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Changing Histories: Japanese and South African Textbooks in Comparison (1945 – 1995)

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Preface

The origin of this book goes back to my doctoral thesis and a series of articles derived from it.[1] The teaching of history at schools in South Africa and Japan has attracted ongoing and intense criticism, both domestically and internationally, due to alleged attempts by education bureaucracy and government to conceal the most controversial aspects of their countries' past and to inculcate nationalism, racism and ethnocentrism. As far as the author is aware, this book is the first attempt to systematically compare the ways in which the creators of compulsory history curricula dealt with opposition and critics in the period from ca. 1945 to 1995. It is hoped that this book will contribute to the existing literature of comparative history by drawing lessons that would probably not have emerged from the study of either country by itself.

The period of enquiry is deliberately set at between roughly 1945 and 1995, when both countries were dominated by single-party governments throughout most of the fifty-year period. Updating the information to the present decade would have become a more time-consuming and costly enterprise requiring, *inter alia*, archival trips to both Japan and South Africa. The extra time involved would have impinged on the relevance of this work. However, Japanese and South African history textbook analysis from 1995 onwards will provide fertile inspiration for further research and work.

The book argues that both South African and Japanese history curricula and

1 Ryôta Nishino, "A Comparative Historical Study of Japanese and South African School History Textbooks ca. 1945 – 1995" (PhD diss., University of Western Australia, 2007); "Narrative Strategies of Japanese Middle-School History Textbooks Regarding Japanese Ethnic Origins and Cultural Identity", *The Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 2, no. 1 (2010): 97 – 112; "The Political Economy of the Textbook in Japan: With Particular Focus on Middle-School History Textbooks, ca. 1945 – 1995", *Internationale Schulbuchforschung (International Textbook Research)*, 30, no. 1 (2008): 487 – 514; "George McCall Theal and South African History Textbooks: Enduring Influence of Settler Historiography in Descriptions of the Fifth 'Frontier War' 1818 – 19", in *Orb and Sceptre: Studies in British Imperialism and its Legacies in Honour of Norman Etherington*, ed. Peter Limb (Melbourne: Monash University ePress, 2008), 06.01 – 06.15.

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textbooks remained largely resistant to change despite pressures for reform. In both nations the education bureaucracy did not overtly express its intentions in the curriculum documents or textbooks. It found other ways to enhance its authority often through subtle measures.

The book surveys the development of educational policies that affected history education and textbooks in both countries. This examination of the historical background identifies various political, economic and educational factors that affected the production of history curricula and textbooks. Demonstrating how the intricate dynamics of these historical events manifested themselves in textbooks forms the core of this book. Within its scope is an analysis of selected themes in textbooks in the compulsory study of history by comparable age groups: Standard 6 in South Africa and middle school (*chûgakkô*) in Japan. A total of eight themes in sixty officially approved Standard 6 South African and middle school Japanese history textbooks have been selected as examples of change and continuity in history education.

Due to limits of space, this work truncates detailed discussions of diverse theoretical foundations and historical themes which might otherwise be accommodated in works with narrower scopes. Those wishing to obtain a deeper understanding of the themes and issues for each nation discussed may be directed to the sources listed in the book's footnotes and bibliography.

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Many of the primary and secondary sources were collected during my fieldwork in South Africa, Germany, Japan and Australia. The Convocation Award by the University of Western Australia Graduate Association funded my research trip. The Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research awarded me a scholarship to conduct research at the institute, and a book award to publish this work.

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Notes on terminology and source materials

Japan and South Africa both present terminological difficulties. Like many Asian societies, Japan introduces people by their surnames first then their given names, although historical figures before the Meiji era are conventionally referred to by their given names. When referring to emperors it is quite rare in the Japanese convention to use their personal names. The reigning emperor is simply called *tennô* (Emperor). Deceased emperors are usually called by the epoch of their reigns. 'Emperor Hirohito' and 'Hirohito', for instance, conform to Western naming conventions rather than the Japanese 'Shôwa Emperor'. In this book I will use the Western conventions for Hirohito, and the Japanese convention for other emperors.

When citing the names of East Asian authors, this book follows the surname-first convention, unless the identities are known as overseas-born or based, or the work is published in the West.

When spelling Japanese words and names in the Roman alphabet, I have followed the Hepburn system. Circumflexes (^) above vowels indicate that the vowels are lengthened – hence *gakkô*, rather than *gakkoo* or *gakkou*. Exceptions are made for words and proper nouns that have entered the English lexicon. Well-known Japanese places such as Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto should be spelt Tôkyô, Ôsaka and Kyôto. However, they appear here without macrons because they are widely recognised in English in that form. When citing works by Japanese authors, I have spelt their names as they appear even if macrons are not added.

Throughout this book, I will refer to the Japanese Ministry of Education as Mombushô. Following restructuring in 2001, Mombushô absorbed the Science and Technology Agency and was renamed Mombukagakushô, abbreviated to MEXT. Its official English name is Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. I will use Mombushô unless I am citing sources emanating from the restructured MEXT.

'Black' South African generally refers to people of African descent who were 'classified' as blacks during apartheid. The term 'non-white' is sometimes used

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to denote everyone except white South Africans. However, its negative labelling is objectionable to the author. Throughout this book 'black' denotes those classified during apartheid as 'Bantu' (or 'Africans'), 'Coloured' and 'Indian'. Specific references to each 'category' of people will be indicated when it is necessary.

'Bantu', 'Hottentot' and 'Bushmen' are terms tainted with racist assumptions from the colonial and apartheid eras. However, the word 'Bantu' is used when citing legislation and the names of government bodies featuring the word. Originally 'Bantu' referred to a language group. This book qualifies it as 'the Bantu-speaking people'. 'Hottentot' and 'Bushmen' are equally problematic. 'Khoi' ('Khoikhoi' in plural) is more appropriate than 'Hottentot'. 'Bushman' had a pejorative connotation. The alternative term 'San' came into use in the 1960s. However, it is now understood that 'Bushman' is the translation of the Khoi term carrying the same meaning. Hence, the current usage has returned to 'Bushman', albeit for different reasons.[1] It is important to note that 'Khoi', 'San' and 'Bushman' do not form distinct 'racial' groups, but refer to their modes of living. The Khoikhoi were pastoralists and the Bushmen were hunter-gatherers. This meant that some Khoikhoi became Bushmen, while some Bushmen became Khoi if they changed their means of livelihood. The composite term 'Khoisan' is used when historically appropriate. In archaeological discourse, labels with ethnic connotations have been superseded by neutral terms such as 'herders' and 'hunter-gatherers'.[2]

Similarly, in Japan there have been calls for replacing the name 'Ainu', the indigenous people of northern Japan, with 'Utari' because of the pejorative connotations Ainu has acquired.[3] I use Ainu, not because I endorse the discrimination and negative connotations, but because of historical usage. In all ethnic appellations, the qualification 'so-called' is perhaps a more considered approach.

Educational systems in the two countries adopt different terminology. Before 1996 in South Africa, 'Standard' referred to the year level. The first two years of primary school were known as Sub-Standards A and B, and then pupils proceeded to Standard One. Secondary education was completed in Standard Ten, the twelfth year of schooling. For Japanese schooling I use the terms primary, middle and high schools (*shôgakkô*, *chûgakkô* and *kôtôgakkô* or *kôkô* re-

1 Christopher Saunders and Nicholas Southey, *A Dictionary of South African History* (Cape Town, David Philip: 1998), 148.

2 See, for instance, Martin Hall, *The Changing Past: Farmers, Kings and Traders in Southern Africa, 200 – 1860* (Cape Town, David Philip: 1987).

3 The Ainu Kyôkai (the Ainu Association), established in 1930, decided to rename itself the Utari Kyôkai in 1961 to dispel the negative connotations the Japanese had attached to Ainu. Richard Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996), 159.

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spectively). These divisions total twelve years of schooling. Primary school ends after the sixth year of schooling. Middle school begins in year seven and ends in year nine. High school lasts from years ten to twelve. In South Africa, the word 'curriculum' seems to refer to the whole collection of subject-specific syllabi. The Japanese educational discourse (in English and Japanese) does not make this fine distinction, but 'curriculum' is more frequently used. In South African English, 'pupil' denotes students in primary and secondary schools, and 'students' are those in tertiary education. The alternative term 'learner' is currently replacing 'pupil'. However, for consistency I will use 'students' for both nations, unless alternative words appear in quoted remarks.

The Japanese curriculum is known as *Gakushû shidô yôryô* or translated as 'Course of Studies'. It will be abbreviated into *COS* in the footnotes, but in the main text it will be called the curriculum with the specific subject name preceding it. The curricula up to 1955 were issued in separate volumes for each subject. These will be referred to as, for example, *COS: Social Studies* followed by the years of issue. From the 1958 curriculum onwards, a single volume contained all subjects. Hence I will simply state *COS* followed by the years issued.

Words not widely recognised or accepted in the English lexicon will be italicised. While words such as *volk*, *minzoku* and *kana* will thus be italicised, 'shogun' (it should be pronounced 'shôgun' in Japanese, lengthening the first vowel), 'samurai', 'apartheid' and 'veld' will not.

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Introduction

This study investigates how and why South Africa and Japan managed, despite unremitting external and internal criticism, to develop middle-school history textbooks that aimed to inculcate values congenial to the ruling elites and important constituencies over fifty years from 1945 to 1995. It deals with four key areas of history education that affect the textbooks and, by implication, teaching methods: historiographical trends, historical background, textbook industry and production, and curricula. It also addresses the ways in which curriculum design and influential examinations treat the most controversial aspects of national history, namely, Japan's twentieth-century wars and South Africa's institutionalised racism, apartheid. This investigation is important because it undertakes to expose institutional practices that operate beneath and behind the level of publicly trumpeted ideology. By comparing the two quite different nation states, the enquiry aims to move beyond explanations based on local or neighbouring circumstances within East Asia and Southern Africa, or on the nations associated with World War II.

Debates on historical memory and history education have continued to occur and have hit the headlines in both Japan and South Africa. In 2007 there was a public protest in Okinawa against Mombushô (the Ministry of Education) approving a high-school history textbook that was alleged to obscure the state's responsibility in the Battle of Okinawa during the last days of the Pacific War.[1] Since South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, the nation has grappled to overcome its uniquely afflicted past to forge a new common identity. This challenge seems almost diametrically opposed to the forces of globalisation that reduce the relevance of the nation state.[2] Moreover, economic expediency seems to have dominated public concern and therefore overwhelmed fears of a decline

1 "Okinawa Slams History Text Rewrite", *The Japan Times*, 23 June 2007, http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20070623a1.html (accessed 7 June 2010).

2 Neville Alexander, *An Ordinary Country: Issues in the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: The University of Natal Press, 2002).

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in school history education.[3] Japan faces a similar challenge of overcoming its neighbours' distrust. On numerous occasions Japanese politicians have made public comments that denied or justified the conduct of the Japanese military during the nation's imperial ventures.[4] Similarly, South Africa's past still affects its domestic as well as international relations. The murder of the white supremacist, Eugune Terre'Blanche, in April 2010 exposed the lingering raw nerves of the fragile 'race relations'.[5]

History and history education are intensely public topics that are not limited to the two nations. During my doctoral studies in Australia, the then Prime Minister John Howard floated the idea of introducing a history curriculum that focused on the 'basic facts' about Australia's past. This immediately raised questions as to the definition of 'fact' and whether history should revert to the mere absorption of them.[6] In the American state of Texas, the recent amendment to its school history curriculum showing a marked shift away from democratic principles towards Christian conservatism has alarmed many education critics. The change in Texas is deemed significant because it is one of the most populous states and thus a large market whose textbook adoption can influence those of other states.[7]

Historical Literature on Textbook Analysis

Analyses critiquing South African and Japanese history textbooks have been conducted by scholars in disciplines ranging from educational studies to linguistics, sociology, social anthropology and history. The textbook analyses reveal similar conclusions that identify textbooks as containing ideological tenets that favoured the ruling regime of the day. Leslie Witz, whose work analyses South African history textbook descriptions of Jan van Riebeeck, the figure described as the 'founder' of (white) South Africa, comments on the special

3 Mark Whittaker, "Textbook Diplomacy, Part 1", Podcast radio programme, London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 27 January 2010. http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/documentaries/2010/01/100127_text_diplomacy.shtml (accessed 9 April 2010).

4 Michelle Rayner, "History under Siege: Battles over the Past: Japan", Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 6 April 2008. http://www.abc.net.au/rn/hindsight/stories/2008/2205819.htm (accessed 19 October 2009)

5 David Smith, "White Supremacist Eugene Terre'Blanche is Hacked to Death after Row with Farmworkers", *The Guardian*, 4 April 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/apr/04/eugene-terreblanche-south-african-white-supremacist (accessed 7 June 2010).

6 Anna Clark, "What Do They Teach Our Children?" in *The History Wars*, new eds. Stuart MacIntyre and Anna Clark (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 171 – 190.

7 Michael Birnbaum, "Texas Board Approves Social Studies Standards that Perceived Liberal Bias", *The Washington Post*, 21 May 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/21/AR2010052104365_pf.html (accessed on 25 May 2010).

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characteristics of history textbooks as a distinct historiographical genre: 'Textbooks in themselves produce specific forms of historical knowledge that can be located within a unique register where there is a specific context, a distinguishable prosaic pattern, and a social relationship in which structures of authority are mutually reinforcing.'[8] If one considers the context in which history textbooks are written the role of education bureaucracy is critical. Education bureaucracy dominated the curriculum drafting processes and those governing the production and authorisation of textbooks. However, the emphases have varied.

Studies of Japanese history textbooks tend to focus on two issues: the politics of textbook certification and textbook lawsuits, and the textbook descriptions of Japan's imperial wartime atrocities. The lawsuits initiated by the historian and textbook writer, Professor Ienaga Saburô, have attracted much scrutiny.[9] Many existing analyses of Japanese history textbooks, in both English and Japanese, focus on the manifestation and descriptions of Japanese nationalism and the country's imperial past. One detailed work by Christopher Barnard applies the functional grammar method from linguistics to critique high-school history textbooks in current use. The topics under scrutiny are the Rape of Nanking, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the surrender by Japan and Germany.[10] A collaborative work by twenty-four contributors compares how recent textbook screening rounds approved and disapproved references to Japan's imperial ventures and wars. The authors show that the history textbooks published in the early 2000s have retracted any mention of Japan's wartime atrocities that were included in the 1990s. Resurgent conservatism is discerned not as overt exaltation of or an apology for the Japanese atrocities, but in discursive strategies of attenuation or omission.[11] Miura Shumon and his researchers analyse all sixteen middle-school history and civics texts against the curriculum statements. They take the curriculum for granted and offer little critique. Most judgements favour the texts by the controversial Atarashii Rekishi Kyôkasho o

8 Leslie Witz, *Apartheid's Festival: Contesting South Africa's National Pasts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 53.

9 George Hicks, *Japan's War Memories: Amnesia or Concealment?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997); Yoshiko Nozaki and Hiromitsu Inokuchi, "Japanese Education, Nationalism and Ienaga Saburô's Textbook Lawsuits", in *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States,* eds. Laura Hein and Mark Selden (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), 96 – 126; and Yoshiko Nozaki, *War Memory, Nationalism and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945 – 2007: The Japanese History Textbook Controversy and Ienaga Saburô's Court Challenges* (London: Routledge, 2008).

10 Christopher Barnard, *Language, Ideology, and Japanese History Textbooks* (London: Routledge, 2003).

11 Takashima Nobuyoshi et al., *Kyôkasho kara kesareru 'sensô'* ['Wars' Disappearing from Textbooks] (Tokyo: Shûkan Kinyôbi, 2004), Section 1.

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Tsukurukai group (the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, hereafter Tsukurukai).[12] John Nelson analyses the same Tsukurukai history text exclusively and in depth. Contrary to Miura's conclusion, Nelson finds the text problematic on three major accounts. Firstly, it extols the superiority of Japanese culture from antiquity onwards. Secondly, the text presents the Japanese nation as having always existed throughout history and with its authority resting with the imperial family. Thirdly, he finds that the text defends Japan's entry into the imperial wars in East Asia as a result of being compelled by European imperialism and as an act of liberation of the European-run colonies in the region.[13] However, fewer studies have been devoted to curriculum analysis than to textbooks.[14] An opportunity therefore seems to have been missed for us to gain an insight into the inner workings of Mombushô. This is because, as the educationist, Michael W. Apple, points out, the curriculum reflects 'what counts as legitimate knowledge [as a] result of complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender and religious groups'.[15]

South African studies have shed light on the influence of syllabi and assessment of history textbooks. The textbook analyses expose racism and the glorification of the Afrikaners.[16] Marianne Cornevin's study argues that history texts justified white supremacy through erroneous historical arguments.[17] Elizabeth Dean, Paul Hartmann and May Katzen examine forty-one history textbooks ranging from Standards 5 to 10, published in the 1960s. They found pervasive ethnocentrism, respecting the whites and trivialising black people's roles, and using such history as a model for the future.[18] Within South Africa, J.

12 Miura Shumon, ed., *'Rekishi', 'kômin' zen kyôkasho o kenshô suru: Kyôkasho kaizen hakusho* [Examining All 'History' and 'Civics' Textbooks: A White Paper for Textbook Improvement] (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 2001).

13 John Nelson, "Tempest in a Textbook: A Report on the New Middle-School History Textbook in Japan", *Critical Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2002): 129 – 148. The study of the Tsukurukai textbook falls outside the scope of my enquiry, as it ends in 1995 and the text was published in 2001. It is worth noting that in the 2002 adoption the text was only adopted by a small number of schools for disabled students in Tokyo and Ehime prefectures, and by some private schools. Out of the 543 school boards in Japan, 532 rejected it. Ibid., 144.

14 A few works addressing this lacuna are: Peter Cave, "Teaching the History of Empire in Japan and England", *International Journal of Educational Research* 37, no. 6 – 7 (2002): 623 – 641; and Yamazumi Masami's *Gakushû shidô yôryô to kyôkasho* [The Curriculum and Textbook] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989) reveals the binding power of the curriculum upon textbooks.

15 Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1990), 46.

16 For instance, see Owen van den Berg and Peter Buckland, *Beyond the History Syllabus: Constraints and Opportunities* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1983); and Rob Siebörger et al., "Assessing History", in *Inventing Knowledge: Contest in Curriculum Construction*, ed. Nick Taylor (Cape Town: Longman, 1993), 214 – 229.

17 Marianne Cornevin, *Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification* (Paris: UNESCO, 1980).

18 Elizabeth Dean, Paul Hartmann and May Katzen, *History in Black and White: An Analysis of South African School History Textbooks* (Paris: UNESCO, 1983).

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M. Du Preez studied geography and history texts, as well as texts set for the study of English and Afrikaans literature. She identified 'master symbols', the generalised socio-cultural values that favoured the apartheid regime.[19] The education historian, Peter Kallaway, points out that one major drawback of analyses conducted by researchers of liberal persuasion, who tend to decry Afrikaner bias in textbooks, is that they have assumed the objectivity of the liberal school.[20] South African textbook analyses are conducted without comparison to other nations. It is possible that the ethnic and provincial fragmentation of education departments in South Africa might have deterred scholars from international comparison. Textbook analyses seemed to reach their crest in the mid-1980s, but have dissipated since then. Unlike previous studies, my analysis addresses post-apartheid and apartheid textbooks in order to reveal both changes and continuity.

Some recent studies compare Japanese history teaching with practices in other countries. These studies are valuable because they help us to better understand the common and unique features of history education among the countries compared. The edited volume by Laura Hein and Mark Selden offers a tri-national comparison of Germany, the United States and Japan with reference to World War II.[21] Contributors to Edward Vickers and Alisa Jones' edited volume analyse the issues surrounding history education across a range of East Asian states. Vickers notes similarities across East Asian nations, such as the status of official examinations, government control over textbooks and a belief in the need for 'correct' versions of history. The contributors find that different ways of remembering the past and political circumstances have influenced textbooks and history education more than cultural factors.[22] The two volumes make similar observations. Subscribing to the American hegemony during the Cold War years inhibited self-critique of their wartime pasts and internally engendered democratisation.

Japan has also been compared with England. The educationists Martin Booth, Masayuki Satô and Richard Matthews have observed lessons, interviewed teachers and conducted surveys among students.[23] The social anthropologist,

19 J. M. Du Preez, *Africana Afrikaner: Master Symbols in South African School Textbooks* (Pretoria: Librarius, 1982).

20 Peter Kallaway, "Historical Discourses, Racist Mythology and Education in Twentieth-Century South Africa", in *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience*, ed. J. A. Mangan (London: Routledge, 1993), 199 – 200.

21 Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds. *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000).

22 Edward Vickers, "Introduction: History, Nationalism and the Politics of Memory", in *History Education in East Asia*, eds. Edward Vickers and Alisa Jones (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7 – 8.

23 Martin Booth, Masayuki Satô and Richard Matthews, "Case Studies of History Teaching in

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Peter Cave, analyses curriculum documents, examination papers, observation of classroom teaching, interviews with teachers, and textbooks. Analysing the curriculum of both nations, Cave finds that the Japanese and English curricula and textbooks pay relatively little attention to their imperial pasts. This, he concludes, may not be the result of deliberate attempts to conceal these histories, but reflects modes of assessment, curriculum design, and the concept of history education.[24]

The sociologist Julian Dierkes has devised a highly effective comparative framework which he uses to analyse Japanese and German middle-school textbooks and curricula from 1945 to 1995. He examines the influence and strengths of different institutional players in history education policy-making. In West Germany, the focus of historical narrative shifted from national to socio-economic history. The shift is attributed to the campaigns by teachers. In East Germany, the Socialist Party's school history policy was informed firstly by the Soviet Bloc ideology of internationalism to legitimise its statehood. After Joseph Stalin's death, the Party moved towards nationalist and materialist history in line with other Eastern Bloc nations. In Japan, Mombushô emerged as a dominant player. Dierkes interprets the stability of Japanese history education identified in textbooks as adhering to a chronological and empiricist historiography that excluded controversial historical discussions from the classroom.[25]

These previous works are valuable in that they provide a framework. This study aims to shift the focus to historiographical trends amongst the textbooks, asking which were privileged and which were excluded. It enquires as to how textbook descriptions have changed, if at all, and examines the ideological messages they seemed to convey.

Additional insights can be gained from the South Africa-Japan comparison for three further reasons: Firstly, South African history textbooks merit an international comparison, just as their Japanese counterparts can benefit from a comparison with nations outside the circles of Asia and the Western societies that were most involved in World War II. It is worth embarking on a 'transnational' and 'transcultural' comparative history to surmount the nation state as the unit of enquiry.[26] Secondly, the Japanese analysis will benefit from a sys-

Japanese Junior High Schools and English Comprehensive Secondary Schools", *Compare* 25, no. 3 (1995): 279 – 301.

24 Cave, "Teaching the History of Empire in Japan and England", *International Journal of Educational Research* 37 (2002): 623 – 641.

25 Julian Dierkes, "Teaching Portrayals of the Nation: Postwar History Education in Japan and the Germanys" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2003).

26 Philip Ther, "Beyond the Nation: The Relational Basis of a Comparative History of Germany

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