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"Are we gonna live together - together are we gonna live?" (Lee, 1989)

These are the words spoken by radio DJ Mister Señor Love Daddy at the end of Spike Lee's film, *Do the Right Thing*. The previous night the police had brutally killed an African-American, which in turn, led to the looting and destruction of the neighborhood pizzeria. This film is rife with the tensions of several ethnic groups living together in close proximity. A few events of the past two years have given me a deeper understanding of the DJ's words.

The first event happened in February 2001 with the sinking of the Japanese fishing vessel, *Ehime Maru*, by a U.S. nuclear submarine off the coast of Honolulu. I happened to be in Osaka at the time and watched with a huge crowd of Japanese viewers a large screen TV in the train station. On the screen, the U.S. submarine commander repeatedly denied any responsibility for the sinking. Tears filled the eyes of the Japanese viewers; I felt ashamed. In Japanese culture, a leader must apologize for incorrect actions by the group-not to do so is perceived as deeply uncaring. Of course, in the litigious U.S. society, acclamations of responsibility lead to getting sued. From a Japanese perspective, the best action taken by the commander in the whole series of events that followed the tragedy was his sending letters of apology to each of the families who had lost a loved one.

Not surprisingly, the second occurrence that caused me to reconsider the words, "together are we gonna live?" were the events of September 11. I teach at a college in Hawaii whose students are Asians and speak English as a second language. In my ethics class at TransPacific Hawaii College, we had been studying human rights and individual freedoms-basically, new concepts for cultures that believe harmonization with the group to be the most significant social concept. I discovered that my students were not just frightened; they were angry at the U.S. for allowing this to happen. The students believed it was our insensitive treatment of Islamic believers in the past as well as our obsession with individual rights that led to the bombings. For Japanese people, security and protection of the group are paramount; Western preoccupations with individual rights and autonomy seem ill-considered. Do I think my students had grasped the nuances of the complex inter-relationship between the U.S. and Islamic countries with regard to religious, economic, and cultural issues? No, not at all. However, I was once again struck by how deeply we are interconnected as world citizens and how imperative it is to be informed, open-minded, and compassionate when we view painful events.

So what is the link between these reflections and the ostensible topic of my article-that is, how I used action research to determine practical ways to teach Asian students in Hawaii who speak

English as a second language the major values and beliefs of Western culture? In any intercultural exchange, I learned that even if one is the giver of information and the other the receiver, communication must be two-way. This requires special vigilance and willingness to listen on the part of a teacher.

Martha Nussbaum (1997) in her work, *Cultivating Humanity*, claims that three elements are necessary in order to be world citizens: 1) Socratic self-examination-the ability to examine one's thinking critically; 2) narrative imagination-the ability to place oneself in someone else's situation; and 3) to truly *be* a world citizen-the ability to view oneself not just as an American or a Japanese citizen, but as a member of humanity. I argue that one of the objectives of a humanities course should be the fostering of global citizens. This requires more than an ideological commitment; it also requires careful examination of teaching methodologies. Crookes (1993) cites the definition of the term "action research" provided by Kemmis and McTaggart as "trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about the curriculum, teaching and learning" (p. 131). Using Nussbaum's ideas as my guideposts and following Crookes' understanding of action research, I made discoveries regarding effective methods for teaching non-Western students about Western culture.

Students who come to TransPacific Hawaii College are predominantly Japanese with a few Taiwanese and other Asian nationalities. Almost all are 18-21 years old and about 75% of the students are female. The primary mission of the two-year college is to provide a strong educational foundation so that students may transfer to and be academically successful at competitive universities. In the best of all possible worlds, the humanities course I teach would be cross-cultural, spending as much time on African, Asian, and American cultures as on European ones. My college does teach world civilizations, global studies, world geography, and other such courses, but the humanities course fills a specific lacuna. When our students transfer to mainstream North American universities, professors will pepper their lectures with Western cultural references and expect students to understand them. However, many Asian students at TransPacific Hawaii College have limited Western cultural frames of reference. Not only do they lack historical knowledge and are unfamiliar with certain cultural values, they do not know what a Renaissance dress or a Roman toga look like. Moreover, many are unaware of historical figures in Western culture such as the Pope, and many of our students initially have little knowledge of Greek myths or the basics of Christianity. When asked what they found most difficult when conducting research for their term papers, one student, Megumi Nagira, responded in an informal writing assignment as follows:

One of the most difficult thing is western cultures for me-for example, religious culture, especially Christian I didn't know how important ancient European cultures were, and how they influenced the Western countries, because I studied about Asian civilizations, especially Buddhist. This is a good opportunity for me to know the Western cultures, but sometimes it's very hard to understand the life style, appearance, thinking, and relationship of men and women. It's too different or kind of opposite from Asian cultures.

When teaching humanities to these groups, I find the best approach is to build a basic scaffolding of the values and major institutions for each time period, without putting too much emphasis on

specific historical events. By learning the social, political, religious, and economic institutions of each time period, students have a context for further study. For example, in an exploration of ancient Greek culture, I focus on basic political institutions such as the democracy in Athens and the military oligarchy in Sparta. Additionally, I discuss how the two political systems had differing social institutions with respect to minorities and women-although more repressive in general, the economic and social institutions of Sparta gave women greater freedom. I also examine the role of Greek myths and the tension between these and the growing scientific or philosophic inquiries of the time. Finally, I analyze the manner in which *sophrosyne* (i.e., wisdom and moderation) is reflected in ancient Greek architecture, sculpture, tragedy, and epic poetry. When I explain the ideas, I try to keep details to a minimum in order that the big picture may emerge for the students.

I have discovered that for these students, using visual aids, especially films and videos, is important. In the first place, today's students are more visually-oriented than in the past. Additionally, visual aids give Asian ESL students more vivid frames of reference-quicker ways to build scaffolding. Artwork, of course, should be represented visually, but it is helpful to depict other aspects of a cultural time period. For example, in the video *Odyssey* (1997) that portrays events from both Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, students can actually see the Trojan Horse filled with Greek soldiers. I have spent quite a bit of time explaining the story, even drawing pictures on the board, but with little success. Yet when they view the story, students' imaginations become fired and the story begins to matter to them.

Which leads to my next point: I have noticed that the use of narrative form aids the building of cultural frames of reference. Since these students have little background in Greek myths, an examination of the events in the life of Odysseus helps them learn some of the classic stories and understand the relationship between Odysseus and Greek immortals. The narrative device gives students a place to "hang" other notions such as the type of clothing, weapons, and ships an ancient Greek warrior used. In the video, *Odyssey*, everyday estate activities such as pressing olive oil are also portrayed, which furthers the contextualization process. Furthermore, the use of narrative form helps cultivate the narrative imagination. What would one do when placed in Odysseus's position with regard to Cyclops? When asking students if watching the video, *Odyssey*, enriches their understanding, they answer that it does. One student, Reika Matsuno, explains:

Yes, it really helped me to understand about ancient Greek I can "see" what ancient people were, what they eat, what they thought, or about their life in the video. The Greek [section of the course] has large content so the video supported me and made it more easy to get into the ancient Greek world.

I believe that something is lost by emphasizing visual narratives at the expense of written ones. There is no question that reading English translations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* uncover metaphoric beauty and subtle nuances in Greek thought. Unfortunately, given that our students still have limited ability to decipher the complexities of English language and that not much time can be spent in any particular time period, only a brief perusal of the written text is possible. Moreover, students will have the opportunity in literature courses to pursue the special type of knowledge and beauty that written narratives provide.

I have found that watching a film like Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) is not easy for the Asian students at TransPacific Hawaii College, but it is well worth our effort. This film stays true to Shakespeare's language, which gives the students a feel for Renaissance poetry and dialogue. Moreover, its settings, clothing, singing, and dancing vividly set forth some of the social conventions of the Renaissance period, while the narrative about two young lovers deeply engages students.

Kinesthetic activities add another dimension to my students' framework of understanding. This type of learning is useful for any class, but for a group with less than fully-developed language abilities, it is an especially powerful aid. Having students stand-up and form ranks of hoplite soldiers with overlapping shields clearly conveys the advance over previous types of warfare. When asked to identify which classroom activities best aided their understanding, one student, Chika Tamura, notes that the instructor "sometimes teaches and shows us like how people fought by using us." She also observed that this activity, "is interesting and I can remember until the exam."

My students practice a simple Renaissance dance, and then they learn that for a certain social class, a dance such as this constitutes a rare opportunity for young people to flirt. For my students, their dance practice makes the meeting of Juliet and Romeo more poignant. Asian ESL students are often unfamiliar with children's games such as "Ring around the Rosy." After participating in a few rounds of the game, I teach students the origins of this game in the onslaught of the Black Death during the Middle Ages. The fact that children made games about this disease clearly demonstrates its pervasiveness, which provides an existential dimension to the students' awareness.

I find that using a comparative approach when applicable may also help the scaffolding process. Referring to samurai and Heian nobles when describing knights and lords of the Western Middle Ages may be a helpful heuristic device to explain class differences. I also examine the Western chivalric code in light of *bushido*, the way of the warrior. One of my Japanese students, Hikari Taniguchi, notes,

Similarities between chivalry and *bushido* are its historical background that includes economy and the relationship. The dawn of these systems were the land. At this time, the land had more influence than money because the money was not well developed yet. In both chivalry and *bushido*, the contract between employer and knight was very important. Knights had to follow their rules. However, I can see difference between western knight and oriental knight. In western knight, they were kind [to] women and weak people, but orient[al knights] were not.

Another subject that invites comparison is the asceticism of some Buddhist monks that is mirrored in the practices of analogous Christian brethren. Additionally, both Christian and Buddhist monasteries value communal existence. Since arranged marriages still occur in Japan, comparing these to Juliet's arranged marriage to Paris furthers student appreciation of renaissance social conventions. By using these types of parallels, my students gain quick reference points in their understanding framework.

Once the basic values and institutions of a particular period are in place, I find examining their interconnection is fruitful. When studying ancient Greece, I ask students to make connections between the institution of democracy and the value of *sophrosyne*. Yoko Hattori reflects,

Sophrosyne means wisdom, balance, moderation, and restraint. Socrates was killed in a democracy, but he was important because he made people think. Because democracy is ruled by people, it is important that each person think carefully. Since no particular person rule the society everyone need to think what is the best way. [The Athenians] killed Socrates because he made fun of people who did not think critically and they did not like that Thought of *sophrosyne* would not let [the death of Socrates] happen, as *sophrosyne* would let people realize how important he was.

In this course, we also study the importance of Christian otherworldliness in the early Middle Ages and the manner in which this value is manifested in the social, political, and religious institutions. Then students examine the shift to a more secular standpoint in the later Middle Ages. It is through these investigations that students may engage in critical thinking. To what extent is the art of the period reflecting the values or initiating new perspectives? How did certain catastrophic events of the late Middle Ages help precipitate new Renaissance viewpoints? Making inferences and synthesizing ideas not only strengthens the students' critical faculties, but these activities also clarify and enrich students' Western cultural frames of reference. Additionally, uncovering assumptions and shifts of thinking within the Western tradition benefits Western trained teachers, such as myself, as well. I believe that as a nation we cannot be sensitive to the values and cultural traditions of others unless we have examined our own. This sort of critical examination of the Western tradition cultivates both teacher and students in their quest for world citizenship.

Finally, I have discovered that critiquing Western values, especially in light of the Asian students' own, serves several functions. First, critiquing significant values highlights the period studied which strengthens students' cultural frame of reference. Next, students are given another opportunity to engage in critical thinking. Additionally, by setting forth their own values and discovering how they differ from the Western ones, students become fully active participants in the humanities class. These students are in a new country, speaking a language which is not their own, and studying a new subject. Encouraging students to articulate their own values is profoundly empowering. Finally, this activity provides me with a wonderful opportunity to listen to the insights of my students and deepen my global awareness.

For example, the advent of the Renaissance value of individualism and the cult of genius is usually celebrated in humanities textbooks. Individualism does mark an important turning point in the development of Western culture, and Asian students can't fully appreciate European culture without this understanding. However, I have found that hearing the voices of those who believe that group harmonization is a more significant achievement has tempered my own perspective. If world citizens are not first Japanese, Taiwanese, or American, but rather members of humanity, then it is essential that this exchange of values should be truly interactive. Ultimately, the study of Western culture should be from a global perspective. The values expressed in the following two essays, written by Taiwanese students Shih-Wei Tseng and Pin Kuang Chen, further this point. Tseng writes,

Unlike the primary value of west [which] is more focused on individualism, the primary value of Taiwan is more like collectivism. We always talk about unify is power. However, like west, the value of humanism is also important in Taiwan. I like Taiwanese way of collectivism [better] than western individualism because I believe that we cannot do everything by our self. We cannot be lonely-unify is power. Another point is I don't like western people always focused and think about me, me, me. It make me feel selfish. We should think about 'we" first, then think about our [individual] selves.

Chen adds,

The emphasis on family is primary value of Taiwan. The ideas of the importance of family are taught at early ages throughout adolescence and continue to be practiced until our late years. A strong bond ties the members of a family together. This bond has an advantage over the western ideal of individualism. In the west, individual freedom is highly valued and pursued. Some tend to break away from their families at an early stage of adulthood. In some cases, family members do not get along. However, [for Taiwanese] the emphasis on family is sometimes, too much. One cannot express feelings and cannot act without first having to have the consent from the family. It is a heavy burden and obstacle to fully express[ing] oneself.

In sum, Nussbaum's ideas regarding the cultivation of humanity serve as my guideposts in structuring a Western humanities class that engages in critical self-examination, uses narrative imagination, and seeks to obtain a global perspective. With these guideposts in place, given that many Asian ESL students may have less than ideal Western cultural frames of reference, I have discovered that the following strategies help expedite the scaffolding process. I focus on the main values and institutions of the period and use visual aids and narrative forms when possible. I find engaging in kinesthetic activities adds an existential dimension to a topic or convention. In appropriate situations, I compare the institutions and practices of the period studied with analogous ones from students' backgrounds. As a class we examine the interconnections of significant values with key institutions in order to clarify the period and engage in critical thinking. Finally, my students critique the values of a particular Western period with respect to their own values, so that the process is truly interactive.

In his article, "Action Research for Second Language Teachers: Going Beyond Teacher Research," Crookes (1993) cites the definition of action research given by Cohen and Manion: "small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention" (p. 131). It is my hope that examining the cultural institutions of the West from a critical standpoint provides one such small-scale intervention. If "together we are gonna live," I believe such action research is essential. Students from different cultures require special considerations from instructors, who in turn can use them as valuable resources.

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