souvenir sheet printed on the reverse, and conclude that the stamp must have been highly controversial and fervently protested. Hopefully, here some of the high moral ground Stewart Udall mentions may come into view. If President Clinton had taken any hints from the style of Japan's conservative leaders and their manner of dealing - or not dealing - with criticism, both foreign and domestic, of their regular homage to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine and the war criminals memorialized therein, then surely an American atomic bomb commemorative stamp would have made its way unvexed into philatelic history.)

5. What did Presidential Adviser Ralph Bard want Truman to do?

Bard was famously tormented by second thoughts about his initial approval of the bomb's use as a member of the Interim Committee which advised the president on how the bomb should be used. He argued for "some preliminary warning" two or three days in advance rather than a sudden strike. Not to do so would betray "the position of the United States as a great humanitarian nation."

6. What does the city of Hiroshima want Truman to know? Why might even those Americans who believe the bombs were a mistake not have a great deal of sympathy for Japan?

The city of Hiroshima, self-appointed "cornerstone of world peace," hoped and prayed for Harry S. Truman to listen to his "inner voice," become a contrite soul and crusade for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Later in life the former president was often called upon to justify himself, and we can only wonder if his conscience did indeed bother him. Comments he made in 1958 in a television

interview justifying his difficult choices as president, both to use the atomic bombs and to develop even more destructive hydrogen bombs, sparked Tsukasa Nitoguri, Chairman of the Hiroshima City Council, to offer a respectful protest and call for a "retraction." (Truman politely responded by predictably placing the attacks in the context of a war Japan started with a sneak attack and noted the U.S. had been easier on Japan than on Italy or Germany which were completely transformed after defeat.)

The tone of the council's indignation over mass extermination of innocents, while understandable, was couched in language that made no mention of the historical context in which the bombs were used, nor was any frank admission present of Japan's own failed attempt to acquire atomic weapons for use against the Allies.

### The Vietnam War: What the Students Read

I . "Policy in Vietnam, 1965" by Lyndon B. Johnson

1. What countries other than North Vietnam is Johnson worried about?
2. What does Johnson believe will happen if the U.S. were to pull out of Vietnam?
3. What historical precedent does Johnson cite for justifying the commitment in S.E. Asia?
4. Does Johnson say victory will come easily in Vietnam? Explain.
5. What virtues does Johnson describe in the American character which he believes will lead to victory?

President Lyndon Johnson was worried about Communist China taking over Asia. If the U.S. broke its promise to help South Vietnam, the U.S. would be considered an unreliable country in the world, particularly by its allies, which

would in turn mean the collapse of one Southeast Asian country after another ("domino theory"). The United States had the same mission in South Vietnam that it had in Europe and Asia during and after the Second World War: the defense of freedom. Johnson acknowledged it could be a difficult and long war. Its length was ultimately up to the Vietnamese Communists. Johnson stated that Americans fought for ideas and principles, and not for territory the way its enemies have done in the past.

II. Excerpt from The Arrogance of Power by Senator J. William Fulbright

1. What do the Korean War and McCarthyism have to do with America's involvement in Vietnam?
2. What were the Geneva Agreements of 1954? Were they honored? If not, who violated them?
3. How did the dispatching of "advisers" evolve into a full-blown military commitment?
4. What have America's war planners misread about the nature of the Vietnam struggle?  
What does Fulbright believe is the reasonable thing to do under these circumstances?
5. How has the war been a detriment to the United States internally?

The U.S. policymakers thought that the situation in Vietnam was exactly like that in Korea. Vietnam's conflict was nationalistic and anti-colonial. The fear of what would happen there was magnified by anti-Communist hysteria (McCarthyism). The Geneva Conventions of 1954 sought to limit the amount of military aid that could be supplied to Vietnam. It also divided the country on the 17th parallel. (In effect, this made half of Vietnam into a "foreign" country to the other half.) Elections were not held out of fear of Communist take-over.

Everyone violated the accord.

As the South Vietnamese government grew weaker over the years, the number of American military advisers increased until the U.S. government committed itself to fully concentrating on preventing a Communist takeover. War planners did not take into account that the war was based on nationalism (and thus anti-Americanism) and that the best organizing came from the Communists; therefore, argues Fulbright, they should have been a part of South Vietnam's government.

The war was taking away money and time from the U.S. government's efforts at ending poverty and promoting civil rights (The Great Society). The Vietnam policy weakened the United States in ways that policymakers might not have originally imagined.

### III. "The War Showed the Limits of Military Power" by Thomas C. Fox

1. What is the first reason for America's failure in Vietnam according to Thomas C. Fox?
2. What is the second reason?
3. What is the third reason?
4. What attitudes towards the natives did Fox perceive in American military personnel?  
How did the American presence transform Vietnamese society?
5. What was the impetus for this article? What is Fox worried about?

The Vietnam War Memorial is in the news at this time, thus the article.

Fox lists a number of American failures in Vietnam, lest those bemoaning the 'Vietnam Syndrome' forget the reasons the war was lost.

One was not bothering to understand the people, culture and history. (Vietnam had a long history of fighting outsiders and Americans were just the latest.)

Another was that the Americans supported the South Vietnamese government which did not have wide support. (It was largely comprised of Catholics from the north, but Catholics were only 10 percent of the whole population.) A third was simple arrogance and racism. No effort was made to get to know Vietnamese on a personal level, much less an intellectual one. Worse yet, American soldiers hunted down Vietnamese people of both sexes and all ages, used their women for sex and treated the old people, highly respected in Vietnamese society, with contempt.

IV. "U.S. Journalists Caused Defeat" by Robert Elegant

1. Who does Robert Elegant believe won the military war in Vietnam? Why, then, was the war ultimately lost?
2. What was the main motivating force behind reporting news of the war by foreign correspondents according to Elegant? What attitudes steered the reporting in directions that lacked reality?
3. What did Hanoi acknowledge about the role of the Western media in determining the war's outcome? How has the media reacted to that acknowledgement?
4. Which news medium commanded the most attention for its "thrusting and simplistic character"? How did it lend itself to untruthful and misleading reporting?
5. Does Elegant hold officialdom responsible in any way for losing the war? Explain.

The war was lost not by the military - which won the crucial battles consistently - but by the Western media. When the U.S. left Vietnam, the war had been made so unpopular through negative reporting that no more American assistance was politically possible. Reporters had written about the war to make

their editors happy, as bad news and guilt sold well. (In a sense, this was the opposite of yellow journalism in that the bad guys this time were portrayed as Americans.) The news had to be outwardly interesting or emotional in tone, and many journalists did not have the intellectual integrity to dig for actual background details. Hanoi (North Vietnam) thanked the mass media of the non-Communist world for helping it win the war, although the media didn't want to take credit for that (as it would appear treasonous). Television, more than the print media, was the major tool employed in undermining the war effort. TV crews even manufactured some of the drama by suggesting certain behaviors to soldiers, then filming them acting out the suggestions. Military officials were unable to use the media in an intelligent way and did not inform reporters well (although experienced reporters never expected to get good information from the military in the first place). The result was a lack of trust and even mutual contempt.

V. "Coming Home" by Mike Kelley

1. How does Mike Kelley describe the manner in which his countrymen generally treated Vietnam War veterans?
2. How long had Kelley been back in the States before returning to his home outside Sacramento?
3. What did Kelley expect to hear from the cab driver once he saw his Army uniform?
4. Why does Kelley refer to the cab driver as "that wonderful man"?
5. What does this say about the kindness of strangers?

Kelley sensed a "smoldering cynicism and a sense of almost complete alienation." He felt there were more enemies in his homeland than in 'Nam.' He had been in the States recuperating from a wound in a hospital for a year before

going back to his home outside Sacramento. He took a taxi in the dead of night and expected the driver would lecture him about the terrible sins committed by soldiers in the war. To his surprise, the cab driver didn't charge him for the ride. Instead, he thanked Kelley for his service to his country and shook his hand. This moved Kelley to write the article.

### Supplementary Material: Vietnam War Era Photographs

1.) "South Vietnamese Children Burned by Napalm" - taken by Nick Ut (1972).

The Reality - Children run down a road screaming in pain and fear after being bombed with napalm, a jelly-like chemical used as a defoliant. In the center of the photo is a naked girl who would come to be known as "the napalm girl." Later, the world would learn her real name, Kim Phuc, whose life was forever changed by the experience. A photo of Kim Phuc today appears to the right of the famous photo.

Misunderstanding - It may make no difference that this bombing was an error committed by the South Vietnamese, not the Americans (Monk 44). The photo worked so well in turning public sentiment against the war that President Nixon was said to be certain it was a doctored piece of anti-war propaganda ("Huynh Cong Ut").

2.) "Execution of a Viet Cong Suspect" by Eddie Adams (1968).

The Reality - At this point the communists have launched their intensive Tet Offensive against the South. General Nguyen Ngoc Loan holds a pistol up the temple of a wincing young man who is about to have a bullet put in his head. Movie film of the same execution created a stir in American newsrooms for its goriness and was not shown in its entirety.

Misunderstanding - While any summary execution is a horrifying spectacle,

the victim is often described as a "suspect" or a "spy." What is not said is that the suspect confessed to being a mass murderer of women and children who were family members of South Vietnamese officials. Adams later lamented how the photograph had ruined the life of Loan with this virulent publicity: "The general killed the Viet Cong; I killed the general with my camera. Still photographs are the most powerful weapon in the world. People believe them; but photographs do lie, even without manipulation ("Eddie Adams")."

3.) "Little Girl with Photo of Soldier Father in Front of Christmas Tree" by Delbert Graham (1966).

The Reality - He was my father. He worked as a part-time photographer for a local newspaper (The Montesano Vidette). The photo is presented as an example of how war affects everyone personally on some level, and that it wasn't just a nightmare on television. I told the students about Johnny Chambers, the young man from the town of 2,500 people where I lived who died in the war, and another man, son of a local lawyer, who was seriously burned in a helicopter crash.

The Misunderstanding - This particular photo is clearly staged, though for a purpose far more innocent than asking a soldier to set a straw hut on fire so one can photograph it. Still, we must ask ourselves if such set-ups for the sake of a message (*yarase*) can lead to more questionable distortions and manipulations.

4.) "22 Gia Long Street" by Hubert Van Es (1975).

The Reality - Fearful South Vietnamese (who probably worked for the Americans) are trying to board a helicopter on the roof of 22 Gia Long Street as communist troops enter the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon. There are far too many people lining up on the stairway to fit into a single chopper. It is a scene of panic.

The Misunderstanding - It is not the U.S. Embassy roof as is often stated. Van Es notes that editors for some reason refused to read his caption to be certain of what the building actually was. Other interpretations have erroneously assumed the helicopter was a U.S. military one and that American soldiers themselves were running for their lives. The U.S military's offensive against North Vietnam ended in March 1973.

Other photographs in the collection are less ambiguous, for example ...

5.) "Corpsman in Anguish" by Catherine Leroy (1967).

In a bare and smoldering landscape a 19-year-old medic (Vernon White) is looking up in anguished desperation from the body of a fellow Marine and friend. He has just realized he has failed to save his comrade's life. The photo was taken during the battle for Hill 881 North. Battlefield photographers were not always macho men looking for adventure. The French-born Leroy was described as "tiny and totally fearless."

6.) "Baby in the Box" by Chick Harrity (1973).

An orphaned infant sleeping in a box next to her older brother on a street in Saigon was the subject of this photo which actually helped save the baby's life. It was reported that she suffered from a congenital heart condition. Moved perhaps by their Christian sense of guilt, civic-minded Americans pitched in to have the child transported to the United States for treatment. Recently Harrity has received a special lifetime achievement award for his photography which was presented to him by the now grown adult this work helped save.

7.) "Shooting at Kent State University, Ohio" by John Filo (1970).

A young woman who we assume is a student kneels and screams, her arms

stretched outward in stunned disbelief. A classmate lies dead before her. Other students on the scene look either disoriented or unaware that national guardsmen, sent by the Ohio governor to restore order on campus, had fired real bullets into four students, killing them. The photo makes two powerful points. One is that the war is spilling blood at home among civilian youth as well, pitting them against their uniformed childhood friends in the ugliest manner possible. Second is that students are making their voices heard in ways that will change history - far unlike the generally complacent and self-absorbed consumer culture observed in people the same age today.

### Appendix C: Four Sample Essays

Four sample essays are provided as indicators of how well students performed. As essay questions written under a time limit, they were not handed back for revision. One essay appears for each topic and each writer is a different student. (Essays appear with permission of the anonymous students concerned.) These were generally deemed the 'best' ones. They are uncorrected for grammar, spelling and other errors. My comments appear in parentheses.

#### Essay One: The American Revolution

*What were the causes of the American Revolution, and just how 'revolutionary' was it?*

*The cause of American war of Independence is French-Indian War. British govenment imposed taxes on colony with this as a start. (Comment: A good beginning for its simplicity and no-nonsense clarity.)*

*French-Indian War had been carried out in North America from 1754 to 1763.*

*The cause of this war is that British and French scrambled for North America. French united Indian. But this war ended in British winning. British obtained the Louisiana area. (Correction: Actually, it was Spain that acquired it for having lost Florida in the war. Britain gains Canada and land east of the Mississippi River.) Britain expanded their sphere of influence, but France lost power in America. 13 colonial people took British side and they were glad of the victory of Britain because they think they can reclaim new British territory. (Comment: The student is correct to emphasize the impulse for empire is historically ingrained in Americans and begins in grand scale with this war.) But the King of Britain forbid colony to invade new territory. They were offended at the King's idea. It was the first misunderstanding between British government and 13 colonial people.*

*In 1765, British government try to put the Revenue Stamp Law into operation. This Law was that all revenue stamps which were published in the British government burden colony with war expenditure. (Comment: An important point that cannot be overlooked, although unfortunately the student does not mention the quartering of troops as another major bone of contention.)*

*Colony thought British government was selfish because colony did not have new settlement but they had to pay taxes. Colony had not pay taxes and they also did not be given suffrage. But after the war, although they were levied taxes, they did not be gave suffrage as it is. 13 colonial people bounded back. So "No taxation without representation" is a famous slogan which was adopted at this time. (Comment: The student gives the false impression that voting was something colonists never did. More to the point was who they couldn't vote for and not whether they could vote at all.)*

*British government abolished the Revenue Stamp Law for colony's opposition in 1766, but they made some Law like this in 1767. This is called "Townsend." Colony was offended at British government again, and Boston Massacre broke*

*out in 1770. They abolished Townsend in this year, but law of tea was left as an emblem of control of the Colonies. And in 1773, the Boston Tea Party broke out. It was a small matter, but it became the starting point of independence because it was an epoch-making event as regards taking action. (Comment: An unfortunate contradiction. How can a "small matter (sic)" also be epoch-making? Actually, it prompted the closure of the Port of Boston which elicited further hostility among colonists toward the British.)*

*13 colonial people held the continent meeting to seek a way of a reconciliation with Britain in 1774. But independence did not be approved, at last an armed clash broke out between a regular army and colony in 1775. American war of Independence broke out with this as a start. (Comment: Although awkwardly expressed, the writer demonstrates sensitivity toward the complexity of the issue. There is still room for reconciliation.)*

*The United States is a country which colony make with argument for good country.*

*Colony put forward the "Declaration of Independence" in 1776. This contents is a fundamental human right, a revolutionary right, equality, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and so on. This is very fine but "Every man is equal" were wrong. Slaves and Indian did not include among "Every man". To tell the truth, T. Jefferson who wrote the Declaration of Independence as the central leading was considering to abolish slavery. About slavery was written at first, but some leaders of colony had slaves, so abolishing slavery was struck out to fight the war. The view of today, it is not good to go on slavery. It is not "perfect" (Comment: An important and notorious contradiction is included.) But it was as hard as possible colony can So the American Revolution succeed in the end They adopted the newest politics, they aimed at making ideal country. One of this is the separation of powers. In this way they were making country. So this revolution gave a good influence not only America but also all over the world.*

(Comment: Obviously, the argument's momentum is lost in the fog of generalities at this point. There is no mention of the names of experts who authored articles used in class, nor a specific example of another revolution, such as the one to follow in France, that was inspired by the American example.)

## Essay Two: Age of Expansionism

The essay that follows in italics was written in block letters in the usual fifty-minute time limit. It by far contained more words than any other test submitted, with both sides of B4 sized exam paper completely filled. Even then, the student did not have enough time or paper to continue as the discussion ends abruptly.

*What was the American Revolution's legacy for the 19<sup>th</sup> century and how was it reconciled with the apparent contradiction of expansion and its accompanying subjugation of 'others' in a struggle for liberation?*

*(1) In the 1890s, a new spirit started to enter into American foreign policy. America was concerned with building an empire much like European countries. (Comment: The United States fought Spain in the name of anti-imperialism, contrary to its brazen land grab of northern Mexico. The story is told of how McKinley had to look at a globe to actually find the Philippines.) Sometimes this was a result of its business in colonies like Cuba and the Philippines. Britain, France and Germany were all creating colonies. They were exploiting underdeveloped areas which they could rule easily. Some Americans thought that the United States should do the same because colonies meant wealth, power and prestige.*

*(2) In the late eighteenth century the American colonies fought a war against England. The colonies feel that England was taking advantage by heavy tax,*

*forcing them to quarter troops and no form of representation. (Comment: The British were relatively loose with their colonial policy in what would become the United States. Representation was permitted. The problem was that there were no elected colonial representatives in the British Parliament.) The colonies won the war against England and created a nation called America. (Comment: It was 'America' long before it became an independent nation.) However, in nineteenth century America would turn into England with unfair to its own colonies. This occurred during the Spanish-American War which started in 1898 and took place in Cuba and the Philippines. There were some financiers who demanded to start the war. And one said, "The war with Spain will increase businesses like railroad and banking. And it increases the output of all American factories. Also, it would stimulate industry and trading." often business interests provoked war and helped to create the American Empire.*

(3) *In Cuba the guerilla was at work. In 1895, they rebelled against the Spanish. The rebels raided and burnt villages, sugar plantations and railroad depots. Many Americans were worried because they had business with sugar and tobacco. For punish the rebels the Spanish Government put them in prisons and many people died as many as 200,000. Of course the Americans were worried about this. Because they had businesses in Cuba and it is only about 90 miles from America. Also, these Cuban events happened at the same time that American newspapers were trying to increase readers. So American newspaper owners named William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer reported the terrible revenge of the Spanish on the Cubans and it stimulated the feelings of the American people. They sent a ship named the Maine. The ship was attacked and blew up. President McKinley asked the Spanish to leave but they did not and the countries went to war. (Comment: The U.S.S. Maine was most likely not attacked but the victim of a tragic accident, and even if it were sabotaged, the attackers would be those seeking a war with Spain, a country that was not clearly*

eager to fight the United States. Americans keen on maintaining a robust sugar business in Cuba could not have numbered so many as to be a major reason for the war's popularity. That reason is typically attributed to 'yellow journalism,' although it seems incredible that newspapers could hold so much sway over popular opinion.)

(4) *America defeated the Spanish and gave Cuba freedom and independence, but it was a pretense. The battle for the independence started with the Ten Years War in 1868 and it continued till the Spanish-American War in 1898. (Comment: That comes to thirty years, not ten. History has a funny way with labels.) Cuba got its independence thanks to victory in America, but to get independence, Cuba had to accept the Platt Amendment. And this said Cuba has to accept intervention by America whenever they want, also America could build two military bases. America released Cuba from Spanish rule by the name of interference and it went on to control Cuba for many years. The Platt Amendment forced Cuba to accept American troops much like the British forced the American colonist to do. Also, the Americans took advantage of Cuba businesses much like the British did to the American colonist. (Comment: Although not specific, the student hints at striking parallels here.)*

(5) *The Spanish-American War as also fought in the Philippines. The Philippine Insurrection started on the 1st of May because of Dewey's actions. American warship destroyed a Spanish fleet. Then the victory against Spain was brought thanks to America which helped the Filipino patriots. But for America it was a European trick to play on the Filipino patriots. President McKinley wanted the Archipelago as a colony jus like European countries claimed colonies for each other because they thought the islands would be useful for the United States to control for trade with China. To bring this plan to fruition, they exploited the native patriots' mind. Mark Twain says, "America had brought back out of exile their leader Aguinaldo, in high and restored him to his people after*

*they had lent him guns and ammunition. We had been so friendly to them, and had hearted them. And praised them for their courage, gallantly mercifulness, fine and honorable conduct." That is why the Filipinos supposed that Americans also were fighting in their just cause as America had helped the Cubans fight for Cuban Independence and they know the ideas of the American Revolution, self-government and representation. But the truth, "America borrowed their trenches, strong positions which they had previously captured from the Spaiards. Petted them, lied to them and fooled them. Also, used them until we needed them no longe", said Mark Twain too. Many times to build the Empire Americans had to go against many of the ideas of the American Revolution. For American the Philippines was a throw away country.*

*(6) The Spanish-American War became the trigger of the American Empire because it halped America create colonies. To creat these colonies America had to do many things that were against the spirit of the American Revolution. They took advantage of these colonies and imposed unfair laws and policies. They did not give the people representation. These kinds of acts brought the American colonist revolution, one hundred year later they ...* (Comment: Here the student seems to want to draw parallels with the current situation in Iraq, but unfortunately runs out of time. The research paper assignment, a subject outside the scope of this article, is also a class requirement - and a forum specially designed for thinking about the Iraq war in an historical context.)

### Essay Three: The Atomic Bomb

*How did Truman and his supporters justify the use of two atomic bombs against Japan at the end of World War II? Do you agree or disagree with his decision? Give reasons for your answer.*

*More than half a century after the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the argument of the bombing still continues around the world.*

*At last, what's the factor of the bombing?* (Comment: Effective use of rhetorical question.)

*In 1939, Hitler's armies marched into Poland the Second World War began. In the war, the Allied, Britain, the Soviet Union, the U.S. fought against the Axis including Germany and Japan.* (Comment: Going this far back and stating the obvious in this manner is usually discouraged. There just isn't enough time.) *The incident in 1939 and the hate of the U.S. against Germany influenced the US. government. The government spent a vast amount on the Manhattan Project and factories started making tanks, bombers, and other war supplies.*

*After Roosevelt's death in 1945, Harry S. Truman took over as President of the U.S., and he decided to drop the bombs on Japan immediately.* (Comment: This gives the impression there really wasn't anything to discuss or think about. In fact, Truman gave serious attention to the ethical and moral issues involved, even as he was not fully aware of just what the bomb was capable of doing to a city.)

*Why did he decide the bombing?*

*His intention in using the atomic bomb was to save lives and losses of the U.S. by ending the war quickly because Japan was refusing to give up, and to exceed the Soviet Union after the war. Also he wanted to show him as a decisive man by the American citizens.*

*Jimmy Byrnes, the Secretary of State, supposed the use of the bomb to show the U.S. threat to the Soviet Union. And he claimed that more American's lives would have been lost if the U.S. had invaded Japan instead of the bombing.*

*Some people also agreed using the bombs like Truman and his secretary.*

*Japanese historians regarded the bombing as a new step to force the Japanese military to surrender and to end the bloodshed, then accomplish peace.*

*Also others predicted that Japan would have killed all Allied POWs if the U.S.*

*had invaded Japan. So they agreed the use of the bombs.*

*On the other hand, how did the opponents consider the bombing?*

*Eisenhower wrote in his memoir that Japan had already been defeated, so the bombing had been unnecessary and that the U.S. should have avoided the world antipathy by using the weapon.*

*Also the United States Strategic Bombings Survey reported that Japan would have surrendered even if the bombs had not been dropped, even if the Soviet Union had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned.* (Comment: The student went to the trouble to memorize this. No notes were allowed.)

*And Gar Alperowitz said that the U.S. had used the atomic bombs because the bombs had been too expensive.*

*So, many people agree the importance of the bombing.*

*I thought that Japan had been damaged and many Japanese sailors and citizens' lives had been lost by the U.S. by the influence of lessons and textbooks in school, TV program, etc. So I had disagreed the use of the atomic bombs. But many opinions of people around the world changed my mind.* (Comment: Mentioning personal experience is generally not a good idea in a history essay like this, but the remark demonstrates a critical perception of education and the media which is beyond simply anecdotal.)

*In supporters' opinion, the bombing saved many lives by ending the war quickly. Opponents claimed that the bombing wasn't necessary because Japan already was defeated.*

*Both opinions was just prediction. Even if the drop the atomic bombs on Japan didn't happened, people would argue the better solution of the war. It's unimportant that the bombing is right or wrong and who is a victim or a murder.* (Comment: While it isn't clear what the student means by 'unimportant,' it is certainly true that someone would second guess Truman no matter what he

decided. Possible questions that will never be asked: Why didn't Truman use the atomic bomb back when it was small? Why didn't Truman use the atomic bombs to stave off the Russians' advance into Honshu? etc.)

*We should have broad view regarding the war and other things and consider what we believed the truth and common sense.*

#### Essay Four: The Vietnam War

*How was it possible for a small poor country like North Vietnam to defeat a major superpower like the United States? Discuss America's motives and why it felt the sacrifice made was worth it for as long as it did.*

*The Gulf of Tonkin Incident in August 1964 triggered off introducing American troops in the Vietnam War (Comment: Not true. Soldiers at this point were sent to protect air bases from guerrillas, thus not in the previous adviser capacity). The then President Lyndon Johnson used this incident as a legal reason for involving with the battle against North Vietnam. Although more than 58 thousand American soldiers died in this war, the United States government failed to save South Vietnam from the communistic government of North Vietnam. There were some reasons for it.*

*President Johnson firmly believed the "domino theory" as well as President Eisenhower and President Kennedy. They were too worried about it, and they worked hard to stop communist expansion. But the soldiers in Vietnam did not understand the meaning or purpose of the war because the excuse was very unclear. (Comment: A scene in a news clip was shown to students where a reporter asks a soldier what he is fighting for. The soldier doesn't really know.) Even the North Vietnamese intention to attack on American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin was invalid. Moreover the soldiers were often ordered personnel*

*transfers, so their fellow feeling never grow up.* (Comment: "Fellow feeling" probably means camaraderie. Again, the worst tales of fragging, etc. are the ones that stick.) *And they were not interested in the Vietnamese culture and its people. In reality, the soldiers did not have enough motives.*

*And practically, the North Vietnamese army was very hard to deal with. The American and the South vietnamese armies were trained conventionally. So the North Vietnamese guerrilla warfare that had no battle front and fair tactics was successful.* (Comment: No mention of how the Americans were not experiencing this for the first time. It sounds as if they hadn't.) *In addition, the Vietcong were supplied through the Ho Chi Minh Trail endlessly, and the government of the North Vietnam was popular. Its soldiers were willing to do anything to drive out foreign influence. They were also supported by communist countries like the Soviet Union and China. Particularly the Soviet Union sent North Vietnam a large number of weapons.*

*As the war dragged on, people in the United States began to doubt whether they could win the war and the war was right or not. After the Tet Offensive in 1968, the images of the war without any explanation which were televised helped to warm up anti-war movement. A lot of musicians and veterans of the Vietnam war worked on the anti-war campaigns. Most of Americans did not support their government and the soldiers in Vietnam since then. Finally, LBJ who achieved the Civil Rights Act and the Voting rights Act became the enemy of the American nation.* (Comment: An uncommon feel for irony. The student read the text and pinpointed an often cited paradox that is not explicitly present in the assigned readings.)

*Although the United States government devoted so much money and time to this war, the communists united all of Vietnam. The United States might dragged on this war for their pride.* (Comment: "Pride." It is just one word, but it is a convincing reason for why the war was not stopped much earlier.) *They did not*

*want to lose this war. But the Vietnam War killed many young American soldiers, and the "domino theory" were not proved. It became the complete mistaken war in American history after all*

#### Appendix D: The Short Essay Test Results

The short essay is a reality check that reveals predictable indications of the limited ability of students to prepare for an actual standard exam (i.e. taken without notes). As stated previously, students were assigned specific sections of the textbook about which to write their own short essay questions for a single collective class effort. I selected twenty of the better ones and read them aloud as a dictation practice. If all went as planned, students were to look up the answers over the period of slightly over a month, commit them to memory (or better yet, informed analysis based on multiple sources) and be prepared to regurgitate on an examination uniquely of their own making. I supplied three basic questions of my own to check general understanding on some key points students had overlooked, namely pertaining to the Civil War. The third question was a special problem-solving exercise for those seeking a "challenge."

Unfortunately, every single student failed this test. There was no misunderstanding as to what the test was about, how it would be conducted or when. Students were either too busy/lazy to prepare for it (their fault), woefully lacking in study skills or simply uninterested (my fault).

In all fairness to the students who work harder than most, the majority of the questions dealt with subjects which were not directly featured in in-class exercises, lectures or videos. However, this is what studying in an American college situation frequently entails. Students are not quizzed in detail about every passage they have been assigned to read as there is simply no time for that, much less the interminable drudgery of the translation method common in Japanese

universities where a foreign language is text material. The assumption professors abroad make is that material has been read and understood well enough that lectures can be comprehended and even intelligently questioned (something exceedingly rare in Japanese college classrooms).

Students were requested to answer all questions in complete English sentences. Each of the 20 questions was graded as five points for full credit. To show how this test failed, I will for the purpose of brevity highlight a single question (#8) on the Dred Scott decision, and follow it up with some remarks on other questions relating to the Civil War.

*What was the Dred Scott decision? Who welcomed it?*

The textbook reads as follows: "But in 1858 (sic) the supporters of slavery won a victory of another sort. A slave named Dred Scott had been taken by his owner to live in a free state. Scott asked the Supreme Court to declare that this had made him legally free. But the Court refused. It said that black slaves had no rights as American citizens. It added also that Congress had gone beyond its constitutional powers in claiming the right to prohibit slavery in the western territories. The Dred Scott decision caused great excitement in the United States. Southern slave owners were delighted. Opponents of slavery were horrified. The Supreme Court seemed to be saying that free states had no right to forbid slavery within their boundaries and that slave owners could put their slaves to work anywhere" (O'Callaghan 48).

Points were given for 1.) mentioning Dred Scott was a slave, 2.) the date (actually 1857), 3.) noting this Supreme Court decision rejected Scott as an American citizen because of his slave status, 4.) noting slaves could be taken anywhere in the country and still be slaves, and 5.) that Southern slaveholders were happy about this (which should be pretty obvious).

Here are five answers, each representing a particular type commonly observed. The English has not been corrected.

Type I (verbatim parroting of textbook): *The Supreme Court seemed to be saying that free states had no right to forbid slavery within their boundaries and that slave owners could put their slaves to work anywhere.* (Comment: There is no indication the student is actually aware of what he/she is writing. Apparently, the decision was made to memorize some fragments of a paragraph with the words "Dred" and "Scott" in it - or worse yet, he/she was working from crib notes.)

Type II (nonsensically ambiguous): *Dred Scott was a black slave. He claimed that black people have no right. This decision caused great excitement. Black people supported him.*

Type III (factually incorrect): *His decision caused great excitement in America. Slave owners were delighted. But Opponents were horrified. Congress said slaves does not have rights in America.* (Comment: Obviously, the decision wasn't Scott's to make, nor was it Congress's.)

Type IV (Hollywood history): *Dred Scott decision occured sencetion in America. Dred Scott was black slave. So, he recieved unbelievable judge. Black slaves were angry. So, they hoped that Lincorn become the President. They thought that if Lincorn became the President, he try to end slavery.* (Comment: Heavy emphasis on emotional values and historical superheroes with inaccuracy thrown in to fill the gaping omissions.)

Type V (good, if incomplete): *It was the Court's decision that the free states had no right to ban the slavery. And also it said that the slaveowners had the right to make their slaves work anywhere. The Southern slaveowners welcomed it but the opponents were scared. And it is said that it was a part of Civil War.* (Comment: The textbook says as much, but beyond rejecting Scott's right to sue in a federal court, the Supreme Court was engaging in legislating from the bench, or *obiter*

*dictum*, which only served to fan the flames of sectionalism [Midgely 126].)

Unfortunately, there is no effort seen to answer the question beyond the limits of the textbook as might be demonstrated with a mention of the Chief Justice's name or other facts not mentioned by O'Callaghan. Mentioning Lincoln or the Civil War in the answer at least indicated the student was aware of the context of the question, if not the exact date. The other seventeen questions ranging from early exploration to Ronald Reagan's 'warmongering' were more or less answered in the minimalist vein.

As to the question of why the Southern states seceded, only a few who took the test were aware that Lincoln opposed the spread of slavery into the territories as a presidential candidate, not Southern slavery itself, a point clearly made in the textbook (and once by me in a lecture where everyone at least appeared to be listening). A teacher question asking what the two major results were of the North's victory in the Civil War was widely misunderstood as asking *why* the North won. Of the 42 students who took the test, only five answered the question for complete credit (restoration of the Union and abolition of slavery), with ten at least answering the slavery half correctly. The question about what war had the greatest cost in American soldiers' lives, again the Civil War, received 14 correct answers. (Some students have difficulty separating the meanings of 'war' with 'battle.' One wrote that more Americans died at Pearl Harbor than in any other "war." Another wrote "World War II" as an answer, correct when talking about world history, but wrong here. The reasoning was that the U.S. played a key role in World War II and it was only logical it would lose more soldiers than any other country.)

Given the poor performance on the main test, it is no surprise no one answered the challenge question correctly. The problem encouraged students to apply the basic facts they were required to know for the first examination - an examination on which many actually did quite well. The question was a paragraph with blanks

to fill in, and required students know 1.) where New England is, and therefore, 2.) where Maine is; 3.) where the Mississippi River is; 4.) when the American Civil War took place and 5.) where West Virginia is. The same photocopied map (*hakuchizu*) used for the first test was included in this question; numbers indicating the order by which each state entered the Union were written in by hand, thus Delaware would be marked with a 1 and Arizona with a 48, etc. I thought it odd that so many did well on the first test where they were simply required to supply the names of the states that corresponded to the indicated number of entry, yet no one was able to make any sense of the following problem (answers provided in blanks):

Why did Maine, a New England state, enter the Union so long after the others in that region? Originally, it was a part of Massachusetts, which had agreed to separation. In 1820 there were 11 free states and 11 slave states. At the same time, Missouri, which would belong to the latter group, wanted to join the Union as the first state completely west of the Mississippi River. This would help maintain a voting balance in the Senate where every state, regardless of size, had two voting representatives. Although an agreement known as a compromise was reached between the two groups of states where it was agreed slavery would be legal (with one exception) below the parallel of 36 degrees 30 minutes, the argument disturbed an aging Thomas Jefferson who correctly foresaw the coming of the Civil War. "This momentous question," he said, "like a firebell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell (弔いの鐘) of the Union."

Indeed, during that war the shape of Jefferson's beloved home state became forever changed when on June 20, 1863, West Virginia entered the Union in an act of protest against that state's decision two years

earlier to break away from the U.S.A. and join the Confederate  
States of America.

While I did not expect anyone to score on this perfectly, I at least thought they would be able to answer the geography questions. It should seem obvious that Maine was the last of the New England states to join the Union at No. 23 (Vermont was second to last at No. 14) and "at the same time" would likely mean that the other state in question was either No. 22 (Alabama) or No. 24 (Missouri). By recognizing the irregular line snaking down the map as the Mississippi River and the number 24 being the lowest number to the left of it (with the exception of Louisiana) - and at the very least realizing rivers' general usefulness as borders (as true in Japan as anywhere else), it would seem that this question would not be all that difficult. I did not expect anyone to actually know that Maine was once part of Massachusetts (though it is mentioned in the textbook), but I had at least hoped someone might make an intelligent guess. No one did. And when noticing that West Virginia was No. 35 on the map, by far the latest state to enter the Union among those east of the Mississippi River, and on top of that appearing in the same sentence with the year 1863, the very height of the American Civil War, it would seem the question was a near give-away. It was not.

The short essay exam experiment revealed that students, when left to their own devices, cannot perform passably on a simple test that they have collectively created themselves - nor can they arrange facts committed to memory into patterns of creative thought or analysis, at least in this particular instance.

The long essay answer examinations conducted to this point have been in the 'open book' style. While a small minority of students had shown some promise in organizing and writing reasonably good English essays within a specified time limit, doing so without notes would prove to be a new challenge in the aftermath of this discouraging short essay exam result.

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