Arguing for a New History [Textbook]: An Exploratory Rhetorical Analysis of the Tsukurukai's Arguments for Reforming Junior High School History Textbooks

D. L. Olson

The facts only speak when the historian calls on them. It is he who decides which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context.... It is the historian who has decided for his own reasons that Ceasar's crossing of that petty stream, the Rubicorn, is a fact of history, whereas the crossing of the Rubicorn by millions of people before or since interests nobody at all.¹

E H Carr

Introduction

In 2001 the atarashii rekishi kyoukasho wo tsukurukai² authored history textbook for junior high school students came out and immediately caused an uproar both at home and abroad, particularly in China and South Korea, but receiving attention in much of the western media as well.³

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The issues centered on the content of the text, especially with regard to Japanese history and the country's actions in the modern era up to the end of World War II.

This case was by no means a single isolated incident but a rather important one if judged only by the amount of press coverage it received both in Japan and abroad. This was part of the ongoing debate in Japan about not only the events of the past, but more importantly how that past should be viewed and interpreted, and what should be taught to Japanese youth. Both aspects of this issue are also inevitably linked to larger issues of Japanese national identity, which is why the arguments can often become quite impassioned on all sides of the issues in question.⁴

This study is an attempt to examine this issue from a rhetorical perspective, with the particular focus being on a sampling of the arguments made by the tsukurukai. In addition to the atarashii rekishi kyoukasho (hereafter New History Textbook), the tsukurkai and its members have published numerous articles and books making their case. It would be impossible to analyze them all in this space. In fact their publications are profuse and varied to the extent that one could spend years and not a few dissertations examining them from different perspectives. The starting point here will be the preface to the public issued version of the New History Textbook itself, and draw further on other articles its various members have written to try to create the general thrust of some of their main arguments. It would be a mistake to assume that the members of the

¹ "What is History," Chpt 1 in <u>History</u> (London: Penguin, 1961), 11.

² The organization (新しい歴史教科書をつくる会) refers to itself on it's home page as the Society for History Textbook Reform. While the *atarashii* (new) and *tsukuru* (make or create depending on the Chinese character used) could be taken to mean reform, I prefer to stick with the original nuance (somewhat ambiguous since it is only rendered in phonetic *hiragana* characters) and will abbreviate my references to the group as *tsukurukai*, as is common in many Japanese articles about the group. ³ Doug Struck, "Japanese history textbook reopens old wounds," <u>Guardian Weekly</u> (May 24-30, 2001), 36.

⁴ I should point out early on, as I will discuss later, there are not two sides to this issue but multiple ones, as Roger B. Jeans makes abundantly clear in his review of the contents of the displays of Japan's various war and peace museums. "Victims or Victimizers? Museums, Textbooks, and the War Debate in Contemporary Japan," *Journal of Military History* 69 (Jan 2005), 149-195.

^{5 [}市販本]「新しい歴史教科書」東京:扶桑社、2001.

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tsukurukai are themselves wholly in agreement over all the issues involved, as rumor of their breakup in 2006 suggests. Also, as suggested above, it is important to note that some of these authors are worthy of examination in their own right, as their own independent works (not related to the tsukurukai per se), have raised other, equally important issues.

It is not the intent of this research to engage in the debate about what should be in history textbooks, nor to offer an extensive analysis or comparison of the *tsukurukai* text and other school texts on offer. Some discussion of content will however be necessary as it is the content (and though less often aired in public, the pedagogical and ideological views about teaching history) that is central to the whole issue. Thus content will be introduced as necessary to exemplify the discourses being analyzed.⁸

In the sections below I will begin by providing an overview of the background of the textbook issue. This is a decades old issue. I will attempt to highlight the events most pertinent to this particular debate. This will be followed by a brief discussion of method and the choice of texts, and that by the analysis of the texts themselves. The final section will offer an assessment of the texts with some comment on the teaching of history and what this debate suggests about the state of history education in Japan in

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the early 21st century.

Background of History Textbook Issues⁹

Since the Meiji Restoration and the introduction of a modern education system the Japanese government has had a hand in determining the content of school textbooks. During the American Occupation, 1945-1952, this authority was relinquished, but post Occupation was quickly reasserted. In newly democratic Japan, with conservative governments in place steadily since 1955, this was bound to become an issue before long.

Perhaps the most famous and long running example of the conflict over textbook content was the case of Ienaga Saburo, who, working as a history teacher in post-war Japan, began drafting his own history textbooks in the late 50s. ¹⁰ Finding his desire to teach students about the war, including negative aspects of Japan's wartime actions, frustrated by Ministerial vetting, he filed his first law suit against the Ministry of Education in 1965. He was to go on to file two further lawsuits over the years and with all the appeals was to continue his battle for 32 years. Though he never won a complete victory, he did succeed in getting the issues a lot of attention in the media, and brought the issues into greater public awareness. This helped to create momentum for a more inclusive treatment of the war.

[。]たわら・よしふみ「つくる会」分裂・解体か 俵義文(子どもと教科書全国ネット21)(2006-3-15) http://transnews.exblog.jp/2833664/ (2010-10-20). The 子どもと教科書全国ネット 21 is an organization formed after the publication of the text to prevent is adoption by schools around Japan.

⁷ One such issue involves the degree to which revisionist views are entering mainstream culture. Kobayashi Yoshinoi's manga, <u>Sensouron</u>, is reported to have sold one million copies. In it he states the Nanking Massacre and Comfort Women are fictitious. Irie Yoshimasa, "The History of the Textbook Controversy," <u>Japan</u> Echo, 1997, 37-38. Kobayashi is also a member of the *tsukurukai*.

⁸ For an analysis of the textbook see John K. Nelson, "Tempest in a Textbook," Critical Asian Studies 34:1 (2002) 129-148.

³ This review is based largely on Shibuichi, "Japan's History Textbook Controversies; Caroline Rose, "The Textbook Issue:Domestic Sources of Japan's Foreign Policy, <u>Japan Forum</u> 11(2) 1999, 205-216; Rikki Kersten, "Coming to Terms with the Past: <u>Japan," History Today</u> 54(3), (March 2004), 20-22; Jeans, "Victims or Victimizers?"; and Nozaki Yoshiko, "Japanese Politics and the History of the Textbook Controversy, 1945-2001, in Edward Victers and Alisa Jones, eds., <u>History, Education, and National Identity in East Asia</u>, (London: Routledge, 2005), 275-305.

¹⁰ Kersten gives a succinct overview of his life and a general outline of his court cases, "Coming to Terms with the Past."

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The next event which would have a major influence on the textbook issue arose in 1982.11 The issue started through media reports that the screening process for authorizing textbooks had changed the wording about the Nanking massacre and concerning Japan's invasion of China. In the case of the former, the description was softened, removing 'rape', 'plunder', and 'arson' and also omitting the estimated number of deaths. In the case of the latter, the word invasion (侵略) was reported to have been replaced with advance (進行) or (進出). The case became blown out of proportion due to misreporting in the mass media in Japan. While some of the changes had been suggested, and some texts had made changes, many of the texts retained their original wording. While this issue was more or less resolved, Japanese textbooks would continue to waver between differing wording and treatment of these issues. What change the 1982 internationalization of the issue did result in however, was an inclusion in the Standards for Textbook Authorization (kyoukasho kentei kijun) of a recommendation that authors take into consideration in writing descriptions relating to Asian nations "international understanding and cooperation."12 The tsukurukai notes this event as the turning point in the debasement of textbooks.¹³

After 1982, issues rose again from time to time, and already the rumblings against the textbooks as they were could be heard. But it was events in the 1990s that seemed to serve as a catalyst for the *tsukurukai* and like-minded others to organize. Some of these events relate more to Japanese politics than specifically to textbook screening. But the result was

 11 A detailed summary can be found in Rose, "The Textbook Issue," and further analysis in Shibuichi, "Japan's History."

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a shift in mood in the country which allowed for greater inclusion of up until then excluded events from the past.

The changes I refer to were not seismic shifts but a gradual change among some Japanese politicians to publicly accept responsibility, in one form or another, for the sufferings of people during the war. In the 90s the comfort women (従軍慰安婦) became an issue, as the Japanese government admitted for the first time in 1993 that they had in fact existed. This admission was likely due to the discovery in 1992 of documents in the Self Defense Agency's archives linking the military to the establishment of the "comfort stations." The public admission of their existence led to the Ministry of Education allowing mention of the comfort women in new textbooks in 1997. While not the sole cause, this and the other changes led Tokyo University Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu and Nishio Kanji and others to form the tsukurukai in 1996 with the express intent of writing a new history text to "correct" history, and to actively encourage others to get involved in promoting the text and their views of history.

Method and Texts

The method used to examine the texts is descriptive/analytical with an overall assessment growing from evaluative standards suggested by the texts themselves. Together this serves as a kind of hybrid method of

日本教育年鑑委員会、「日本教育年鑑」(東京:行政、1984)、257.

¹³ 新しい歴史教科書をつくる会、「自虐」 『史』 25 (Jan-Mar, 2001)

http://www.tsukurukai.com/02 about us/02 maso.html> (Nov 2010).

¹⁴ Yoshizaki's work and that by others are reviewed in Melissa Wender, "Military Comfort Women: Doing Justice to the Past," <u>Critical Asian Studies</u> 35:1 (2003) 139-145.

¹⁵ Irie, "The History of the Textbook Controversy," 36-37. As textbooks are reviewed every four years, this was the first opportunity to include it after the government admitted they existed.

¹⁶ For a statement of their founding principle and goals see 新しい歴史教科書をつくる会、「主張」(Jan 30, 1997) < http://www.tsukurukai.com/02_about_us/02_maso.html (Nov 2010).

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analysis. An intrinsic textual analysis on the one hand, to create a reading of the texts, and a broader overall assessment which attempts to link the texts back to the context in which they were created, particularly with regard to the arguments being made. As an intrinsic analysis the aim is to create a descriptive accounting of the text. In the process, while not relying on any specific western based models of rhetorical analysis, I will employ rhetorical terms as necessary to explicate the texts. While some of these terms clearly have their roots in the western rhetorical traditions, it is not my intention to evaluate these texts by western standards. A point I should perhaps briefly clarify.

Japanese rhetoric is clearly not the same as rhetoric in cultures influenced by Greco-Roman traditions, and, in the same way, principles from those traditions can not necessarily be applied to Japan. As I have argued elsewhere, ¹⁷ Japanese public discourse tends to be less argumentative (in the confrontational sense) generally (with more lively debate going on behind the scenes), but, as Kunihiro Masao has argued, many Japanese use western or Japanese language in such a way as to preserve standards of western logic. ¹⁸ The western style, he notes, is used particularly in academic and other fields where making one's case is an integral part of the profession. Many of the *tsukurukai* writers are academics, and, from the content of the discourses analyzed, it is clear that they are highly argumen-

17 "The Indigenous Rhetoric of Japan: Exploration and Examination of Aspects of the Cultural Rhetoric of Japan," Proceedings of the Twelfth International Symposium on Asian Studies, Hong Kong, 1991; "Beginning to Define Japanese Rhetoric: Takeshita as a Japanese Rhetorician" 福岡大学人文論叢 第 22 巻第 4 号, 1991, 1013-133; "Researching Japanese Political Rhetoric: A Case Study on Hatoyama's Policy Speech, Oct. 26th, 2009." 西南学院大学英文論集第 50 巻 1 • 2 • 3 合併号 2010, 19-48.

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tative and can justifiably be viewed through similar logical standards and rules of evidence. Obviously, what counts as authoritative proofs and the importance placed on various types of proofs will vary among cultures. I attempt to be sensitive to this as much as possible and when I encounter areas of suspect variance in cultural standards I will discuss them as such. A further exploration of these differences will be worth pursuing in future research.

In terms of assessing the texts, the aim is not to measure effectiveness (i.e., persuasiveness) as in traditional classical western traditions, but interpretive, attempting to view the text in the larger context in which they exist. In so far as I examine disparate texts which would have been seen by (in some respects at least) disparate audiences makes any assessment of their actual effectiveness problematic at best, and not really to the point of this research. The fact that out of 542 schools 532 rejected the New History Textbook in 2001 may say more about the history text itself, or about the effective efforts of citizens groups campaigning against the text, than about the argumentative effectiveness, or not, of the discourses (of which I examine only a small selection).¹⁹

As mentioned above, the starting point is the introduction to the public version of the New History Textbook. This was published in June 2001 after the text was approved and the diplomatic storm had settled somewhat, but the debate was still quite heated. A second text is the introduc-

¹⁸ "Indigenous Barriers to Communication," <u>The Japan Interpreter</u> 8 (Winter 1973), 96-108).

¹⁹ The numbers are quoted from Jeans, "Victims or Victimizers?" 192. Shibuichi Daiki gives a more recent figure of 0.4% of total schools adopting for 2006. In "Japan's History Textbook Controversy: Social Movements and Governments in East Asia, 1982-2006," <u>Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies</u> (March 4, 2008)

http://www.japanstudies.org.uk/discussionpapers/2008/shibuichi.html/#Author (August 8, 2008).

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tion of atarashii rekishikyoukasho tanjou!!, published in September of 2000. As the screaming title suggests, this presumably was aimed at pre-approval promotion of the text and tsukurukai points of view generally. The third text is the introduction to another text published in June 2001, atarashii rekishikyoukasho "tsukurukai" no shuchou, superficially at least, with the purpose of further promoting the New History Textbook. I will focus on a close analysis of these introductory texts. I will draw on other essays in the analysis, but as these latter two books contain a combined 40 essays by very different authors (though with similar points of view) treating highly varied topics, I will limit my analysis to these introductory materials.²⁰ Another primary source examined was the tsukurukai home page, in particular the statement adopted at its founding meeting (setsuritsu soukai) on January 1st, 1997. This was useful for getting a general statement (as a statement of principle it is lacking in detail) of the objectives of the group. As mentioned above, this analysis is meant to be largely intrinsic, while at the same time viewing them in terms of the larger situation in which they were created.

Little has been said about the specific audiences for these texts. With the case of the first text, due to the diplomatic problems and intense media coverage this textbook received in Japan, it comes as little surprise that the public issued version of the New History Textbook would become a best seller. Certainly those who support the *tsukurukai*, those educators in the field of history or involved in the process of textbook selection, those

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strongly opposed to the group's activities, and members of the general public who just wanted to see what all the fuss was about, would all have been potential readers. In the case of the second two books I suspect the audiences would have been considerably more limited, due to the lack of press coverage (not being textbooks but merely arguments by *tsukurukai* members), and the overlap with similar types of content available in the market place. The texts themselves suggest a fairly partisan audience, and these latter two texts, as the analysis will show, seem largely intended for an audience generally holding views similar to their authors. No doubt those fighting against the proposed changes to the textbooks would also have been mining these materials to prepare counter arguments, but these clearly would not have been among the intended audience.

Analysis

"Introduction," New History Textbook

While chronologically coming out later than the second text examined, as the introduction to the New History Textbook itself, with a broader public audience presumed, it seemed appropriate to begin the examination of these discourses with Nishio's introduction to the text. While book introductions can serve a variety of often similar purposes—introducing the background or beginning of the work, discussing its development, thanking those who assisted, etc.—this introduction is unusual in-so-far as it is the introduction to the general adult public of book intended for junior high school students. On top of that, it is a book that was recently at the center of diplomatic friction between China and South Korea (no doubt North Korea had its say as well but was little reported), and received no small amount of attention in Japanese domestic media. Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising that what we find is a little unusual by way of book introductions.

²⁰ The texts are as follows: 西尾幹二、「市販本のまえがき」in (市販本)「新しい歴史 教科書」東京: 扶桑社、2001, II-III; 西尾幹二、「まえがき――めざしたのは常識の確立」in 西尾幹二、編著者『新しい歴史教科書「つくる会」の主張』(東京: 徳間書店、2001), 3-6; 高橋史朗、「まえがき」in 高橋史朗、新しい歴史教科書をつくる会、編集、『新しい歴史教科書誕生!!』(東京: PHP 研究所, 2000), 1-3.

²¹ 新しい歴史教科書をつくる会、「主張」(Jan 1,1997)

http://www.tsukurukai.com/02 about us/01 opinion.html> (Mar. 2008).

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The structure of Nishio's preface for the New History Textbook is two pages, divided into 8 paragraphs. Paragraph one is one simple sentence declaring that the book is the New History Textbook being offered so that many Japanese people (日本国民) can read it (読んでいただくため). This is a fairly straight forward statement, and suggests the purpose of what follows will be to convince people that they should. What follows indeed could be said to support that assertion, but the form the argument takes is somewhat unusual, though perhaps not so unpredictable considering the circumstances.

Paragraphs two through four are essentially a diatribe against the media and *tsukurukai* critics. The attacks are highly critical and partisan. He begins by saying:

With regard to this textbook, for some time now, a part of the mass media and others have been behaving in a way that must be hard for average people to accept. Put differently, even though people do not know the content of the textbook, newspapers have been throwing criticisms at it as they like [気まま]. Also, Korea and China have been opposing the text and nonchalantly demanding revisions. Though the particular people or foreigners who are writing these things are free to state their opinions at will, the people of Japan have not been allowed to read it with their own eyes and to make their own judgment. This is an unnatural and unhealthy state of affairs.

A couple of things stand out here, which he continues to develop in the next two paragraphs. First he describes it as "a part of the mass media and others" (一部のマスコミなど) suggesting it is not very widespread, and thus their behavior is out of the ordinary. This is reinforced by stating that they are stating their criticisms "as they like." One expects professionalism in the media, and this strongly suggests they are doing whatever they want,

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i.e., are unprofessional. Again, reinforcing the idea that the critics are not part of us (acting according to accepted norms) he refers to these critics as "the particular people or foreigners" (特定の人や外国人), thus grouping his domestic critics with the foreign critics. He concludes the sentence by saying they basically get to state their opinions freely, which, we are asked to conclude in the final sentence, is "an unnatural and unhealthy state of affairs."

In the third paragraph he appeals similarly to the unfairness, that in the midst of this heated debate both at home and abroad "the people have not even been given basic information. This, we think, does not meet the necessary conditions of a democratic society" (民主主義社会の要件を満たしていない). That is why, Nishio goes on to argue, they felt it was their duty (義務) to publish the text, and, from the perspective of the people, this should be seen as fulfilling their natural right to know (「知る権利」の当然の行使とみなされてしかるべきである). Here he has introduced another theme which is that they are fulfilling their duty, thereby giving the people the opportunity of exercising their right to know.

In paragraph four Nishio further develops the undercurrent of us versus them that has been running through the second and third paragraphs. He states that though there were eight texts that were approved only ours was targeted for "abuse and slander" (誹謗・中傷) on the pages of major newspapers and in television media. Again, echoing his statement in paragraph two, these sources have pursued this slander and abuse anyway they like (ほしいまま). He goes on to add that the particular political forces behind all this and that have targeted the New History Textbook with criticism have already produced four books (critical of the *tsukurukai* text). And without the text in question being made public, these "slurs" (悪罵) go unanswered (独り歩き), and "we cannot respond without making our text public." He concludes this paragraph and this section by asserting that this

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is a serious problem involving the honor of the authors and publisher of the textbook. It is a problem of "freedom of speech and a threat to our basic human rights" (言論の自由…執筆者や発行者の基本的人権が脅かされている問題である).

While the underlying argument here in paragraphs two through four is fairly consistent, that they are being unfairly criticized, that they are being singled out, etc., there is also an inconsistency in the second and fourth. In the second paragraph he refers to "a part of the media" and "particular people and foreigners" suggesting that these people are perhaps not such a large number and not mainstream, but in paragraph four, this becomes "major newspaper/s and television" and "particular political forces," suggesting here that they are quite powerful. While seemingly inconsistent, the purpose seems in the former to suggest that these are not majority voices. Whereas in the fourth, the purpose seems more clearly to suggest they are being victimized by the media, i.e., their basic human rights are under threat. The tone of this passage is another issue which I will return to later.

Paragraphs five and six, though reiterating some of the earlier themes, function more as a refutation in the form of a criticism of the criticism leveled again their text. Paragraph five begins by stating that the criticism has "overall been directed at minor details of the text"(叙述), but that a text must be seen in its entirety. To ignore the entirety and to judge a text only on certain parts, Nishio argues, will result not only in criticism that is incorrect, but "will tend to end up as unscrupulous intentional attacks" (不当意図的攻撃に終わりがちである). He goes on to say that this is in fact what has happened. Then again, asserting the inappropriateness of debating only the minor details, he states, "if we refute the criticisms of only minor details, for the general reader who does not know the whole, there is the danger that it will be seen as a pointless argument" (水掛け論).

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This is both a refutation in that he reasserts again that they are only criticizing small details, and, at the same time, is an argument for the general public to read the entire text (if they want to understand). He goes on to say that debating the whole text is the healthy/sound (健全) way to proceed and expresses their confidence that the content of their text is up to the task.

The sixth paragraph is a continuation of this refutation, but again with an appeal to democratic values. "In democratic discussion, all opposing voices have a right to be heard" (民主社会の言論においてはすべての反論権 が認められなくてはならない). He suggests here, as in previous sections, that somehow their rights are being infringed upon. The next sentence stands out as something of an understatement. "We composedly/quietly offer this book to Japanese civil society" (われわれは日本の市民社会に本書 を静かに提供する). He concludes this paragraph by saying "this is an effective counterpunch that will take the wind out of the foolish criticisms" (愚かな批判をむなしくする有効なカンターパンチである). This is the conclusion of the refutation for the most part, which, along with the criticism of the media in the early sections, has mainly focused on appeals to democratic principles and fairness. Nishio does not address specific criticisms (nor in such a short introduction could be be expected to) but rather the way the criticisms have been leveled, and to a lesser degree. attacking the critics indirectly by omitting them from his immediate audience by referring to them as "particular people, others, foreigners" etc.

The last two paragraphs are something of a summary and a further appeal for readers to take up the text, but he also changes track to include an argument about the *tsukurukai*'s opposition to the way textbooks are selected. While a related argument, it is less central to this analysis so I will focus on those aspects most relevant to the preceding analysis.

In paragraph seven he expresses his anxiety that the abuse and slander

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hurled at the New History Textbook in the media might influence those who might be making the selection of textbooks. Again he appeals to contemporary society's right to know. He states that the official closing-off of the textbook selection process ends up protecting established publishers and as such may encourage unfairness. Here again echoing the "unfairness" theme introduced earlier. The final sentence of this paragraph, arguing for an opening up of the process, states that the public issue of the New History Textbook is none other than a "textbook market based on free competition to encourage fair choice in the public spirit" (教科書の市販は、開かれた自由競争に基づく公正な選択を促す公共の精神に一致する). This, while adding the argument about having an open and fair market, also suggests people are not getting the choices they deserve and expect.

The final paragraph is both a challenge to other publishers to publish their texts so that people can compare them, saying that the people also have a right to see them as well (知る権利) so that they too can freely debate the different texts. Here, as in the previous paragraph, Nishio makes another appeal for opening up the selection process (or I should say for his readers to support the opening up of the process), by stating "the selection should not be done closed off in some secret room but should be done in public, where it could be widely debated by many people." He goes on to say that not only would this not bring confusion to the process, it would enhance the sense of absolute public fairness, "based on the spirit of openness which is a requirement of democratic society." As mentioned earlier this argument concerning the selection process is of less concern here, but of interest is Nishio's appeals to the same shared values that appear in the other sections. I will return to this later in the final assessment of these texts, but with this text, a final word should be said about tone.

From the quotes and language already introduced the tone comes

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across as very strong, almost angry sounding. The terms he uses to describe his critics in the media and elsewhere as criticizing "as they please" and suggesting that what they are doing is "unnatural" and "unhealthy," present a picture of his critics as behaving badly at best and immorally at worst. The criticisms of the text are not simple criticisms, but "abuse and slander" and "slurs." Such language in the United States is not uncommon in political rhetoric, but in Japan such language comes across as angry if not spiteful. Likewise, the references to the critics' criticisms as infringing on freedom of speech, and threatening their basic human rights are overstatements to say the least (unless of course Nishio can offer some evidence that his critics were trying to silence his group, of which I have seen none).

Trying to assess how his readers might have reacted to this tone is speculative, but the strong language I expect would have left some people taken aback to say the least. In the context of what was being said, this may have seemed a reasonable way to develop the argument. It seems justifiable to be angry if the media is saying whatever it wants about you because they don't like your text (and you presumably). This seemed to be the main thrust of paragraphs two to four, that the authors (of the textbook) are being treated unfairly. If readers accepted that, they may have been inclined to sympathize with the author.

This approach may have encouraged people to overlook the main argument of the refutation, i.e., that it was unfair because the critics only dealt with certain (small) parts of the text. This argument is in itself something of a red herring. This is a junior high school textbook. Most of the content is what you could expect to find in pretty much every other junior high school textbook, which presumably the vast majority of readers would have studied themselves. The *problems* lie in those very parts of the text which had caused tensions to rise with Korea and China, and caused

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such an uproar in Japan as well. Things were not so much taken out of context, but pulled out because they were so at odds with what at the time was considered to be the normal accepted range of content for a junior high school textbook.

The greatest criticisms of the textbook that appeared in the media are not addressed, nor are they even mentioned. The next two texts also do not address the specific criticisms, nor were they intended to. They are similar in the position they take with regard to the new textbook, but offer different perspectives on the *tsukurukai* 's motives and reasons for writing the New History Textbook. The next text is the one that came out in September of 2000, about five months prior to when the New History Textbook became public.

"Introduction," <u>The New Textbook is Here!!</u> (新しい教科書:誕生!!) Takahashi Shirou

This book is a collection of essays, interviews, Q&As, reprinted lectures, and includes several addenda which list, among other things, the committee members of the *tsukurukai*, a list of prominent people who have signed on to the project, a list of Liberal Democratic Party Diet members of the Textbook Sub-Committee, reports of the group's activities, etc. It is clearly intended for supporters, and the timing of its publication (and its screaming title) suggest it was intended as a rallying cry before the fight which they no doubt knew would come when the text became public. I chose it because I thought it might add further insight into some of the motives for creating a new textbook.

The 12-paragraph long text follows more along the usual lines of the general book introduction (which as I mentioned earlier has no specific template). It basically sets out the reasons why the book was written and concludes with words of appreciation for all those who helped make it a

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possibility. In this case those 'reasons' are important, as they give clues as to why the *tsukurukai* sees the need to write a new textbook. ²² As suggested above, this introduction also serves as a rallying cry for the upcoming release and selection for new textbooks.

The last two paragraphs include the expressions of appreciation and a reminder that the *tsukurukai* and its supporters are at crunch time (正念場) for getting their textbook approved and selected. Takahashi mentions specific activities various groups around the country are undertaking to try and change the selection process. This is included in the two paragraph conclusion, which, by including such detail, helps to remind his readers of all the people making and who have made efforts, and to encourage them to keep up the fight. This by itself is not so convincing of course. It is the first ten paragraphs which set up this conclusion and rally cry which are of the most interest here.

The first ten paragraphs basically follow a problem-solution structure, the solution being a new history textbook (not just a textbook, the textbook serving as a metonymy for broader change). He introduces the problem using an inductive structure. Takahashi hints at what the problem is about by way of quote from the title of a column in the *tsukurukai*'s social studies textbook entitled "Is respect for life an absolute value?" In the remainder of this first and the next four paragraphs he then goes on to introduce (or remind) the audience of recent cases in which youth have been involved in violent, seemingly inexplicable, crime. First is the stabbing of a woman by a young man in Aichi prefecture in which he quotes the youth as saying "I wondered what it would take for a person to die. I knew murder

²² Obviously the *tsukurukai* home page does this as well as do numerous works the group has published over the years, the most famous slogan centering on the need to correct the "masochistic" view of history. This is clear enough. I am interested in seeing what other aspects this may be related to.

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was bad and that it would cause a lot of trouble for my family, but I wanted to see what it would feel like to kill someone." He then describes the case of the youth in Kobe, again quoting the youth with words to the effect that he just wanted to see what it would take for someone to die, and that it was a kind of experiment.

Takahashi intervenes with a transitional paragraph here which serves to foreshadow his conclusion, i.e. what the problem is. He describes the events of the 1977 hijacking of the Japan Airlines flight by the Japanese Red Army. Then Prime Minister Fukuda is quoted as saying "Human life is the most precious thing in the world." He then contrasts this with the case in West Germany in which the government sent in a special forces team and killed the hijackers. Takahashi's interpretation: "[the government] tried to resolve this peacefully. This is symbolic of post-War Japan and post-War Japanese education that has come to emphasize the importance of life (生命尊重) under the peace constitution" (それは平和憲法の下で「生命尊重」を説いてきた戦後日本、戦後教育の象徴である).

He goes on in the next paragraph to introduce one more case, that of the bus hijacking, for which he gives little detail (as no doubt this would still be fresh in people's minds). He prefaces this by mocking Prime Minister Fukuda's statement, "well, the 'more precious than the world' people's lives are being taking from them easily in case after case." He then quotes from the bus highjacker, stating his belief that it was his mission to kill as many people as possible.

Clearly these cases are meant to arouse emotions and for people to recall the horror and bafflement they would have felt upon first hearing the news of the cases. As would the news, such cases create a strong feeling of - 160 - (20) D. L. Olson

unease. People naturally feel the need to do something, and in cases as fear inducing as these, a natural response is to want to know why (so they can do something to stop it or prevent it happening again). The answer (i.e. the problem) Takahashi relates to us through the words of two youths, the first of whom he quotes from an article in the *Asahi ja-naru*: "To all adults. You are not teaching us anything. The things that we need to be taught you are not teaching us....at some point this will come back to you." Takahashi interprets this as the youth's questioning of how adults live, of post-War Japan and Japanese education. The next youth he quotes is a university student who complains that there are no ideal role models in history and without them he/she doesn't know how to live his/her life. With these quotes Takahashi has clearly identified the problem: post-War education, and especially post-War history education.

The solution, that is, what kind of education do we need, or what kind of young people do we want coming out of our schools, Takahashi deals with this very briefly and with a poignant example, that of Mishima Yukio's suicide in 1970. He quotes Mishima exclamation: "I'll show you what has more value than respect for human life. It is the country with history and tradition, Japan!" It is this Japan, Takahashi argues, that Nishio Kanji is attempting to restore with his book The History of the Japanese People (国民の歴史).²⁴

The next two paragraphs discuss how well this and other similar writings have been received by students and the public in general, these two paragraphs serving as the lead in to the final two-paragraph conclusion and rallying call for members to keep the faith and continue in their efforts to change education and Japanese society in line with their views. Their

²³「人の生命は地球より重い」 literally, human life is weightier/heavier than the world/planet.

Textbook, to correct views of history prevalent (in the author's views) at the time.

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effectiveness lies in demonstrating that progress is being made.

As primarily a rallying cry for strong supporters of this movement, this preface was well designed in-so-far as it relied heavily on passionate appeals to generate a strong emotional response. The inductive structure at the beginning would also likely have been effective on this audience as they would mostly have been aware of these cases and could have anticipated what was coming next. From the perspective of this analysis, more interesting was the explicit statements connecting youth violence with the state (content) of Japanese education. The only suggestion of evidence that there is in fact a link between these two in this particular text were the statements by the two youth, one bemoaning that adults weren't teaching him/her what he/she needs to know (with no specificity as to what that something is. Surely, had the youth said, "you're not teaching me history" Takahashi would have included that quote); and the other, who complains that he/she can't find any ideal role models in history. This also does not prove that the present content of history is wrong, but does indicate that the student cannot find anyone he/she can identify with. Likewise, the use of the quotes from the children involved in serious violent crimes, says less about history education than it does about these children's alienation from society, which is difficult to put down to history education. Interestingly, one of the banners being flown by the tsukurkai, that they need to correct the 'masochistic' view of history (which is shorthand for teaching students about bad things that happened in the past), is not given any direct support by the students they quote. 25

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"An attempt to establish common sense" (めざしたのは常識の確立), "Tsukurukai" no shuchou (「つくる会」の主張) Nishio Kanji

The last introduction I analyze is again intended for a broader audience. This came out in the same month as the public version of the textbook. As was discussed in the analysis of the introduction to the textbook, people opposed to the textbook had already published four books critical of the new text. China and Korea, as well as many other media sources had also weighed in on the debate. The contents of this text are clearly intended as a rebuttal to arguments, especially those coming from Korea and China. The first four chapters are devoted to criticizing textbooks in Korea and China, and Asia more broadly. The latter three chapters are again devoted to appealing to what the authors think are the strong points of their textbook.

As the title of this introduction suggests, Nishio intends to spell out more specifically the aims of the *tsukurukai* in writing their New History Textbook. What they aimed for is, if the title is taken literally, in this case, "common sense." It is an interesting choice of words, as it implies that anyone that disagrees with them is therefore lacking in common sense. So what is the "common sense" that the *tsukurukai* is attempting to establish.

In the first paragraph, Nishio states that learning history "is not about using today's standards to judge the past as wrong or unfair or to otherwise indict it. Each period in the past had its own right and wrong..."

This is a statement repeated in the preface for students in the New History Textbook. What follows in the new few paragraphs are examples from their text in comparison with texts that have been published up until then. He begins with a discussion of the land ownership and use system in early Japan (班田制). In their text they describe this as promoting fairness (公

²⁵ Which is not to say it does not appear elsewhere. I am sure if they looked hard and asked enough students they could find some who say that studying in the present history text makes them feel ashamed. Part of the problem with getting students involved in this argument by using their words to support the argument, is that junior high school students are not taught to think critically about history, but see it rather as something to be memorized. Hence, what's on offer is what's on offer.

²⁶⁽市販)新しい歴史教科書, 7.

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IE) whereas in other texts they have comments that "This was horrible for farmers." Nishio interprets this comment in the other texts as showing their authors' bias in viewing power as bad and seeing history as a class struggle. While it is not a point of this analysis to argue about the content of textbooks per say or whether or not there is a Marxist bias in them, simply saying that farmers would have had it tough, does not seem much different than saying peasants led difficult lives in medieval Europe, or that slaves had it rough in the American south.

Another aspect of this seems contradictory. Clearly he is critical of other textbooks for saying, in this case, farmers had it tough, thereby judging that the system was bad (though the part Nishio quotes does not say that). On the other hand, in their text book Nishio et.al, are in fact judging the very same system as "improving fairness for the people" (公正 の前進). If this is the case then apparently what he means by not judging the past, is not saying anything was bad.

Nishio next gives the example of how the New History Textbook describes the history of the annexation and colonization of Korea. The point he makes is that textbooks up until then have focused on the issue as if it were a bilateral issue between Japan and Korea, but that it has to be looked at in terms of the larger context. I don't want to get into an argument over content, but for the purpose of understanding this passage, I looked at how these texts are viewed by other authors. What they argue is that prior texts tend primarily to focus on the annexation and the policies affecting Korean people, e.g., having to learn Japanese, study Japanese history, etc. The New History Textbook includes that information, but also argues that the United States, Britain and Russia accepted Japan's annexation because they were worried about one of the others gaining influence there. According to Fukushima et. al., it was in return for Japan recognizing the US colonization of the Philippines, Britain of

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Hong Kong, and Russia of Northern Manchuria. Hence they conclude, none of the texts do justice to this history.²⁷

The point of course is not to argue content but to look closely at how Nishio is arguing his point. In the first discourse examined, Nishio was primarily making assertions and appealing to democratic values of the right to know, freedom of speech, etc., and using rather strong language to make his point heard. Here again the language stands out. He uses rather harsh words to denounce critics. He states than anyone who says that they (the New History Textbook) are presenting an imperial view of history by placing importance on the ancient myths is "ignorant and is talking nonsense, and should be ashamed of such foolishness" (皇国史観というばかなことを言う非知性的態度こそ、恥ずべき愚昧である). In other words you either accept what we have written as acceptable or you are an ignorant fool.

The concluding paragraph also has a few points of interest. He begins by saying, "It has been said that our text is overcoming the masochism [of history textbooks]." This begs the question, who said this. One has to presume other members of the *tsukurukai* or their supporters. He goes on to say, "but rather it is overcoming the lack of common sense (非常識)." Here we are back to the title of this introduction, where he states they are aiming for common sense. He reiterates the same sentiment from a slightly different perspective: "Rather than say we are presenting our view of history, our aim is to improve all Japanese history textbooks." And again, from yet another angle: "We are not in the throes of any one ideology, but rather stand in opposition to the ideologically influenced totally drab history [textbooks] up to now." The basic strategy we see repeated here is

[&]quot;福島隆彦、高田明典、高橋順一、西岡昌紀、橋爪大三郎、日垣隆、宮崎学、『新しい 歴史教科書:どうちがう?』(東京:夏目書房、2001), 102-103.

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labeling: We present common sense (you don't); We don't have a view of history (i.e., ours is objective?), you do. We don't have ideology (at least its not in our text), you do. From a rhetorical perspective this is not normally considered very effective, but it is one of the common strategies of propaganda, along with repetition, another common strategy both here and in the first discourse. The name-calling--foolish, ignorant (implied) Marxist, etc., also is considered common in propaganda. I expect most thinking adults would find this language somewhat off-putting, particularly Japanese, who tend not to like to see such harsh language in public forums. No doubt members of the *tsukurukai* would find this reassuring as they could identify with the arguments and the views being presented.

Assessment

The three discourses examined here were but a tiny sample of the works published by the tsukurukai, so I cannot say more than what I have gleaned from these texts. But from the readings of these texts we can observe a number of different characteristics. First, the tsukurukai (or at least these representative voices) see themselves as a corrective and as working for the benefit of the general public. The harsh terms are directed at critics, whom are described in such a way as to make them almost seem not part of the "people" (国民) who are the primary audience. Hence if you are critical of us you are not part of the audience. At the very least, the critics are behaving in ways that go against democratic values, and are infringing on their human rights. Second, as was clear in the second introduction, the tsukurukai see a relationship between the state of Japanese youth, in this case violent unimaginable crime and Japanese education. I have yet to see any kind of argument coming close to demonstrating anything other than a coincidental correlative link. One might as well blame recent violent crimes on the fact that so many young people dye - 166 - (26) D. L. Olson

their hair. Indeed, one could argue that it was in part the pre-1945 education system which may have made it possible to nurture the kinds of citizens who could be induced to carry out the very actions the *tsukurkai* opted to omit from their history because they were deemed too masochistic.

On their home page, the tsukurukai list a number of assertions that serve as their guiding principles. The second assertion states: "People/nations around the world have their own individual histories, and likewise Japan has its own history." This statement seems innocuous enough on the surface. But what it has seemed to mean in practice for the tsukurkai is that only they offer the "correct" view of history. Including such things as the Nanking massacre or the comfort women would amount to, in Nishio's words, a loss of "our own (独自の) historical sense; instead, textbooks should restore 'correct' history" (正史).28 Nishio doesn't mention it in his introduction to the history textbook, but in his introduction to the social studies textbook he states that one of the tasks of middle school education is to nurture the public spirit (公共心) in students, and that "that public spirit is born of the good sense (良心) found in the nation's history."29 This is perhaps the clearest statement introduced thus far that suggests the moralizing function of history education for Nishio and the tsukurukai. What this suggests is that part of the debate that should being going on is less about what events to include or exclude (though this is certainly an important issue), but what role should history education play in the education of our youth. Is it really possible in a globalized world to teach history as if one's country existed in isolation? Another question that comes to mind, one wonders what students who study this sanitized history

²⁸ Quoted in Gavan McCormack, "The Japanese Movement to 'Correct' History," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 30:2 (1998), 18.

^{29 [}市販本]『新しい公民教科書』西尾幹二ほか7著作、(東京:扶桑社、2001)、III.

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will think if and when at sometime in the future they discover what they weren't taught. As one Japanese writer put it:

We must face up to the facts of history and openly communicate past successes and failures to students....[T]here is no shame in failure itself. Rather it is shameful not to study past failures or to falsify them and so distort the historical consciousness of the Japanese people.³⁰

If indeed national narratives like those presented in history textbooks are used for "instructing people how to think and act as national subjects," then perhaps more debate should be focused on what sort of citizens education should nurture.

This brings us to a third aspect of these discourses, in particular the preface to the New History Textbook issued for the general public. In the preface Nisho argues that one of the reasons they are publishing the text is that people have a "right to know" (知る権利). He includes numerous references to democratic values, freedom of speech, and their "duty" to make their arguments public. It seems the greatest irony of all in these discourses that what they demand for themselves and the adult reading public, "the people," they would deny, through their omissions in the textbook, to the Japanese youth who are its intended audience. To students it seems, they only have a right to know what the *tsukurukai* thinks is "right." If that is the case, than this becomes less history and more indoctrination, if not outright propaganda.

Epilogue

At the very least, if as educators we want students to be able to

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function in a globalized society, then it seems important that students realize that the study of history is not just about understanding or learning about what happened in the past, but how study of the past is directly linked to our understanding of the present. As E.H. Carr wrote of the historian: "The function of the historian is neither to love the past nor to emancipate himself from the past, but to master and understand it as the key to understanding the present.³¹

This analysis examined only a very limited number discourses produced by the *tsukuriukai*. In so far as it was an attempt to look at this issue from a rhetorical perspective it represents a beginning. While not referring to these particular discourses, it is clear this group has been making progress in their goal of rewriting Japanese history textbooks. Their movement has apparently influenced other publishers, as in 2002 only four of seven texts included the comfort women issue. And more recently, in 2007, the Japanese government ordered seven publishers to delete mentions of the forced suicides in Okinawa at the end of the war, saying "it is not clear there were military orders." This of course caused large demonstrations in Okinawa. For our purposes here, it provides a fitting example of what can happen when "history" conflicts too much with living memory, and what is the history of a country (or the very idea of a "country") if not to some degree shared memory?

³⁰ Nakamura Masanori, "The History Textbook Controversy and Nationalism," Trans, Kristin Dennehy, Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 30:2 (1998), 24.

^{31 &}quot;What is History," 26.

³² Justin McCurry, "Japan tries to rewrite the war," <u>Guardian Weekly</u>, (Aug. 8, 2007), 28.