

INTRODUCING WORLD LITERATURE INTO A VIETNAM WAR HISTORY COURSE

Jonathan Goldstein*
West Georgia College

ABSTRACT

The author expresses in this essay his conviction of the usefulness of literature –in this case the Vietnam War imaginative literature– as a tool for social sciences. His points of view are supported on the experience of teaching for several years the history of the war and including literary texts as documents related to the conflict.

In 1984 and 1987, I participated in a team-taught course on the Vietnam War at West Georgia College.¹ The course used textbooks by Stanley Karnow, Guenter Lewy and George Herring.² The vast and expanding body of war-related literary works in French, Vietnamese and English was untapped as a classroom resource.³ Since the West Georgia program pursued an interdisciplinary approach, I sought to demonstrate to my colleagues that the inclusion of literary texts could strengthen both pedagogy and student interest. It did not, in the end, prove difficult to identify the reasons for or the means of revising our Vietnam course using world literature as a major component of the curriculum.

WHY INCLUDE LITERARY WORKS IN A VIETNAM WAR HISTORY COURSE?

There seem to be two reasons why some of this literature should be incorporated into a Vietnam War history course. The first is a general one that might apply to other history courses. Literary texts, when used as supplements to analytical histories and historical documents, can raise cultural and historical consciousness. They can be used to explore such themes as personal and national aggression, conflict of cultures, dislocation, restless alienation, tradition and modernization, exile, “self” versus “other,” “motherland” versus “colonial periphery,” or “metropolis” versus “hinterland.” A

speculative approach in which questions are posed before students have read the texts can prepare students to look for those themes when they read. The texts then become the materials for finding some of the answers.

A second reason for including literary texts, while particular to the needs of West Georgia's course on the Vietnam War, may be relevant elsewhere. When the course was given in 1984 and 1987, no adjunct literary texts were assigned, nor were students asked to do book reports using literary works of their own selection. Such lack is a serious pedagogical shortcoming because the Vietnam War received considerable attention in both the print and the electronic media. As Robert Elegant, who reported about Southeast Asia for 20 years, has written in *Encounter*, "Vietnam was determined not only on the battlefield, but on the printed page, and above all, on the television screen."⁴ At West Georgia in 1984 and 1987, the audio-visual record of the war, especially the Public Broadcasting System series, was presented, discussed, and therefore privileged by the instructor. A student could leave the course legitimately wondering why no literature had emerged from the Vietnam War when there were so many movies, newsreels and songs.

The 1984 and 1987 syllabi should be revised because of general theoretical and particular pedagogical concerns. All students should be assigned, as complements to the history texts, readings from the Vietnamese, French and English literary responses to this war. To supplement the instructor's choice of texts, each student should be asked to choose literary works from any of the three relevant groups.

THE REQUIRED READING OF THREE ADJUNCT TEXTS

As in many teaching situations, the instructor's choice of canonical text is based on considerations of literary worth tempered by such practical realities as the cost of the books and the amount of time available for the reading. Given financial and time constraints at West Georgia, three inexpensive paperbacks, each under three hundred pages, plus a textbook and book(s) of the student's choosing for book reports, appear to be the maximum amount of reading that each student can be required to purchase, read and discuss in class.⁵

USING A REQUIRED FRENCH TEXT IN *TRANSLATION*

A good text dealing with the French colonial background is Marguerite Duras's *The Sea Wall*, first published in 1950.⁶ Duras's father was a French colonial official in Vietnam. Her account highlights an aspect of the French colonial experience that can be overlooked if one focuses on highly visible confrontations between the *Légion Etrangère* and Viet nationalists: the fate of the average French agricultural settler who went out to colonize. According to Duras, the settler was exploited on a different level than the Vietnamese. Before students have read Duras, they can be asked to look in other sources for evidence of Western imperial exploitation. Most will find evidence of exploitation of Vietnamese by the French. After they have read the novel, their perspective can be broadened to encompass familial, intergenerational, and class conflict of French versus French. In the Vietnamese colonial economy, a Michelin plantation executive or owner had as little empathy for the pureblooded French agriculturalist as for a Viet farmer. In telling the story of the trials and tribulations of French

settlers Duras portrays exploitation and personal suffering as having universality—a nonnationalistic dimension that can be analyzed in the classroom.

USING A REQUIRED ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEXT

William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick's *The Ugly American* picks up chronologically where Duras ends. The setting is the mythical Southeast Asian city of "Haidho, Sarkan," in the 1940s and early 1950s. France is on its way out, and Americans, Soviets and various political alignments of "Sarkanese" vie for influence. A liquor-guzzling United States political reject serves as his nation's ambassador. His Machiavellian Soviet counterpart procures Sarkanese goodwill by arranging to have sacks of donated American rice stamped "This is a gift from Russia." The ruse is especially successful since the stamp is in Sarkanese, which most Americans cannot read. There is a single American with a grasp of the language and a non-condescending empathy for the people of Sarkan. Frustrated by the combined efforts of bungling and historically ignorant American bureaucrats, he is beset by the village-level machinations of the communist/nationalist resistance. A poignant irony is that this aid worker's failure is orchestrated by his former Sarkanese comrade-in-arms from World War II days. Their close personal ties are sundered by disputes over whether gradualist capitalism or revolutionary socialism is the better road to progress for Sarkan.

Like Duras's novel, *The Ugly American* can be used in the classroom to highlight themes of personal, national and international crisis and conflict. Another theme, not present in Duras, concerns how Americans should or should not conduct relations with third world peoples, be they Vietnamese, Iraqis, Central Americans or others. In both the fictionalized and nonfictionalized parts of *The Ugly American* Lederer and Burdick imply that United States foreign service personnel should have multilingual competence and should intensively study the history, geography, economy and culture of the region to which they are assigned. American tours of duty should be lengthened, on the Soviet model, rather than subjected to abrupt and often highly politicized rotation.

The Ugly American was published in 1958, eight years after Duras' book and before any substantial commitment of American troops in Vietnam. These were critical years of upheaval and crisis in which the *crème de la crème* of the French military was defeated on the Dien Bien Phu battlefield. During the same eight years, the United States fought Chinese and Korean troops and took on an increasingly militant counterinsurgency posture in Guatemala.

While broader global conflicts are not explicitly discussed in *The Ugly American*, their causation and parameters are alluded to in The Gook's didactic non-fictionalized last chapter. Like George Orwell's 1984, *The Ugly American* is timely, foreshadows the future, and stands on its own as a work of literary quality. The characters' concerns become our concerns.

For the more academically-motivated students, an alternative text to Lederer and Burdick is Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*.⁷ Like Burdick and Lederer, Greene wrote a fast-moving account of what took place just as the French were leaving Indochina and Americans were arriving. There the similarities end. Graham Greene, unlike Lederer and Burdick, resided extensively in Vietnam in the 1950s. He drew on his own experience to create believable characters in a vivid Vietnamese setting rather than cardboard characters in an exotic locale. Greene's protagonist, an English journalist, explores the alleys, boulevards, warehouses and wharves of Hanoi and Saigon. He visits battlefields and flies a bombing run up Hanoi's Red River valley. Unlike Lederer and Burdick,

Greene's cynical correspondent sees no "goodies" and no "baddies" and espouses no highly dichotomized Cold War worldview. He is skeptical of all governmental schemes, especially of the efforts of an idealistic American who wishes to channel aid to a "third force" as France departs. Of this person, the correspondent concludes: "I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused."⁸

USING A REQUIRED TEXT IN TRANSLATION FROM THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

It is a formidable task to find a readily available inexpensive classroom text coming from or reflective of the viewpoint of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, hereafter referred to as the SRV. One must distinguish between scarce literature written and published in the SRV versus an abundance of Vietnamese expatriate literature. Each genre has its own value when used critically in the classroom. The two forms can be juxtaposed much in the way that an American history instructor might contrast a literary work written by an American Revolutionary with one written by a Tory.

With respect to the literature of the SRV, much has been written in Vietnamese and published there in journalistic fashion. Additionally, Hanoi's Foreign Language Publishing House has published in English Nguyen Khac Vien and Hu Ngoc's mammoth, 3-1/2 inch thick anthology *Vietnamese Literature*. Anh Duc's *Hon Dat* is an example of a Vietnamese novel written during the American Indochina War.⁹ Because of lack of availability, neither of these works would be appropriate for an American classroom. Relatively little that has been translated into English has found effective distribution in the United States. The card catalog of the National Library in Hanoi lists hundreds of editions of English language works produced by Hanoi's Red River Publishing House and affiliated publishers. Until Sino-Vietnamese hostilities began in 1978-1979, Americans could purchase Vietnamese literature in translation through the semi-official outlet for People's Republic of China publications in the United States, China Books and Periodicals.¹⁰ Since the outbreak of that war, American sources for SRV literature in translation have been largely restricted to publications of the William Joiner Center of the University of Massachusetts at Boston, the Asia Resource Center, the United States-Vietnam Friendship Association, and the United States Vietnam Friendship and Aid Association of Southern California.¹¹

If and when the United States recognizes the SRV and lifts its embargo on trade with that nation, an important component of the third major linguistic tradition that overarches the Vietnam conflict may become more accessible to American teachers and students. Until then one can fall back on autobiography for a text from the SRV. General Vo Nguyen Giap, perhaps the most important military figure in twentieth-century Vietnam, published his 110-page autobiographical account *Dien Bien Phu* in Hanoi in approximately 1955. Originally issued by Foreign Language Press, the work has been reprinted in numerous editions. It is available in paperback as pages 131-88 of *People's War People's Army* with a foreword by Roger Hilsman.¹² It is Giap's personal reminiscence of the military and political techniques he used against the French. His theme is an abiding nationalism. He sees native ingenuity as the essential quality that enabled the Vietnamese to defeat Mongol naval invasion. The Vietnamese cleverly drove stakes into the Bach Dang River to impale the invaders, warships. Subsequently, an intimate knowledge of terrain helped Vietnamese achieve what many Westerners perceived as an impossible task: carrying heavy artillery pieces across the mountains to Dien Bien Phu. To Giap, indomitable courage ena-

bled the Vietnamese to mount human-wave suicide charges and to tunnel under French fortifications. Finally, according to him, Marxist ideology and party discipline additionally enabled a victory of a so-called underdeveloped third-world people over a “mighty” first-world foe.¹³

Whether one assigns Giap, Greene, Lederer and Burdick, or Duras, certain teaching strategies can be applied to some of all of these readings. One strategy suggested by Douglas Simon of Drew University is to assign *The Ugly American* to students before they have read a single textbook page or have viewed any of the Public Broadcasting System’s *Vietnam: A Television History*. Students are asked to write down and discuss the major points, lessons and predictions of the book and then to “file away” these ideas. The class returns to the ideas a couple of weeks later or at the end of the course. At that time students attempt to determine the validity of Lederer and Burdick’s major points. How prophetic were these two authors?

A variant on Professor Simon’s strategy would be to pose specific speculative questions before students have read their assignments. Were there any pre-1945 lesson from Vietnamese history that should have tempered American’s post-1954 policies in that region? Were there any unlearned lessons of the battle of Dien Bien Phu? Younger American officers certainly read Giap’s book prior to massive United States involvement and took Giap seriously as a strategist who defeated the French.¹⁴ Giap proceeded to use some of the same strategy against the Americans.

Was the American role in Vietnam simply wrong on all counts? Do the Vietnamese or American texts contribute any specific information that can help us to better answer that question? These questions can serve as bases for class discussion after the required texts have been read. They broaden a discussion of international relations and raise issues of American ethnocentricity and racism, professional myopia, perceptions of not being a colonial power like France, and over-confidence in having an overwhelmingly favorable balance of military forces.

A BOOK REPORT ON TEXT(S) OF THE STUDENT’S CHOICE

The instructor’s selection of three literary texts to complement the textbook has been described as a privileged choice based on practical and financial as well as pedagogical considerations. Each of the three texts has also been chosen for its lucidity. Philip Brown, who used Lederer and Burdick in a Vietnam course at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, included on his syllabus the phrase “most students have found L & B good reading when they want to relax.”¹⁵

To supplement the canonical choices of the instructor, each student should be asked to select either one full-length novel *or* two shorter literary works. He or she would then prepare an analysis in which several questions would be answered with reference to the Vietnam War. What subject matter does each author cover? How does each handle this subject matter? What is the major thrust or interpretation of each book? What issues, if any, are subordinated to bring out the main focus? What are the writer’s sources of information? What are the author’s biases? How do you know? What basic assumptions does each writer make about the indigenous history of Vietnam? About Westerners in Vietnam? How do you rate the author(s) in terms of style, clarity, and persuasiveness?

COLLATERAL READING

Three specialized categories of Vietnam War literature from which students could select collateral reading remain to be discussed: Vietnamese expatriate texts, episodic novels and texts that lend themselves to comparative analysis in book report form.

VIETNAMESE EXPATRIATE TEXTS

An instructor might wish to recommend one of two translations of Vietnamese expatriate literary texts to more academically motivated students. Both books are readily available in the United States.

Pham Ban Ky's *Blood Brothers* was originally written in 1947 in French.¹⁶ Ky's major focus is on tradition and change at the village level, forces personified in the attitudes and behavior of two of the narrator's "blood brothers." One brother espouses traditional Taoist mysticism, the Chinese philosophy of inaction (*wuu wei*), passivity and asceticism. Another brother adopts Marxist ideology and joins the Viet Minh. The narrator finds himself in a dilemma. He is unable to choose not only between friends and brothers but also between Vietnamese traditionalism and a radical form of modernization. The second half of his dilemma is also what Vietnamese society as a whole must confront from 1945 on.

A second Vietnamese expatriate novel that might be considered for class use is Tran Vin Dinh's *Blue Dragon, White Tiger: A Tet Story*, originally written in Vietnamese and available in English translation only as a 334-page hardback.¹⁷ Because of cost and length it may be less appropriate for classroom use than Ky's shorter and less expensive paperback.

Dinh's work explicates the motif of a "Blue Dragon," representing the East, spring and tenderness, in conflict with a "White Tiger," symbolizing the West, winter and force. The novel focuses on 'the 1960s and 1970s through the eyes of a Vietnamese diplomat who resigns his post to protest the anti-Buddhist policies of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime. Minh joins the Viet Cong and rises to prominence in that organization. Ultimately, he comes to see the Viet Cong, also, as a force that stifles traditional Vietnamese culture. He flees Vietnam as one of the "boat people" and winds up as a refugee in the United States. Dinh includes excerpts from Vietnamese poetry, songs, inscriptions and histories. In addition to what Dinh includes, a wide variety of these types of non-novelistic Vietnamese literature is readily available in English translation for classroom use.¹⁸

EPISODIC NOVELS

Long episodic novels can be useful in teaching a Vietnam War course. A primary reason for assigning episodic novels is their lucidity. They have the potential for sustaining less academically motivated students' interest in history—an enthusiasm that may have been kindled by required books like *The Ugly American*. Episodic novels may "turn on" students otherwise "turned off" to history. A second reason for including episodic novels is their substance. In all of the novels previously discussed in this paper that were originally written in English Vietnamese characters are either absent, peripheral or drawn from Western stereotypes. Two episodic English-language novels that extensively feature Vietnamese as well as Western experiences during the French and to a lesser extent the American involvements in Vietnam are *The Immortal Dragon* and *Saigon*.

Michaël Peterson's *The Immortal Dragon* is an extravaganza of intrigue taking place in France and Vietnam between 1847 and 1914 as the mother country tried to consolidate her Southeast Asian empire.¹⁸ The novel traces the life of André, a French *colon* and his extended French, Vietnamese and mixed-race family. Most prominent among the Vietnamese with whom André and his kin interact is Ahn, a mandarin whose fervent nationalism alienates him from Emperor Tu Duc.

Peterson explores the complexity of behavior as Vietnamese try to define and pursue the dragon's virtue. Emperor Tu Duc sees collaboration with France as a means of preserving at least part of his kingdom. That, to him, is virtue. Ahn defines virtue differently and admonishes the Emperor that "our people will never be subjugated. A thousand years of Chinese (rule) proved that, and these silly pale people from afar have no hope of dominating us."²⁰ Resistance is the proper course of action.

Peterson's examination of these social conflicts is the strength of his book. On the other hand, he garnishes his tale with almost non-stop sexual and sexist episodes, perhaps gearing his script for a television mini-series. The sheer volume of gratuitous sex in *The Immortal Dragon* may make this novel inappropriate for some students, communities or educational systems. From that standpoint alone, the British journalist Anthony Grey's less sexually explicit *Saigon* may be more appropriate.

Grey picks up roughly where Peterson ends, covering the years 1925 to 1975.²¹ He also traces one fictionalized Western family's interaction with Vietnamese counterparts. He begins in the 1920s with Chuck Sherman's death on a hunting safari in Vietnam. Grey ends with the 1975 evacuation from Saigon of an illegitimate Sherman offspring. The novel provides a panorama of urban and rural Vietnamese life, including the elaborate court at Huế, plantations, villages, and the fetid Chinese ghetto of Cholon.

Grey and Peterson emphasize the French colonial era. Students who wish to focus more on the American experience, or students who are more academically motivated and who can handle two books rather than a single episodic novel, can write a comparative book report rather than writing a book report based on a single volume.

A COMPARATIVE BOOK REPORT OF TWO CONTRASTING TEXTS

A student selecting this option would have to select some comparative framework and make it clear to the instructor. The vast and expanding volume of American literature of the Vietnam War makes this approach viable.²² The literature is sufficiently large that students can crisscross ideological, racial and gender considerations.²³ For example, one can readily contrast, based on literature, pro- and anti-war sentiments of women who served in Vietnam, both in the military and in the voluntary agencies.²⁴ Black versus white prisoner of war accounts can be compared.²⁵

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the expatriate text, episodic novel or three seminal texts representing the major groups of Vietnam war literature, can offer students a richer experience than they might have had while restricted to textbooks plus audio-visual accounts. The selection by the instructor of three lucid texts capitalizes on students' enthusiasm and directs it toward clarification of issues that are both highly controversial and

relevant in their lives. The addition of other texts that students choose furthers their value-clarification process and mitigates against their adoption of only the world view presented in texts assigned by the instructor.

Vietnam veteran and education Professor David Berman lamented in an issue of *The Social Studies* that “it is unfortunate that our approach to the teaching of Vietnam is primarily through the American lens.”²⁶ The need that Professor Berman highlights can be filled by juxtaposing Western and non-Western literatures. In that fashion, students, world outlook and empathy for “the other” may be broadened and sensitized. The insertion of world literature into a history course might then, in the long run, even have redeeming features for society as a whole.

Notes

- * This paper was prepared for delivery at the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Cooperative Study of Civilizations at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY. The author wishes to thank Melba Daniels of West Georgia College for secretarial assistance.
- 1. An earlier version of this paper was prepared for the panel “Teaching the Vietnam War at the Secondary and Collegiate Levels,” Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS), Charlotte, North Carolina, January 15, 1988. For criticism of that paper, the author would like to thank Joe P. Dunn, of Converse College, Sarah Lawall of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, William Turley of Southern Illinois University, Douglas W. Simon of Drew University, Lorie Smith of Saint Michael’s College, Earl H. Tilford, Jr., of The Air University and Don Luce of the Asia Resource Center. This paper is designed as a sequel to Jonathan Goldstein, “Teaching the American-Indochina War on the College Level: An Interdisciplinary Experiment,” *Journal of Higher Education*, (New Delhi) 1-2 (1985-86): 137-43.
- 2. Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam. A History* (New York: Viking, 1983); Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford UP, 1980); George Herring, *America’s Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (New York: Knopf, 1986).
- 3. Joe P. Dunn, “The Vietnam Bookshelf Enters the 1980s,” *Naval War College Review*, 34.5 (September-October 1981): 107-13. On Spanish Civil War literature, see Paul Ilie, *Literature and Inner Exile: Authoritarian Spain, 1939-75* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980).
- 4. Robert Elegant noted in John Corry “TV: The Tet Offensive in Vietnam,” *The New York Times* (November 8 1983): sec. c, 15.
- 5. A “buddy system” would be an experimental variant of this strategy. Under such a system, half the class might read text 3A, the other half of the class 3B, and then they might swap the books they have bought.
- 6. Marguerite Duras, *The Sea Wall*, trans. by Herma Briffault (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 1976 [1950]); Marguerite Duras, *A Sea of Troubles*, Trans. by Antonia White (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969). The original title of the novel was *Un Barrage contre le Pacifique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950). For a novel on urban life in French Indochina, a possibility might be Duras’s, *The Lover*, trans. by Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon, 1985). The original title of this book was *L’amant*. Reviews might suggest which is the better translation and more appropriate choice of subject matter for a particular classroom context.
- 7. Graham Greene, *The Ugly American* (New York: Penguin, 1980 [1955]). A third alternative to Burdick and Lederer is the Englishman Mark Frankland’s semiautobiographical novel, *The Mother-of-Pearl Men* (London: John Murray, 1985) 188 pages; unavailable as of August 1988.

8. *Ibid.* 60.

9. Nguyen Khac Vien and Hu Ngoc, *Vietnamese Literature* (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982); Anh Duc, *Hon Dat*, trans. by Robert C. Friend (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1969). For a general critique of Vietnamese literature, historical and contemporary, see Maurice Durand and Nguyen Tran Huan, *An Introduction to Vietnamese Literature* (New York: Columbia UP, 1985), a translation of *Introduction à la Littérature Vietnamienne* (1969).

10. China Books and Periodicals, Inc., is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of the People's Republic of China.

11. Published materials from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are available in the United States in 1992 from Asia Resource Center, P.O. Box 15275, Washington, D.C. 20003, Tel: (202) 547-1114; The U.S.-Vietnam Friendship and Aid Association of Southern California, P.O. Box 453, Murrieta, California, 92363, Tel: (714) 677-5905; and The U.S./Vietnam Friendship Association, P.O. Box 5043, San Francisco, California, 94101. The brochure *English-Language Publications from Vietnam* is available from the Murrieta, California, association.

Since 1986 an increasing number of Americans have been visiting Vietnam. In Hanoi American visitors can purchase a wide variety of English-language publications from Xunhasaba-State Enterprise for the Export and Import of Books, Periodicals, and Other Cultural Commodities, 32 Hai Ba Trung, Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

As of 1992, there are excellent prospects for literature from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam becoming more readily available in the United States. The William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequence at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, has announced plans for the University of Massachusetts Press to publish five Vietnamese veterans' works in translation. In 1988 the Joiner Center began to publish *The Vietnam Forum* in conjunction with Yale University's Council on Southeast Asia Studies. Huynh Sanh Thong, executive editor of the *Forum*, told me on September 19, 1988, of his intention to use the *Forum* increasingly as a publication vehicle for both expatriate Vietnamese writers and writers living and working in Vietnam.

12. Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War, People's Army* (New York: Bantam, 1968).

13. As a foil to Giap's, internationally publicized official history, a professor might wish to assign a contrasting interpretation of the battle. One possibility is a not-for publication Vietnamese army general staff critique of the battle of Dien Bien Phu which William Turley discovered in the captured enemy documents collection at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Turley's discovery is a book of 160 pages, approximately the same length as Giap's. Unlike Giap's, Turley's account was made for teaching Vietnamese army cadres rather than for international distribution. Although it has not been fully translated into English, it holds the potential for classroom usefulness. I am grateful to Kevin Bowen, Co-Director of the Joiner Center at the University of Massachusetts for showing me excerpts from the captured document. See also Ronald H. Spector, "In the Nam and 'Back in the World': American and Vietnamese Sources on the Vietnam War," *The Journal of American History*, 75.1 (June 1988): 213.

Yet another viewpoint on the battle is provided by the French Marxist historian Alain Ruscio in his article "How Did Our Contemporaries Live the Final Battle of the French War in Indochina," *Vietnam Courier*, (Hanoi) 6 (1987): 5-9. This article is a translation of excerpts from Ruscio's longer piece, "Dien Bien Phu: du coup de genie à l'aberration," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, (Paris) 72.268 (1985): 335-47. Ruscio deflates a myth that permeated the French press concerning the role of women at Dien Bien Phu. He points out that the much publicized Florence Nightingale of Dien Bien Phu (Geneviève de Galard) was not the only woman to remain in the entrenched camp to the bitter end. The French press rarely mentioned the simultaneous presence of the Vietnamese and North African prostitutes of the *bordels militaires de campagne*. For a more generalized and contrasting Vietnamese expatriate's appraisal of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's

- army and the army of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, see Truong Nhu Tang, *A Vietcong Memoir* (New York: Vintage, 1986).
14. See William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (New York: Dell, 1980) 67, 359, 364, 442-45, 536-37.
 15. "Vietnam, Spring, 1987, Brown," printed syllabus, History Department, University of North Carolina, Charlotte.
 16. Pham Van Ky, *Blood Brothers*, trans. by Margaret Maudon (New Haven: Council for Southeast Asia Studies, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1987). A comprehensive introduction, footnotes, and appendix have been prepared by Lucy Nguyen. This book also includes numerous advertisements for translations into English of other Vietnamese works. This novel was originally published in French as *Frère de sang* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1947). On Vietnamese expatriate literature, see articles in *The Vietnam Forum* (New Haven); and David M. Berman, "Vietnam Through Vietnamese Eyes: A Review of the Literature," *Asian Pacific Community* (Tokyo) (Spring 1985): 88-104. I am grateful to Professor Berman for insights into Vietnamese literature provided in his article and in his personal commentary during our January 1987 tour of Vietnam.
 17. Tranh Van Dinh, *Blue Dragon, White Tiger: A Tet Story* (Philadelphia: Tri-Am Press, 1983). A second historical novel by Dinh is *No Passenger on the River* (Fort Collins Pratt, 1989).
 18. Whether or not one uses Dinh's novel with its excerpts of Vietnamese poetry and songs, the assigning of this type of collateral reading can expand a student's awareness of Vietnamese culture. Among non-novelistic Vietnamese literary works readily available in the United States in English translation are: (1) three collections of historical poetry: Huynh Sanh Thong, trans. and ed., *The Heritage of Vietnamese Poetry* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979); Nguyen Ngoc Bich, trans. and ed., with Burton Raffel and W.S. Merwin, *A Thousand Years of Vietnamese Poetry* (New York: Knopf, 1975); and Burton Raffel, trans., *From the Vietnamese: Ten Centuries of Poetry* (New York: October House, 1968) which includes 11 prison poems of Ho Chi Minh; (2) four translations of contemporary Vietnamese poetry: Nhat Hanh and Vo-Dinh, *Zen Poems* (Greensboro: Unicorn Press, 1976); Nhat Hanh, *Viet Nam Poems*, trans. by Nhat Hanh and Helen Coutant, (Santa Barbara: Unicorn Press, 1972); Thich Nhat Hanh and Vo-Dinh, *The Cry of Vietnam* (Santa Barbara: Unicorn Press, 1968); and Don Luce, John C. Shafer, and Jacquelyn Chagnon, eds., *We Promise One Another, Poems from an Asian War* (Washington, D.C.: Indochina Mobile Education Project, 1971); (3) a bilingual anthology of Vietnamese folk poetry: John Balaban, trans. and ed., *Ca Dao Vietnam: A Bilingual Anthology of Vietnamese Folk Poetry* (Greensboro: Unicorn Press, 1980); and (4) a translation of the Eighteenth Century Vietnamese poet, Nguyen Du: Nguyen Dr, *The Tale of Keiu*, trans. by Huynh Sanh Thong (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987) 276 pages. Du is also represented in the aforementioned Nguyen and Hu anthology published in Hanoi and in *We Promise One Another*.
 19. Michael Peterson, *The Immortal Dragon* (New York: New American Library, 1983).
 20. *Ibid.*, *Immortal* 163.
 21. Anthony Grey, *Saigon* (New York: Dell, 1983).
 22. A student is able to choose from a wide range of available texts to develop his or her comparative framework. Apart from college and public libraries, the B. Dalton bookstore chain has installed a "Vietnam Books" paperback section in its outlets nationwide. There are at least three American book dealers who specialize in Vietnam War literature: Ken Lopez, 51 Huntington Road, Hadley, Massachusetts 01035, Tel: (413) 584-4827; Dailey Book Service, 90 Kimball Lane, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073, Tel: (703) 382-8949; and Vietnam Bookstore, P.O. Box 469, Collinsville, Connecticut 06022, which also publishes a catalog and newsletter. The bimonthly magazine *Vietnam* (Leesburg, Virginia) includes personal reminiscences of the war and reviews of war literature.
 23. To assist students in coming to grips with the abundance of American literature on the Vietnam War, there are several standard references on the subject. Catherine Calloway

and Arthur Casciato's bibliographies of criticism of American Vietnam War literature include subsections on poetry, prose and drama: Catherine Calloway, "Vietnam War Literature and Film: A Bibliography of Secondary Sources," *Bulletin of Bibliography*, 43.3 (September 1986): 149-58; and Arthur D. Casciato, "Teaching the Literature of the Vietnam War," *Review*, 9 (1987): 125-147. Harry Summer's dictionary of the jargon of the American war, *Vietnam War Almanac* (New York: Facts on File, 1985), explicates geographical terms, unit identifications and names of weapons. For listings of titles of Vietnam War literature, students can consult Tom Colonnese and Jerry Hogan's comprehensive bibliography of novels, poetry, plays, short stories and journalistic works containing some fiction, "Vietnam War Literature, 1958-1979: A First Checklist," *Bulletin of Bibliography*, 38.1 (January-March 1981):26-31, 51. They can consult other general literary bibliographies and critiques by John C. Pratt, Edward Palm, John Newman, Margaret E. Stewart, and Philip Beidler. See: John Clark Pratt "Bibliographic Commentary," in Timothy Lomperis, *Reading the Wind: The Literature of the Vietnam War* (Durham: Duke UP, 1987); Edward F. Palm, "Novels of Vietnam and the Uses of War Literature," *Marine Corps Gazette* (November 1986): 92-99; John Newman, *Vietnam War Literature* (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1982); Margaret E. Stewart, "Vietnam War Novels in the Classroom," *Teaching History*, 6.2 (Fall 1981): 60-66; and Philip D. Beidler, *American Literature and the Experience of Vietnam* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1982).

There are also specialized bibliographical resources. Jeffrey Fenn has analyzed American plays pertaining to the Vietnam War, William Eberhart has anthologized poetry, and Nancy Anisfeld has compiled a reader containing novel and drama excerpts, short stories and poetry. See: Jeffrey W. Fenn, "Culture under Stress: American Drama and the Vietnam War," (Ph.D. diss., Theater, University of British Columbia, 1988); William D. Ehrhart, ed., *Carrying the Darkness* (New York: Avon, 1985); and Nancy Anisfeld, ed., *Vietnam Anthology: American War Literature* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State U Popular P, 1987).

24. On Vietnamese and American women during the Vietnam War, see Patricia L. Walsh, *Forever Sad the Hearts* (New York: Avon, 1982); Linda Van Devanter and Christopher Morgan, *Home Before Morning* (New York: Beaufort, 1984); Wendy Larsen and Tran Thi Nga, *Two Women and Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1986); and Bobbie Ann Mason, *In Country* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985).
25. Pupils who like prisoner of war accounts can find comprehensive bibliographies in Joe P. Dunn, "The POW Chronicles: A Bibliographic Review," *Armed Forces and Society*, 3 (Spring 1983): 495-514, and in Dunn, "The Vietnam War POW/MIAs: An Annotated Bibliography," *Bulletin of Bibliography*, 45.2 (June 1988): 152-57. Students can be directed toward real or fictional accounts of American prisoners of war who reached differing conclusions about the war as a result of their incarcerations. Soldiers who emerged from prison more gung ho than they went in, such as United States Air Force Colonel Ted Guy or Navy Apprentice Seaman Douglas Hegdahl, can be juxtaposed with one who emerged as an antiwar activist, Army Special Forces Sergeant George Smith. See for example, James A. Daly and Lee Bergman, *A Hero's Welcome: The Conscience of Sergeant James Daly Versus the United States Army* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975); Norman A McDaniel, *Yet Another Voice* (New York: Hawthorne Books 1975); or George Smith, *POW: Two Years with the Viet Cong* (Berkeley: Ramparts, 1971).
26. David M. Berman, "Perspectives on the Teaching of Vietnam," *The Social Studies*, 77.4 (July-August 1986): 165.

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