

understand than many other World War II references. It is also rare to find a book with a Korean point of view.

I am the same age as the narrator, but we have some huge differences in our lifestyles. I can play football and use computers and do a lot of different things. He was forced to work on building an airfield.

*Before reading *Lost Names*, I always had thought of books based on history as being boring, but after finishing it and writing the short story on my family history, I realized what I had thought wasn't necessarily true.*

My great grandfather, the person I am writing about, also suffered through a lot of persecution because he was Jewish. Reading about this boy's experiences helped me to understand what might have happened to my great grandfather.

*The real events in *Lost Names* make it a great research tool as well as a great book that teaches different writing styles.*

Many of the students' projects on family history coincidentally involve that same period of time illustrated in

Lost Names. I think this novel gave them an added perspective on the political changes erupting at this time. The novel also illustrated to them that persecution and political unrest exists across all cultures and age groups. They not only learned what factors affected their recent ancestors' choices in life, but that these factors are in a way universal.

Lost Names is a multidisciplinary novel; it goes beyond the confines of social studies or a history course; I plan to incorporate it into my United States History courses in the future. I hope my seventh graders will have the opportunity to study *Lost Names* at some other time in their educational career with an insight gained from their Family History Short Story Projects. ■

PETER R. WRIGHT holds a Master's degree in History and a Master's in Teaching from Simmons College and teaches United States History and Seventh Grade Humanities at the Brimmer and May School in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. He has participated in summer programs and fellowships at Deerfield Academy, the University of Virginia, and at the Five College Center for East Asian Studies at Smith College.

Teaching *Lost Names* in an American High School

By Susan Mastro

In a currently popular world literature text of 1,442 pages, there are a total of four pages on Korean literature. An entire country's literary heritage is condensed into two poems. Until I read *Lost Names* by Richard Kim, my only contact with Korea had been to watch my mother cry as my older brother set off for the Korean War. Then later I encountered some opinions and allusions to the country through study of Japanese language and culture. None of these led me any closer to what might be the heart and soul of the Korean people—the essential quality to which I wanted to expose my students in world literature. Then I read *Lost Names*. I knew immediately that this text would help my students discover that a small country across the world from America, with customs and traditions very different from theirs, is a place with warm, friendly people who share the same hopes and dreams as they do.

The student body at W. G. Enloe High School is very diverse. There might be a dozen different national backgrounds in any given classroom. A student sitting side-by-side with a friend who speaks English fluently may have no idea that his classmate's home life is based on assumptions and ideas quite different from his own. Until they are introduced to world cultures and world literature in tenth grade, our students often have little idea of the value and richness of other cultural heritages.

It is the personal lives of others that draw students into literature, that make them want to know and understand more about another culture. Literature is the perfect key to open the curious



minds of adolescents and help them to understand that for all of our differences, human beings share the same basic needs and desires and values. *Lost Names* is one of those rare texts that appeal to all ages. Seeing World War II through the eyes of a boy growing up in the midst of the chaos puts the war in a completely different perspective for our students who have no understanding of genuine hardship or sacrifice.

Before my students begin to read *Lost Names*, they have studied the cultures, religions, and literatures of India, China, and Japan. They have looked at World War II through the eyes of Japanese survivors of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. They are empathetic and sympathetic to the suffering of the Japanese people. Then they look at another non-American side of the war—not just what Japan suffered, but also the suffering Japan caused. They triumph with the small victories of a young boy and his proud father trying to retain their self respect amid the indignities of occupation and war. The story that Richard Kim weaves encircles them and draws them into the pain and daily victories of survival, into the courage and determination to persevere in the face of great danger. They see the Confucian values of family hierarchy and duty, not as abstract characteristics to memorize, but as a way of life that, when they are practiced well, supports every member of a society. They see filial piety and duty as two parts of a whole. They see the boy practicing these values as a son and then as a leader of his group at school.

Until American students see how these values work in everyday life, it is hard for them to understand how anything but being a “rugged individualist” can be a good way of life. When, in chapter three, the boy challenges a classmate to a race, knowing the classmate will win, students can see that losing can be a different kind of victory. From reading this novel students can begin to develop an understanding of the tragedy of war in general and civil war in particular. In addition, they can vicariously experience the triumph of the human spirit, something common to all mankind.

At the end of last school year, when I asked which works in the curriculum should be taught again and which replaced, there was a great outcry for the continued inclusion of *Lost Names*. For further information, see *Teaching More about Korea: Lessons for Students in Grades K-12*. The lesson plans are published by

The Korea Society as an outcome of the Tenth Annual Summer Fellowship in Korean Studies Program. The booklet includes “A Study Guide for *Lost Names* and Discussion Questions for Various Short Stories,” all by Korean authors. For more information about the publication, contact Yong Jin Choi, Director, Korean Studies Program, The Korea Society, 950 Third Avenue, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10022; phone: (212) 759-7525, ext. 25. ■

SUSAN MASTRO is currently the Coordinator of the International Baccalaureate Programme at W. G. Enloe Magnet High School in Raleigh, North Carolina. Formerly a teacher of world literature and Japanese language, she has written curricula for both subjects and an article on Japanese literature for AGORA magazine (1992). She is an adjunct to the North Carolina Japan Center and has traveled extensively in Japan.

Lost Names, Master Narratives, and Messy History

By Richard H. Minear

“**P**roblematize the master narrative!” These were the words some years ago at an NEH summer institute for teachers. The speaker’s language wasn’t mine then (it is now), but I realized that that’s what I’d been doing in my teaching for years: making an issue of the dominant interpretation (usually that of a textbook). It is what more of us need to focus on, at all levels and in all subjects. Textbooks are always wrong. History is never simple.

As a professor of Japanese history at a major state university, I have the luxury of teaching a full-semester survey course on Japan (History of Japanese Civilization). It is in this course that for many years now I have used Richard Kim’s *Lost Names*. (Just before the first edition went out of print, I was able to buy forty copies, so that *Lost Names* lived on in my course even though it was out of print.) So let me describe the course. There are forty-five students of various rank, freshman through senior; and the class meets three times per week. Two meetings per week are lectures, films, or other activities; one meeting per week is a discussion. I lead all the discussions. One of the concerns throughout the course is the relation between author and material (study the historian), and the syllabus carries biographical data on all authors we encounter, including both me and Richard Kim. I have as well the advantage of having been present twice in the last five years when Kim discussed *Lost Names* with groups of teachers.

The latter half of my course, roughly, is Japan since 1800. Because I dislike textbooks, I assign a non-textbook, Ienaga Saburo’s *The Pacific War*, and then spend much of my time disagreeing with it. My lecture presentations take issue with Ienaga, and for the final paper the students have to compare and contrast Ienaga and Minear. The next-to-last paper concerns *Lost Names*.

The *Lost Names* paper focuses on ethnocentrism in the Japanese treatment of their Korean subjects (*Lost Names* is the



students’ only source) and on how to evaluate the evidence Kim presents. *Lost Names* is not a history book; but how do we process the information Kim offers? Students find the first part of the paper—how ethnocentrism affects the narrator and his family and the Japanese officials—very easy and the second part very difficult. The sheer power of Kim’s prose makes it difficult for them to step back and criticize—even though this is late in the course and we have been criticizing sources all semester.

But close reading and criticism are what the course is about, and despite the fact that many students complain that *Lost Names* is all they know about the subject, I insist that they can and must *criticize*. It is not a matter of liking the book or not liking the book; with rare exceptions, students are bowled over by it. It is a matter of processing the material.

So where to begin? As always, with the author’s biography. Clearly, the narrator’s life and Kim’s overlap. But how do we deal with autobiography? What are the advantages and disadvantages of hearing things “straight from the horse’s mouth”? Some students find it impossible to believe that the narrator was so utterly invincible, so right in all the major choices he makes. The “Author’s Note” at the end of the new edition states artfully (too artfully?), “Perhaps I should have included a disclaimer [in the first edition]: all the characters and events described in this book are real, but everything else is fiction. . . . It is for me a happy predicament. On the one hand, a book I created as fiction is not accepted as such. . . .” In sessions with teachers, Kim has come close to stating that things happened essentially as he recounts them in the book, except that he combined events from separate days into one day or changed a daytime event to nighttime.

At war’s end, Kim the author is thirteen years old, the age of the narrator. But Kim wrote *Lost Names* twenty-five years later, in 1970, when Kim the author was thirty-eight. Between 1945 and