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America at War Again: Issues of Ethnicity and Unity

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When it came to any war, Robert Frost was single-minded. Writing in 1943 about the war against Germany, Frost asserted that ". . . most people believe in *this* war whereas I believe in *any and all* wars. I mean I sympathize with all the brave people who go out to die for causes" (letter to John Bartlett, *RF* III.102, emphasis added).[1]

Ever since World War II, however, Americans have seen how wars and warfare have changed; and accordingly ideas and practices of "patriotism," American nationalism, bravery, and the act of dying for a cause have changed or at least have been reexamined. The reexaminations involve moral issues stirred by decisions, indecisions, and actions of the United States in the atomic bombings of Japan, the Korean Conflict, the Cold War, the war in Vietnam (which called into question earlier historical conflicts, such as the United States war in the Philippines in 1898 and afterward), and certainly the American loss of the conflict in Vietnam, a debacle in Mogadishu, and the complexities of Kosovo. But other recent instances of warmaking by the United States have been met by not only further antiwar protests but also a return to a patriotism that looks like Robert Frost's and that has been boosted by the incursions into Panama, Granada, the Gulf War of 1991, the war in Afghanistan, and the second war on Iraq, all perceived as victories to patriots who want

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to "put Vietnam behind us."[2] Of course the terrorist attack on the United States on 11 September 2001 hugely affected Americans' attitudes toward patriotism and military power, however diverse these attitudes may be. While possibly I am entirely alone in invoking Frost on the topic of war in the present case, I thought of him last November and December when I was devising a topic for today. I thought of Frost as offering a point of reference for discussing attitudes among Americans toward war in our time. And while it may occur to you that Frost in many other instances, in his poetry, is complex, ironical, and artfully ambiguous, I want to comment on how even Frost's ambiguity is used in reductive ways to epitomize so-called American values that support our going to war.

My prime example for a poem in which Frost writes about war, during wartime, and implying his belief "in any and all wars," ought to be memorable to any American over the age of fifty or fifty-five. The poem is best remembered by its contexts; it is called "The Gift Outright"[3]:

THE GIFT OUTRIGHT

The land was ours before we were the land's.
She was our land more than a hundred years
Before we were her people. She was ours
In Massachusetts, in Virginia,
But we were England's, still colonials,
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by,
Possessed by what we now no more possessed.
Something we were withholding made us weak
Until we found out that it was ourselves
We were withholding from our land of living,
And forthwith found salvation in surrender.
Such as we were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)
To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become.
[1936] 1942

I was mistaken in saying that Frost wrote this poem during wartime. His biographer Lawrance Thompson reports rather sharply that Frost gave copies of "The Gift Outright" to the Jones Library of the town of Amherst, Massachusetts and to Thompson himself in 1936 (*RF* III. 390). Thompson reports, too, that on 5 December 1941 Frost read the poem

publicly, for perhaps the first time, at an appearance at the College of William and Mary in Virginia (*RF* III.83–84)—doing so because he names Virginia in the poem. Two days later the United States entered or was drawn into World War II because of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and, Frost complained, by the inability of the British to wage their war against Germany without the help of Americans. Frost went on to publish "The Gift Outright" in his next collection, *A Witness Tree*, in 1942.

One of the poem's unusual features—unusual for Frost, that is—is that it is a historical poem (only one earlier poem, "La Noche Triste," Frost's very first poem occurs in this category, according to Thompson [*RF* III.84]).[4] Its most obvious feature, however, was evidently not obvious at all to most Americans or to Frost in 1942. In "The Gift Outright," who are "we"? "We" are Anglo Americans, those whose history goes back to when their forebears were British colonials in what became the Republic of the United States of America. "We" are so exclusively defined a group, in Frost's poem, that even the land itself, the land that "was ours before we were the land's," has no American identity until that group goes on to create a history on and of "The land vaguely realizing westward, / But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced." In his idea of history, Frost is both quite right and quite wrong. He is right in that the British colonials did not consider or call themselves "American" until the mid-eighteenth century (see "American" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*). They had not given themselves to the land, as they did not until then give themselves the name of the land, "Americans." But earlier, "American" did acknowledge the presence, life, and stories of the indigenous peoples, for the term earlier referred to the plants, animals, and natives by the name, "American." "We" further excludes whatever diversity of nationality and origin there was among those who fought against the British in the Revolution: people of French, Spanish, and Dutch origin, for instance; and people of American Indian nations; African Americans; and how could Frost even have conceived of Filipinos fighting, as they were, on the side of the Revolution down around Louisiana?

I have two illustrations of how exclusionary the "we" is in Frost's poem. First, in the early days of the Republic American Indian leaders, far from being ignored as part of America, were sometimes portrayed in a central place among the founders of the nation. John Trumbull, a prominent artist of the new American Republic in the late-18th century, painted composite portraits of American leaders with Native Americans placed

in the center. In one such portrait, " 'The Young Sachem' (A Chief of the Six Nations)" is centered, surrounded by images of a sculptor and three Senators. In another, " 'Good Peter' (Chief of the Oneida Indians)" is ringed by four Anglo dignitaries, one of them the artist himself. It is interesting that the Native American subjects are at once centered and surrounded. Second, in a 1994 cartoon the artist Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie portrays the American pop culture figures the masked Lone Ranger and his American Indian sidekick Tonto. They are surrounded by Indians about to attack. The Lone Ranger says, "TRAPPED! Wild Indians everywhere. What are we going to do?" Smiling at his own thoughts, Tonto thinks, " 'WE?!' "[5]

I nonetheless agree with William Pritchard that this poem is "fine" in its sounds, meters, style, and relations between style and sense.[6] I do not know why, but Pritchard calls "The Gift Outright" a "fine sonnet" (Pritchard 239). The poem is sixteen lines long and not fourteen, the usual (though not exclusively so) length of a sonnet. Something about "The Gift Outright" impresses the reader with a sense of artistic (and political) unity, which the poem is about. It is a poem fit for wartime, 1942.

When I said earlier that Frost's "The Gift Outright" is perhaps best remembered by its contexts, I think of what I saw on television in 1961. It must have been a week after the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy, a week after 20 January 1961—because in those days it took a week for news already broadcast in North America to reach Hawai'i in whatever format television "news," by now old, was sent to the middle of the Pacific. I saw a bright winter light bathing the people on the great inaugural platform: John F. Kennedy, Jacqueline Kennedy, Earl Warren, Lyndon Johnson, and others stood tall and squinting. I remember that at some point Robert Frost stepped forward and read a poem. I was impressed because I felt or was told that it was unusual—and unusually classy—for a president to invite a poet to speak at the inauguration. I thought for years afterward that this meant that Frost was our American Poet Laureate (only now I learn that he was proclaimed the Poet Laureate not of the United States but of the small state of Vermont, nothing more, because he had a residence there). This was a sort of glory that seemed promised by the new President, the First Lady, and their charisma.

I do not remember what others then saw and heard and what Frost experienced, almost in panic. Accounts that I now study tell how the winter light glaring off the snow blinded Frost. He had had to have his poem,

written especially for the inauguration, typed in an extra large font. But even thus prepared, he could not see the words clearly, and he could not recite the poem from memory because it was newly composed, a rather effulgent and stately poem, uncharacteristic of Frost, in which he proclaimed the arrival of a new "Augustan" age for America (Pritchard 253–55; *RF* III. 277–83). Frost said aloud that the sunlight was blinding him. Lyndon Johnson got up, took off his top hat, and used it to shade Frost's page to make it easier for Frost to see. When Johnson's effort failed, Frost tried to grab the hat and help Johnson. Remembering that event, a colleague told me that Frost "very nearly lost it." And then Frost began to recite "The Gift Outright" from memory. And when he came to the last line of the poem, he paused to announce that he would revise a word, for this occasion, so that it would read, not about what the nation "would become," but what "she *will* become" (*RF* III.282).

Being fifteen years old and unable to think that anything could go wrong in such a presidential setting, I thought that Frost's recital of "The Gift Outright" was his intention all along. I would not remember that he had faltered. Later, I would think that after all, one of the themes of the poem, the giving of "our" blood in order to give ourselves to the land, our nation, was paralleled by President Kennedy's stunning and rousing exhortation in his inaugural speech that day, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." I would still later think of how "The Gift Outright" was repeated in a wartime context of 1961: it was now the Cold War, against an "-ism," an ideology and a system that threatened to "bury" us.

Despite his near collapse, Frost triumphed at the inauguration of John F. Kennedy by virtue of his unplanned but commanding recital of "The Gift Outright." In September 1962 Frost went on to pay a visit to Premier Nikita Khruschev at the Soviet leader's summer house (Pritchard 255–56). Adhering to his philosophy about war—"I sympathize with all the brave people who go out to die for causes," and war to Frost was like a fight between two boys, except bigger—he reportedly told Khruschev that the United States and the Soviet Union should see their conflict as a "rivalry" that strengthens both sides. When he returned to the United States Frost was prepared to tell President Kennedy about how he had advised Khruschev. To his disappointment, Frost was not invited to meet with the President again.

"The Gift Outright" I think is unusual for Frost in being as straightforward as it is in its expression of what it means to "belong" to the

nation, the United States of America.[7] In most of his poetry, Frost is not straightforward about anything. It is strange, however, that he evidently is taken as a poet who speaks directly. With one of Frost's most famous poems, I want to demonstrate how a deeply ambiguous poem is popularly interpreted as a simple and therefore admired one when taken as a metaphor or a simple allegory for a decision to go to war. The poem is "The Road Not Taken":

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
[1915] 1916

"The Road Not Taken" may be the most quoted poem of America. But it is not an actual line from the poem that is quoted; rather it is a paraphrase of the penultimate line. The expression, "The Road Less Traveled," is ubiquitous. It can be found in advertisements for banks, schools, cigarettes, cars and trucks, soft drinks, vacation travel packages, suntan lotion, whatever. The expression signifies the making of an individualized, self-confident choice that shows one's boldness about going against a crowd of conformists. It epitomizes American individualism. I would say that the expression, "The Road Less Traveled," occurs in

the graduation ceremonies of more than half of the high schools in the United States every June. Yet the very words, "The Road Less Traveled," do not exactly occur in the poem. Moreover, the title of the poem is not "The Road Less Traveled" but the other road: not the road "I" took but "The Road *Not* Taken."

How is this so?

Before I address this question, I want to connect this poem to America's warmaking today. On 22 December 2002, Tim Russert, the host of NBC TV's Sunday morning program, *Meet the Press*, showed a clip from the *Meet the Press* broadcast of 25 December 1955. The host in 1955 asked Robert Frost whether there was anything in Frost's life that he would change. In response, Frost recited "The Road Not Taken." He had explained that "a man" would lack "complete understanding" if "he lacked poetry in his life." Then Frost recited his famous poem about making decisions, "The Road Not Taken." As soon as Frost's 1955 recital of his poem ended, the 2002 program cut to the present. Tim Russert immediately went on to speak of "The Road Less Traveled"—please note again that this is neither the title of Frost's poem nor a phrase in the poem—and Russert proceeded to comment on how since 9/11 the United States has traveled that "less traveled road" of freedom, values, and valor. I felt when I watched this that Russert was blundering into an incomplete understanding that arises, Frost cautioned, when a man "lacked poetry in his life."

For what does Frost's poem say? Most of the poem is an account of how two roads lay there equally unused, equally untrodden. The speaker faces a choice between two equal alternatives. Line after line, the speaker of the poem states his or her quandary. In one of his novels, John Barth echoes Frost: how do you choose between equally reasonable alternatives? He proposes a method for choosing: choose from left to right, like reading or writing English, so that the alternative on the left wins; or choose from top to bottom, so that the uppermost wins; or, if not spatially, then temporally, choose by chronological order, so that the earlier occurring alternative wins. Just choose. When it is finally, paradoxically, an arbitrary choice, then take the leap of faith and pick one. In popular Japanese culture, or in Japanese American culture because this film is so powerfully significant to some of us Nikkei, at the beginning of Akira Kurosawa's film *Yojimbo* the protagonist played by Toshiro Mifune and who calls himself Kuwabatake Sanjuro in this episode comes to a fork in the road. To choose which divergent road to take, he throws a stick

high into the air then follows the road that the stick points toward when it falls on the ground. This is the existential, *jitsuzon-teki*, act of choosing that I came to feel and admire that Frost's poem also was about. I wonder if Kurosawa was deliberately alluding to Frost. Pritchard comments that the last stanza of the poem is not about the speaker's psyche at the time of making the decision but a projection into the future, with the speaker imagining how it will seem one day "ages and ages hence" that he had chosen "the one less traveled by" (Pritchard 127). My teacher of modern poetry in graduate school, Professor Roger Sale, a colleague of Pritchard and of Robert Frost, went on to question, what "difference" has the choice made? Why should we assume that it was a good difference? The line could be an expression of regret, told "with a sigh."

In the reductive, unambiguous reading that Tim Russert of NBC's *Meet the Press* was presenting and that, I assert, participants in more than half the high school graduation ceremonies in the United States perform every year, the "difference" that the choice has made is a great and noble one. This reading misses the ambivalence, the poignancy, perhaps the remorse, of the reflections one increasingly has on life when one is fortunate to live long enough. And there is a further complication to this poem. Frost's biographer Thompson devotes pages to recounting how Frost wrote the poem as a parody of a Welsh friend of his named Edward Thomas (*RF* II.88–89). Thomas was habitually indecisive. Frost hated this characteristic. So the poem Frost wrote was not even meant in the first place to be an expression of Frost's own character. It was a parody of a self-doubting Thomas.

So very much has been written about Frost and this poem that here I have presented only what I am thinking at this time and cannot myself claim to be comprehensive. Indeed I may be in a tiny minority of readers of Frost's wonderful poem. In my three decades of teaching, I have met only one student who could tell me that her teacher read Frost's poem in a way similar to what I have presented here and what my sources and teachers (for example Pritchard and Sale) have shown me. By comparison, I have known many more students who have argued against me by saying that the poem is about American individualism and that the usual, unambiguous way or reading Frost's poem is perfectly valid, because in the first place any interpretation of a poem is individual and as true as any other interpretation. I really have to ask them, and I do: do you want me to read and interpret your paper that way, in any individualistic way I want?

The continual misappropriation and, I must say, misunderstanding of Frost's and one of the most famous poems in twentieth-century American literature reminds me of how in 1972 Richard Nixon's presidential campaign slogan was, "Now More Than Ever." Could not any adviser warn Nixon that this phrase appears in John Keats's poem, "Ode to a Nightingale," where the line reads in full, "Now more than ever *seems it rich to die*" (emphasis added)?

How ironical it is, then, that in making war this year the United States had to try to fashion an image of a united nation and war effort, when many peoples of the United States have had histories and experiences that fracture the old and attempted constructs of unity. Take Frost's "The Gift Outright," for example. In November and December of 2002 I offered a course at the Blaine Memorial United Methodist Church of Seattle (a church founded by and for Issei, Blaine will be a century old in 2004). Our class met every Sunday for eight weeks, in a course called "Two Nisei Writers of Seattle: Monica Sone and John Okada." Sometimes as many as forty-five attended a session. Busy Sansei participants came and went, chasing after their children, but about twenty-five Nisei attended class regularly for eight weeks. They were contemporaries and friends, even relatives, of the two authors we studied.

As important as Sone and Okada are in Nikkei literature, such a course had never been run before. It was as if members of the class were characters in the two books studied, in Seattle where the narratives are set. Near the end of our course, I presented Frost's "The Gift Outright" for discussion. Bob Sato, a participant in the course, is a veteran of World War II and the all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team in Europe. Mr. Sato is a former Commander of the Nisei Veterans' Committee and a national activist for Nikkei concerns. I used to expect him to be narrowly patriotic and against any critique or protest of America at war. But when we discussed "The Gift Outright," he openly stated that he thought that "that guy" Frost epitomized in the poem the very thing that Bob Sato, a Japanese American, fought against in World War II—against a definition of America as exclusively "Anglo." There is meanwhile no doubt that Bob Sato is patriotic and that he gave himself to America in his service in the war. He has been battling since then to have his gift accepted. For five decades he has stood up to fellow Americans, veterans in the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, who still do not accept Nisei veterans as fellow comrades in arms. Sato is a critic of America's prejudices and discrimination against Arab Americans and

people mistaken for belonging in that group. Mr. Sato is campaigning to educate others to understand how the internment of Japanese Americans and, profoundly related to it, the persecution of so-called "Arabs" in America are setbacks in America's own unfinished path of democracy: they are injustices against democracy and the Constitution, he says.

To Bob Sato and myself, and to many Nisei in our Sunday class, the United States government's pronouncements and postures regarding freedom, democracy, and national unity in support of the war seem as ironically shattered with contradictions and hypocrisies as their internment in World War II was. And this is why, I feel, the war against Iraq turns our stomachs. It is not a "just war," and perhaps knowing that, as Huck Finn puts it, "You can't pray a lie," President George W. Bush does not invoke the Biblical concept of a "just war," as his father did in 1991, to label and justify the Iraq War of that he began in 2003. The self-righteous claims of our country about bringing freedom and democracy to the people of Iraq—that is, of "liberating" them—are very close to the terms that leaders such as President William McKinley used in 1898 to take over the Kingdom of Hawai'i, professedly to free a savage people from a savage monarchy and put an end to alleged tyrannical abuses. In regard to such self-righteousness, nothing much has changed compared to 1961 when Frost recited "The Gift Outright" in a panic, to 1942 when Frost first published the poem, and earlier to1936 when he read and wrote it, to 1898 when the United States imperialized Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, Guam, Cuba, and the Philippines, to the nineteenth century when Manifest Destiny was America's destiny, and back to the European conquest and colonization of the American continents. Nothing much has changed when it comes to self-righteousness.[8] Although nowadays in American Studies we distance ourselves from assuming an "American exceptionalism," I wonder if the self-righteousness of making war may still be an American specialty because of American claims about dispensing gifts of liberation and democracy.

In its war against Iraq, the United States has employed many means to appear to transcend conflicts and tensions between American diversity and American unity in the broader interests of marshalling an America united in warmaking. The television news coverage alone, of American soldiers at war, by making visible the skin color of soldiers and by the identification of surnames, displayed the racial diversity of the military and the American nation. Men and women of different races were seen to be literally in uniform. Like the Native American men who were once

soldiers in World War II, in Leslie Silko's novel, *Ceremony*, the uniform made them seem like all other American soldiers, not just Indians. In much the same way, but less explicitly and obviously, Jay Gatsby in Fitzgerald's novel obscured his ethnic identity by wearing the uniform of an American soldier in World War I and by changing his name from James Gatz to Jay Gatsby, when his ethnicity, German American, was not a very good one to wear back home in the United States. The uniform of an American soldier enabled him to assimilate, to become "uniform." In the war in Iraq, thus, American soldiers, men and women, appeared on television as both diverse and uniform, in uniform, at the same time. At the height of combat, a male African American officer delivered the daily press briefings at the headquarters in Qatar; a Navajo woman soldier was killed and to some degree made a hero in a battle when her unit strayed off course and encountered Iraqi paramilitary fighters; in the same battle, a white woman was captured after fighting valiantly and was rescued in a commando raid nine days later; a male Chinese American soldier was ordered to climb up the new statue of Saddam Hussein in the center of Baghdad to cover the face of it with an American flag, an ill-conceived but entirely deliberate act of Americans momentarily possessing and not liberating Iraq; and white male officers were everywhere. The display of American diversity was unprecedented, in this war.

Many of us live in concern that the unity in diversity that our country is displaying, through the American media, in the war on Iraq, hides something.

The special quality of unity and diversity in the American military obscures certain imbalances. For instance, sixteen percent of the American war dead have been Latinos, almost all of them immigrants. Behind this statistic are questions: why such a high percentage and why should immigrants be playing such a costly role? Some of these casualties are not citizens of the United States. Joining the all-volunteer armies of the United States offers some upward mobility to people who are near the bottom of legal status, rights, and opportunities. Latinos have thus enrolled disproportionately in the military. Why are they especially prone to becoming casualties? As happened to Nisei soldiers in Europe in WWII, the casualty rate of Latinos may be high because they are the footsoldiers and the ones ordered to enter some of the worst battles. The military has appeared diverse; but it seems now that some groups have had a better or worse chance of being targeted.

In America today, the USA PATRIOT Act gives us plenty to worry about.[9] According to the Act, section (412), anyone suspected of terrorist plotting or activity may be detained indefinitely, without a duly processed arrest, without charges, without trial, without conviction, in short without due process of law. This is so close to what happened in the detainment and incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II that although the PATRIOT Act is worded as if it targets individuals, it reminds us of the targeting of entire groups by race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, and "creed." The PATRIOT Act is now in force. Under it, how can we even know who and how many are at present being "detained"? When 20,000 people protested the threatened war in the mass march in Seattle on 15 February 2003, those who rallied at the Immigration and Naturalization Service at the end of the march reported that they had caught glimpses of people behind the bars of the windows of the basement of the building. The people were waving to draw attention. They seemed to be detained there, locked up. Who are they? They may not be isolated cases. Through the year we have heard in Seattle and from other places about people taken from their homes into prisons under sheer suspicion, not for acts committed. In Seattle, the Hamoui family suffered horrendous treatment. The mother in the family was violently arrested, imprisoned for months, and denied adequate medical care. The family has reason to believe that Arab Americans as a group are targeted. While we see a display of American diversity on the battlefield, a concentrated discrimination may be occurring, at home, in America, in an obscene way—that is, off-scene and hidden from view—a discrimination that highlights difference and crushes it.

I prepare to go to press with this paper nine months after I delivered it in a speech for the Japanese Association for American Studies. Today, in February 2004, America's war in Iraq still goes on in spite of Bush's declaration on 1 May 2003 that major combat had ended and despite Bush's premature implication in saying this that the war was over. This paper began as a rather tidy one in my mind, when I proposed it in December 2002, because I felt I already knew what I wanted to say about Frost and war and his two poems. Subsequently the war began and has continued. My subject, America at war, is continually changing. My thoughts about war also grew in unexpected directions; I was aware of this when visiting the Heiwa no Ishi Ji, the Peace Memorial of Okinawa, in early June 2003. The already abundant information became entirely without bounds and unruly, like the moral, emotional, and psychic uncer-

tainties that some and perhaps many of us have been experiencing in the United States. It is no surprise that voters are now watching and analyzing the election campaigns of 2004 for clarity and deliberate choices.

NOTES

This paper was given at the Annual Meeting of the Japan Association for American Studies, Kobe University, 31 May to 1 June 2003.

[1] Lawrance Thompson and R. H. Winnick, *Robert Frost: The Later Years 1938–1963* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976). Cited hereafter in my paper as *RF* III, this is the third of three volumes in Thompson's literary biography of Frost. My parenthetical citations of *RF* II refer to the second volume, *Robert Frost: The Years of Triumph 1915–1938* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970). I do not cite the first volume, *The Early Years*. The first and second volumes are by Thompson alone.

[2] See Chris Hedges, *War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2002). A foreign correspondent for the *New York Times*, Hedges has covered wars in Bosnia, El Salvador, Israel, the Persian Gulf, and Afghanistan. In a peculiar sense, he has experienced more war than have soldiers, leaders, and peoples of any single nation at war. His interest in *War Is a Force* is in studying how war intoxicates warmakers.

[3] The texts of poems by Frost that I quote in this paper are from the *Complete Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

[4] In *Meet the Press* on NBC TV, 25 December 1955, Frost recited "The Gift Outright" and remarked that this was his poem of most direct comment on America. Footage of this recital and commentary by Frost was shown on *Meet the Press* on 28 December 2003.

[5] For Trumbull's portraiture of The Young Sachem and Good Peter, see Theodore Sizer, *The Works of Colonel John Trumbull: Artist of the American Revolution*, revised edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), figures 110 and 113. I have only photocopies of Tsinhnahjinnie's cartoon and have been unable to reach her for further identification of the source beyond the note alongside the cartoon that it is from "Living the Spirit." Thanks to Teresa Brownwolf Powers for her help in trying to contact the artist.

[6] William H. Pritchard, *Frost: A Literary Life Reconsidered*, second edition, with a new Preface (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993). Pritchard, a fine and sensitive reader of poetry, "reconsiders" Frost's poetry and life; he also is "reconsidering" the "literary life" of Frost that Thompson wrote.

[7] It can be said that "The Gift Outright" is about "violence and belonging," the theme of the annual meeting of the American Studies Association for 2003, in Hartford, Connecticut.

[8] On 23 April 2003 a "Day of Reflection" was held at the University of Washington in Seattle, an afternoon devoted to numerous sessions and activities in dialogue and commentary on the war on Iraq. I attended a session on "The Bible and War: The Defense of Territory in American Christianity," by a scholar of Comparative Religion, James Wellman, who spoke about Evangelical Christianity in the United States and how the many groups in this category constitute a political force, based on their beliefs, and generally lend support to ways that George W. Bush sees the world and acts within it. In Wellman's analysis, righteousness is an element in Evangelical and Bush's character. While the Day of Reflection was meant to invite participants of different political positions, those against the war were the heavy majority of the people who proposed sessions.

[9] USA PATRIOT, the name of the Act, is an acronym for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism." The Act guides the work of the new Department of Homeland Security. I thank my student in our Senior Thesis course, Dion Wigfall, for his research on Homeland Security and the PATRIOT Act.