MM: Professor Jordan, could we start out by learning something about your background, where you were born, where you grew up.

EJ: Surely, I was one of the few born in New York City.

MM: I thought I detected an accent I was familiar with.

EJ: And grew up there. I also have very close ties with Martha's Vineyard. I started going there, as I say, six months before I was born, and spent every summer of my life there, so it was New York and Martha's Vineyard.

MM: When you say New York, you mean Manhattan?

EJ: Yes. And then I went to Bryn Mawr. Well, from high school on I was very interested in languages.

MM: Were you a high school student in New York City?

EJ: Yes. Well, I went to school in Brooklyn, Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn. Then my first year at Bryn Mawr I remember my curriculum was English, Latin, French, German. Those were my four subjects and it looked a bit specialized. So sophomore year I took some math and then I was pulled very much in that direction and I had to make the decision whether to major in math or Latin and finally chose Latin.

MM: Did this interest in language have anything to do with your family background or the interests of your parents?

EJ: No, I have no idea where it came from, but I was very interested. But I was interested from the beginning in language and language analysis and when I went
to Bryn Mawr I fully expected to be a French major and after my first hour of French went straight to the Dean's Office to change my major because the whole hour had been spent, it was a lecture in French on 17th century poets. And I explained frantically to the Dean that this was not what I had had in mind. At that point, of course, you could not major in linguistics. There was just nothing like that in the undergraduate college anywhere. She was a very wise woman and she said, "What you want is this new field, but you can't get it till graduate school." So there I was, second-day freshman, she had my whole life planned out. She said, "You will go through Bryn Mawr, you'll major in Latin. You will take graduate courses in your senior year at Penn where you can get an Introduction to Linguistics, and then you will go to Yale." And so that's what I did.

MM: So you started Bryn Mawr in about 1938/39?

EJ: 1938.

MM: 1938. Of course I am wondering how you eventually arrived at this decision to take up Japanese. So while you were a college student the war with Japan broke out. Is that right?

EJ: Yes, in my senior year, but I still thought—I wasn't thinking of Japanese at all.

MM: So you had absolutely no Asia or Japan or China interest or consciousness prior to the war?

EJ: Nothing, no background. I didn't have a Japanese friend or anything in that area. I went to Yale and took my master's in Latin and Greek, but with the specialization in classical linguistics. And then the decision had to be made whether I would major in classic, specializing in linguistics, or major in linguistics specializing in classics. And the very funny conversation I had with my advisor went like this: "If you're going to proceed on the basis of
what you love to do, major in linguistics. If you're going to proceed with the idea of making a living, major in classics." This was a while back and I said that I was going to make a living but I also wanted to do what I loved, and therefore I would stay with linguistics and take my chances.

Then Verner Bloch arrived at Yale. He came from Brown, and he had been analyzing Japanese at Brown on a part-time basis with Linconna McKinnon as his informant. She was a young woman who had been born in Japan. Her father was American, her mother was Japanese, and she had been at college in the States. She was at Radcliffe. So he was using her as his informant and proceeding to analyze Japanese from scratch, a whole new linguistic analysis of the language.

MM: May I ask you about Bloch's background? Had he become interested in Japanese because of the war or did he have any prior interest in Japan?

EJ: No, I'm sure this was a war-connected interest. He was a fantastic phonetician and he had worked on the Linguistic Atlas of the United States, had done a lot of interviewing on that, and I think was a genius. He was an incredible man, absolutely incredible. So Yale was bringing him down to proceed with this analysis and set up this very important new program in Japanese.

MM: And what was that program designated?

EJ: Well, one of the biggest ASTP, Army Specialized Training Program, groups was being sent to Yale. And then in addition there was this—I don't exactly how this was set up in terms of Washington, but all sorts of languages were being analyzed and textbooks were to be written. This was the Spoken Language Series and Yale was asked to do the Japanese.

MM: An ASTP, Army Specialized Training Program, was that for enlisted men or for officers or for both?

EJ: For enlisted men.
MM: Enlisted men?

EJ: Yes, and it was a very selective program. They were giving intelligence tests, IQ tests and so on, and they had a much higher cutoff than the officers' training courses. And this was a very spectacular group of young men that came in. They were very, very talented. There were a few that weren't, but most of them were pretty impressive.

MM: And then somehow Bloch got your name and the two of you started working together?

EJ: What happened was because I had decided definitely on linguistics, it was suggested that I go to a linguistic institute. They have these every summer. So I went out to the University of Wisconsin and took a teaching methodology course on Thai, used the Thai language. That was my first exposure to an Asian language and I was absolutely fascinated. At the end of the summer, I was asked by Milton Cowan, who was in Washington at that time, a linguist who was very much involved in all these projects. He asked me if I'd be willing to go to California to work with the Thai professor because they were going to do the Thai text, and I thought this would be marvelous. So I went happily back to Martha's Vineyard and waited for my cable. And when it came it said, "We do want you but the Thai project is off. Instead of California, will you go back to Yale, and instead of Thai, would you mind doing Japanese?" Fine, great. So I went back but I told Bloch, as I mentioned last night, that it was to be temporary. I mean, I was going to go back to Sanskrit. And as a matter of fact at the beginning I was still part-time with the Sanskrit and other things in methodology courses at Yale.

MM: Now this was 1943, is that right, when you got the cable saying, "Go to Yale."

EJ: Yes, that's right.

MM: And at what stage was Bloch in his work then at Yale?
EJ: Well, we started right away with this program and we had 242 people in that one group, and the lectures were held in the University Theatre.

MM: Were these all men or were there some women also in the program?

EJ: No, all men, and a marvelous cross section of America. I still remember part of the roster when Bloch used to read these names of Bialstock, Bianko, Blahunka, Blagosh. You just didn't know what all the ethnic backgrounds were represented, and these men had been selected on the basis of, as I say, very high IQ, very high scores in the intelligence tests, plus language background. But Whitney Griswold, who later became president of Yale, was involved in this program at Yale, and he stood up one day and said to the group of men, "Now you came here for Spanish. We have some news for you. It's not Spanish, it's Japanese." Or some were told, "It's Burmese" and so on. And they were all absolutely staggered. They had no more background than I did, and we were all in this together.

MM: Did Bloch bring Linconna McKinnon with him to Yale at this time?

EJ: Yes. So she was there and she became one of the chief instructors. And then we brought in this large group of native speakers of Japanese, and of course it was extremely difficult to get people like this at that time because so many of them had been put in the camps. So we were able to get people from the East Coast and then some were actually released from the camps for the purpose of working in programs like this. But this was a group of Japanese that represented every possible kind of background. We had some who were extremely influential Japanese who were well known in not only the Japanese community but the American community in that area. And then we had young people who had been students, everyone imaginable. We had to train them to teach and produce the materials at the same time.
MM: Were you involved in training them to teach?

EJ: Yes. And so I started, my first exposure to Japanese was visiting classes from morning till night, watching what the instructors were doing, reporting back to Bloch, discussing what they were doing, what they should be doing, out again the next day. So my exposure was almost like a baby's exposure in that I wasn't saying, well, I wasn't even gurgling. But I was just listening, listening, listening, to all these different accents and--

MM: And learning some Japanese yourself?

EJ: And learning some Japanese incidentally, yes.

MM: And Bloch was continuing his analysis?

EJ: He was continuing with his material and his analysis, and then he gave these marvelous, marvelous lectures to these students. He was an incredible lecturer and could just keep an audience spellbound even on grammar.

MM: And somehow lessons were being turned out?

EJ: That's right. Lessons were being churned out, mimeographed lessons. Then the book was sort of in back of the lessons, coming along slowly but surely.

MM: And this is what became the famous Bloch-Jordan Army Manual?

EJ: That's right, yes. So that eventually then came out as the manual.

MM: But you were developing pattern sentences and things like that, too?

EJ: That's right.

MM: In 1943 and 1944?

EJ: That's right, and still analyzing the language, still figuring out how things operated and how they worked and so on.

MM: And you stayed at Yale for the duration of the war and after?

EJ: No, I did some traveling around because in the meantime I married. So part of the manual was being written elsewhere and I would mail back chapters and so on.
MM: Now where else was this being done?

EJ: For a while I was at Michigan living in an apartment there and then for a while Texas.

MM: Oh, there was a program in Texas?

EJ: No, there was no program. I was just following my husband.

MM: Oh, I see.

EJ: And then eventually we both went back to Yale and they were still having programs at that point. And then we were both teaching in the program. We each had a section of the ASTP, both teaching. And then there was a CATS \Civil Affairs Training School/. They were officers.

MM: You made the comment that the enlisted men in ASTP were very good. Do you have any generalizations to make about the officers?

EJ: The CATS people, of course, tended to be older and their training program was much shorter. The war wasn't over yet but it was closer to a conclusion. There was a very different atmosphere with them, and some of the very high-ranking officers were afraid. This kind of thing can be very threatening when you have such a clear hierarchy. The ASTP people were all enlisted men who had been--they were brought in because of the war, they had no illusions of, you know, long-term Army commitment. Most of them did become officers. If they stayed with the program, they went on to Military Intelligence schools.

MM: How much Japanese were these men expected really to be able to master and for what purpose in the ASTP program?

EJ: Well, after the ASTP, many of them, the ones that were doing well, went on to Michigan for advanced training and then they went to Fort Snelling for the very senior kind of intelligence, and they were meant to be extremely good.
MM: And was that for interrogation or also for reading documents?

EJ: A lot of interrogation. They were very much involved in that.

MM: Was there more emphasis on the spoken rather than written?

EJ: But they read, too. Now I didn't know too much about the Snelling project except that it came later. We did know that.

MM: But what you did at Yale? Was that primarily spoken?

EJ: Yes.

MM: The introductory and spoken Japanese? And then at Michigan they did some more advanced spoken and maybe some kanji and kana?

EJ: Yes, they did a lot of reading at Michigan, too, a lot of reading there. And then on for the very specialized vocabulary and so on. But the Snelling school was strictly an intelligence school and there was not that much talk about exactly what went on there.

MM: Do you have any, you or Bloch or anyone else involved in the program back in 1943/1944, have any theories about when kana should be introduced or kanji should be introduced?

EJ: Well, there was a very strong feeling that reading, after all, is coping with written symbols for something you know and that if you start at the beginning with written symbols, you're asking a foreigner to do something that no Japanese would ever do. No Japanese has ever learned to read before he's learned to speak. And that if you do start with reading, it's possible of course that you produce decoders because if you look at symbols, you've got to have them stand for something. And if you don't have anything in the foreign language that's meaningful to you, you'll simply transfer to English. So you look at the symbol and you move to English right away, and I don't think this produces the most meaningful kind of reading. So we did work with the written language, but we were always
introducing it in back of the spoken. And I still firmly believe in this.

MM: Were these enlisted men also being asked to learn a little bit about Japanese history, culture, society, or was this strictly a language program?

No.

EJ: Yes. They had area backup programs.

MM: And the CATS training, how did that differ in substance from what the enlisted men received?

EJ: It was pretty much the same kind of thing, but it was a shorter course. But it was similar.

MM: Since these men were not going on into intelligence work, but rather going into civil affairs duties in Japan?

EJ: Yes, but again they were not studying the language long enough so that we could really zero in on any specialized vocabulary. We were happy if we could get them through the most basic kind of language.

MM: Now the next question has to do with how you ultimately arrived in Japan, the next stages in your career. The war ends, the CATS and the ASTP ends at Yale. What then did you do at Yale? What kinds of programs were developed?

EJ: There was a regular civilian program that was developed and I was teaching in that.

MM: Was that an area studies program?

EJ: No, language.

MM: A language program?

EJ: Then I was also continuing my graduate work. In fact, I was alternating. I would go back to a full year of just study and then I would teach. This didn't go on all that long. I was ready then to do my dissertation.

MM: Still temporarily involved?

EJ: Still temporarily involved because I had said that I would finish before I went back. I was very anxious to get to Japan to write the dissertation. And in the
meantime my husband had gone to journalism school at Columbia and was awarded at graduation a traveling fellowship, and of course he wanted to go to Japan. So with the fellowship and the Associated Press was very interested, and so they took him on with the idea that he would work half time for AP and use his fellowship money half time. So he went over to Japan and then I tried to get in with my fellowship from Yale to do research for my dissertation.

MM: Now this was approximately when?

EJ: This was 1947, 1948, and I had everybody working on this, the Senior Senator from Connecticut who was so helpful and tried to do everything. And I was very angry at that point because anyone who called himself a missionary in any shape or form was able to get into Japan. And I felt that we needed something—fine, let them in by all means, but that there ought to be other categories that could get in as well. And it seemed to me that I did have a legitimate reason for being there, the kind of work I was doing required that I really have live data. All the Japanese who were in this country at that time had been here for years and years and we were learning nothing about the Japanese language of that time. But things weren't going very well, and then they suddenly decided that it would be all right for correspondents' wives to enter Japan. And so I was the first one that was allowed to live in the Press Club. As the correspondents pointed out to me, I was the first wife to live in the Press Club, and it was a strange crew that was in that building at that time. It was a very interesting period.

MM: Well, I'm very, very curious now to learn about your initial experiences speaking Japanese to a Japanese who had never either been to the United States or spoken to an American before and your first impressions of Japan itself. How did you get to Japan?
EJ: I went over on a freighter and it was a very long and rough trip. It was not the Pacific at all and it was the wild ocean. It was a small freighter and it was a long trip, 15 days, a small group of passengers. We all got to know each other very well and the captain was intrigued by what I was going over to do and what I had done. And when we approached Yokohama, when the pilot was about due to come on board, he came to my cabin and said that he'd let me up on the bridge if I wanted to talk to this Japanese. This was pretty exciting because, as I said, this was the first Japanese who had never been to the States, never heard a foreigner speak Japanese. And so I went up and I tried talking to him and used all this very technical vocabulary, sort of dictionary vocabulary for a pilot. I mean, all I tried was, "Are you the pilot?" and it was most unfortunate. I didn't excuse myself, I didn't explain what I was about to do. There was no introductory material, it was just straight out of the blue, "Are you the pilot" using this word "mizuzaki anni," which really bowled him over. I think it took him at least 30 seconds to realize that I was talking to him in Japanese, and he was very amused, and then answered that yes, he was the pilot. And I realized then that, not just the kinesics and the sociolinguistics and so on would be different, but a lot of the vocabulary was going to be very different, too.

So then it all started, a matter of transferring from a very much grammar-vocabulary--and translate approach to what do the Japanese say in this situation kind of approach. And the minute I set foot in Japan I wanted to start writing another textbook because I knew that the other just--that the grammatical analysis would hold but not the actual material.

MM: Did Bloch himself ever go to Japan?

EJ: He never, never got to Japan, which is such a crime.

MM: So now this is 1948?
MM: 1949, and you've come into Yokohama, and Japan is now in its fourth year of the occupation and well midway through the occupation period. What were your first impressions of Japan and the Japanese?

EJ: Well, they were extremely cordial, friendly, pleasant. All the room girls at the Press Club were really intrigued. Of course no women had been staying there except Japanese women and they were in my room all the time. They were also intrigued because I had arrived—strange though it was, I did have some kind of Japanese—and the fact that I'd arrived knowing some Japanese was unbelievable to them. They came in with all their problems and all their discussions and everything, so there was lots of practice. The country was still of course in terrible shape. Tokyo was still largely rubble.

MM: This is very interesting what you're saying, "largely rubble" in 1949.

EJ: Yes. I mean, it was beginning to build up but there were whole sections of it where nothing would be standing but, you know, one godown, the storehouse. That persisted through all the bombing, but the houses were just gone. The taxis were marvelous. They ran by charcoal and these wonderful charcoal heaters in the back of the cab, and they would break down in the middle of a big, broad street and there'd be a lineup of 20 cars behind waiting while the driver went out and stoked the fire and got the charcoal lit again.

MM: How did the Japanese look, just seeing them on the streets, relatively decently clad, well fed?

EJ: They were having clothing problems clearly and you had to go away for a while and come back to realize the tremendous progress that was being made in that area. Sometimes now when I go back and see how every one of them looks so well dressed and so neatly dressed, it's hard to remember that period. But they were clearly
having a lot of trouble.

MM: Was there a problem with people begging on the streets, particularly veterans?

EJ: Yes, veterans were on the street. They were always dressed completely in white and they would beg on the street corners. I don't remember that much begging, but there was a great deal of, for example, these room girls, they would do anything for a bar of soap or something from the PX /Post Exchange/. This was always the great thing, you know, "Could you get me something from the PX?" It was very difficult to be in that position where you knew that you were not supposed to do it and yet you wanted to help these people. Obviously a lot of Americans were helping, there's no question.

MM: Now you were there on a fellowship to do dissertation work? What precisely was the topic that you were doing?

EJ: I was working on what ultimately was called The Syntax of Modern Colloquial Japanese, and I worked with a lot of native speakers. They were always very cooperative and very easy to work with, and I was just collecting material from all over.

MM: So you were mainly interacting with the Japanese and not so much with Americans who were the occupiers?

EJ: Except in living in the Press Club, of course I ate my meals there and everyone else who was eating there was American or foreign anyway. They were not Japanese. In that period was when the American Club was first started. No Japanese were allowed in at all. This was not true at the Press Club, but at the American Club you couldn't even take a Japanese guest. Then Japanese guests were permitted. Now Japanese members are permitted and the last time I was there, I heard that they've had to put a quota because there were more Japanese members than Americans.
Well, there's the danger the Japanese members will exceed the American members at the American Club. So there's been a real change. But at the Press Club it was, of course, possible to bring in, they encouraged people to bring in Japanese.

MM: Do you have any observations to make about the press corps or the mixture of people in the press corps in Japan?

EJ: It was a very interesting group and one of the pleasant things about it is how many of those people have kept in touch and do still know each other and know each other well. It was a very closely-knit group.

MM: Did some of these people develop a deep interest in the Japanese language or Japan itself? Or they were there just to report the scene?

EJ: One of the sad things was that so few of the correspondents did anything serious about the language, even those who stayed several years. And they always claimed that they could work through interpreters and of course that's not the same thing. But there were very, very few that ever bothered about the language seriously.

At one point I had a class which I ran in the library of the Press Club for correspondents or correspondents' wives. There were about five or six of them that were interested in trying to do something a little more serious. But of course what was this, a few hours a week. You can't do much in that amount of time, but at least it showed a little more interest than what had been going on.

MM: Was there much irreverence among these press people about the occupation and what it was supposed to be doing or let's say about General [Douglas] MacArthur himself?

EJ: Oh, yes.

MM: Did you hear much of that kind of conversation?

EJ: Yes, there was a great deal of talk about conflict. That is one day one person would say something and the next day somebody else would say something else. There was always concern about that.
MM: This would be press releases from MacArthur's headquarters?

EJ: Or interviews, discussion with people. There was one thing, this quote. I remember one correspondent saying he had been asked--how did he put it--"Are you going to tell the real story or are you going to be--"no. "Are you going to write a favorable story or are you going to be subjective?" But little things like that that would come out that would amuse people very much, and they were digging. They were interested to know what was going on. I think again basically the feeling was that this was a kindly occupation. I mean, goodness knows mistakes were being made and people were trying to be, maneuvering and so forth. But there were an awful lot of chocolate bars going out in one way or another, and I think it's amazing what did come out of it all.

MM: When you arrived in 1949, again there had already been a great deal of talk about democratization and the new constitution. And by the time you arrived the war crimes trials were over and the zaibatsu-busting phase was over. You were primarily interested in language and you were doing dissertation research. But somewhere, perhaps in the back of your mind, there was some sense of what the occupation was all about. Or perhaps not.

EJ: Well, one thing that--

MM: Or the American presence in Japan.

EJ: Yes.

MM: Since you weren't really with the occupation per se but you were in occupied Japan.

EJ: No, we were definitely there, were very, very much aware of the American presence. You just saw Americans everywhere. As a matter of fact, it wasn't until I came back many years later when I had one visit to Japan which was totally Japanese. I didn't see an American the entire time I was there. And this was the most vivid experience for me in terms of indicating how terribly American all my other
visits had been, even though I was working on the language, even though I was seeing Japanese every day. And after I set up the school at the embassy I always used Japanese with all my employees all the time. But still, it was an American experience, and this is why I think that so many Americans who were in the occupation, who never had the later kind of experience, really don't know what Japan is about at all.

MM: When you were doing your research, did you travel much in Japan?

EJ: No, because I was interested in the Tokyo dialect, you see. I did do some traveling, well not that much, but I did get to Kyoto several times and Nara and Ise and so on, but not all over the islands. And I didn't do any data gathering anywhere except in Tokyo.

MM: Were you pretty much alone in pursuing this kind of systematic analysis and study of the Japanese language, I mean along among foreigners in Japan?

EJ: Yes.

MM: And were there any Japanese scholars in that period or linguists with whom you could have contact?

EJ: There was one person I was very anxious to meet. By and large, the Japanese had been cut off totally from what was going on in the State in terms of linguistic research on Japanese, and Bloch's work was really such a giant step forward and yet they in general knew very little about it.

MM: In what ways? For the lay person who is not in linguistics, what was his contribution? You said "a great step ahead."

EJ: Well, it was the first modern analysis of Japanese. The Japanese themselves were primarily concerned with discussions of written style and literary studies of the Japanese classics and so on. In terms of analyzing Japanese accent or intonation patterns or anything that was connected with the spoken language which wasn't considered, you know, "This isn't really what we say" or "We don't
really talk this way, really living, honest-to-goodness spoken Japanese, they
were not analyzing that. This was not something they were interested in, and
Bloch was working on that kind of thing. Also, in modern linguistic terms, accord-
ing to the terms of structural linguistics. And as I say, nothing had been done
in that area, so there was not that much interest in finding out what was going
on because they had been so cut off from us. But there was this one linguist in
particular who had done a lot of work on Japanese accent, and I was very anxious
to meet him. And luckily, one of the Japanese who had been working with me had
been a student of this man's father. He was also a famous linguist, and she knew
him very well. She thought that she would be able to get us together. Well, at
that particular time he happened to be--this was my first contact with khanzumay.
Do you know about khanzumay?

MM: No, I don't.

EJ: If an author is supposed to be producing a book and if he's a little behind
schedule, as is apt to happen, the publisher will arrange to can him and so he
becomes canned goods. And he's put in an inn somewhere and no one knows where
he is, the most marvelous system, absolutely secret except to the publishing
company. Well, as luck would have it, Professor Kin Dai-Ichi was canned at that
point, but anyway, this was the occupation. This was the sort of special treat-
ment that people were getting all the time. Anyway, she called the publisher
and she explained that this was this foreigner, this American, and it was about
linguistics and so on. And so they finally said all right, I could see him, I
could have an audience with him. Well, this was one of the most interesting
experiences that I'd ever had because I felt as if I were being almost kidnapped.
They did everything but--

MM: Blindfold you?
EJ: Right, exactly. I was driven through all these unknown parts of Tokyo and we suddenly arrived at this little inn and everyone was very quiet. I was ushered into this back room and sat down, and as I think back on it, it must have been a very strange experience for this man. And as a matter of fact, it was just a year or so ago when I was talking to a Japanese linguist who mentioned—I've never seen this man since, by the way. I've met his son and so on, but I've never seen him. But this person who knows him very well said that he has never forgotten this weird day when this young American girl came in to ask questions about primary and secondary accent in Japanese. I mean, it was just too much for him. It was the weirdest experience he's ever had, so he's followed my work with great interest, but we've never gotten together again. So anyway, there were a lot of odd things going on, a lot of odd things.

MM: How did you find the Japanese that you worked with, the Japanese who became your informants?

EJ: Oh, delightful. Again they were baffled by this approach. You're apt to think of language instruction as being prescriptive, you know, this is the way it is and this is the way you're supposed to talk. But this notion of finding out first how people really talk and then creating the rules on the basis of that was something very new for them. They were very, very cooperative.

MM: How did you go about choosing them?

EJ: It was largely finding people that represented the particular age level and particular educational level that I was most interested in. And then one would know another and so on, and I paid them by the hour and they were all very happy to get this kind of work.

MM: Did you place a notice in some kind of--

EJ: No.
MM: It was all by word of mouth?
EJ: It was all done by word of mouth, yes.
MM: So this dissertation research went on how long?
EJ: Well, let's see, I arrived in March and I had already done a lot of work before I went over. And so I was gathering data. I finished the dissertation. I mailed it off in September.
MM: So fast?
EJ: Well, there were nights when, you know, I never went to bed. And I remember one night when I just was close to absolutely breaking down and saying, you know, "It's got to be a noun because it does this. It can't be a noun because it does this. Why don't they fix this language," frustration, trying to figure out how it all worked. And I remember the night we were ready to type, to start the typing, and this young woman arrived. And it was the night of the worst hurricane, worst typhoon, that had hit Tokyo, Central Tokyo. Maybe nothing that bad has hit since in the heart of Tokyo. All the electricity went off, and so we started the typing by candlelight. And here was this poor woman trying to cope with all these accent symbols and so on in the pitch dark with this one little candle because I had this deadline and I had to get it in. And all the advising was done between Yale and Tokyo by disks. This was the first time, to my knowledge, anybody has had a thesis directed this way. I mean, I would make a whole disk, recorded disk, of what I was going through and, you know, how I was handling this and how I was handling that. Then I'd mail it to New Haven and then Bloch would come back with his comments on Chapter 4 and so on and this went back and forth.
MM: So you were doing your defense while you were writing your dissertation?
EJ: That's right, and then it was finished. It had to be bound in Tokyo, and of course they do such beautiful work in terms of the handwork, but they had no
equipment. And this came out, the cover was a bilious green and within 24 hours it had started to warp. And by the time the thesis arrived in New York, it was. . . .

END SIDE I, BEGIN SIDE II

The cover had warped so by the time it arrived in New Haven, Bloch said that it took the space of about four books on the shelf. And then the glue that the Japanese had at that point was some foul-smelling concoction. You could smell this package long before it ever was brought into the room. And my father, who was trying to be so helpful, he was so proud, you know. Here was a girl who was going to get a Ph.D., and so he was in New York pacing, waiting for the plane. The pilot hand-carried this thing. You know, mails at that point between Japan and America were not that simple. And then he got it up to New Haven and cabled me, and I have all these cables, you know. No one was ever so excited about the arrival of a package, but it got in just in time, just in time. It was a hard deadline to make.

MM: That's incredible. It is now, well, you said September. That's still 1949?

EJ: Right,

MM: You now had more time to pursue your interests. And so what was the next stage in your development?

EJ: The day I left for Japan while I was still working on my dissertation I had had a letter from the State Department asking me if I would possibly consider teaching the embassy specialists when I was over there. And I had said that I would be happy to do it after I finished my dissertation.

MM: Now when you say "embassy" specialists, was the term "embassy" being used?

EJ: No. U.S. POLAD /Political Advisor/ it was at that time. Because at Yale in a summer program I had taught three foreign service officers Beginning Japanese
and they were arriving in Japan just about when I was finishing my dissertation. But at that stage, the State Department people were training at the Noganuma School. And the head of language at the State Department, the Foreign Service Institute, was a linguist. And he was very anxious for these students to continue with the linguistic approach that had been used at Yale, particularly since these were the same three individuals. But the Noganuma School was the official training school at that point. So what happened was they went to the Noganuma School in the morning and then in the afternoon the three of them traipsed over to my room at the Press Club, came up to this one little room, and we went on then to discuss linguistic analysis of Japanese. I worked with them in that fashion for about a year, and then the following September, by that time I had a house. No, they didn't come to the house.

Then it was arranged for me to offer part-time training at US POLAD, not just for the specialists but for the US POLAD employees in general. That is, we started offering part-time classes for everyone. So it started out just as a part-time program like that and I was hired on an hourly basis, just under contract. But then the program grew and grew and grew and then we began to get full-time officers who were studying with us all day every day, and then eventually we received school status. Eventually US POLAD became the American Embassy and we were the American Embassy Language School.

MM: Now this brings up the latter part of the occupation. While you finished your dissertation and embarked on the next stage of your career, the occupation was also entering another stage. I wonder if you have any observations to make about the changing scene in Tokyo as the Korean War, for example, broke out,
any change in the attitude of the Japanese toward Americans or Americans toward Japanese?

EJ: In terms of the Korean War, there was a tremendous influx of course of press people, and the Press Club became a center of all kinds of activity, with constant movement back and forth, correspondents going over for a period of time in Korea and then coming back to Japan to rest up a little bit and then going over again. Correspondents were being killed. This was brought home very vividly to everyone because these were people, you had dinner with a man one night and he was off at the front the next day and he'd be killed the following day. And it was so peculiar for them to go back and forth. You don't commute to war, and yet that's what they were doing.

The Japanese in the meantime were becoming more prosperous. Houses were going up everywhere. The whole city was looking much more like a modern city. There were more things in the stores. Tourists were beginning to come in.

MM: Oh, that's very interesting.

EJ: Small groups would start coming to visit, and it was all a very gradual change. And then of course you had all sorts of situations that were now being turned over to the Japanese that had been handled by the Americans.

MM: What kinds of things?

EJ: Well, the press, after the occupation ended, I'm trying to remember exactly how this worked, but for example, PX privileges, things like that that were gradually removed so that there were a lot of Americans now who were operating on the Japanese market rather than buying everything in commissaries and PX's and so on. So from that point of view life began to change. And then housing had been provided for correspondents but with the end of the occupation then the renting was done directly from the Japanese, and rents were very different. And if something broke down, you couldn't just call the Maintenance Division of the
Occupation to send somebody out. So there was a little more feeling for the country as a Japanese nation rather than as a sort of branch of America.

**MM:** From where you were in the occupation—I shouldn't really say "in the occupation." I sense that it wouldn't be quite fair to call you an occupationaire. You weren't in one of the special SCAP /Supreme Commander Allied Powers/sections or anything like that, although you did come into the Language School at POLAD. From where you were in Occupied Japan, how did the looming figure of MacArthur appear to you?

**EJ:** Well, all the strutting seemed incredible. His arrival and departure every day at the Dai-Ichi Building was something you had to see to believe, with people sort of waiting in line and the car would drive up and he'd get out and sort of hesitate for a minute and pose and then walk in and everyone was sort of panting, looking very excited and so on. Beyond that, he was a very remote figure. When Clark came in afterwards, I mean Clark you would see at receptions and so on, but MacArthur you never saw. And later some Japanese confessed that there used to be a lot of jokes about him. One of the great questions, one Japanese said to another, "Do you really think he ever has to go to the bathroom?" But there was this vision of someone who was not quite an earth being.

**MM:** When your career brought you in touch with the foreign service officers and with POLAD, you were then mingling with a crowd a little bit different from the Press Club perhaps?

**EJ:** Yes, although there was a very close bond between those two groups, and the US POLAD people, many of them, were at the Press Club a great deal for meals and so on, so that a lot of socializing together. Obviously there were certain things the US POLAD people would not talk about, but by and large, I think there were a lot of very close friendships.
Another question I had. Again I realize this was remote from the language teaching that you were involved in at the time, but there was another looming presence on the scene, Prime Minister Yoshida. And I wonder if you and the people you were among had a very set impression of him, too. He seems to be now, as I try to reconstruct the period as a student of the period, in some ways to be one of the extraordinary figures of the 20th century.

No, I would say that he was admired and he was looked on as a real statesman, a great deal of interest in him and everything he was doing, of course. I'm trying to remember whether he was in any way, whether any of the correspondents—I'm quite sure some of them were able to—I'm just hesitant to say because I'm not sure of it, but whether or not any of them interviewed him directly.

Now that is an interesting point, maybe one to pursue to see what efforts were made to talk directly to him.

Certainly some of these people that I've mentioned to you would know this, would know it very specifically.

Do you recall any change in the attitude of Japanese toward Americans, let's say after MacArthur was dismissed and his replacement came in, let's say street demonstrations, anything like that, Japanese less compliant or—

Well, the big thing of course was the May Day riots and I don't remember which year that was. It would have been very early in the fifties.

1951 perhaps?

That sounds about right and I remember when the instructors left the school that day, they didn't part with their usual greeting because they were already beginning to overturn cars and so on, and this was very close to where we were. There was a great deal of worry, and I think seeing that demonstration there was a slight fear on the part of some Americans because
there were many involved in it. It wasn't just a casual group of a few students or anything like that. The labor forces were all together, but it calmed down and nothing happened after that. Certainly on a person-to-person basis, I didn't notice any difference at all and by that time there were Japanese that I had been working with for a number of years and I felt very comfortable with them.

MM: I am very interested in finding out more about how Americans interacted with Japan and Japanese culture in this period. Now since you were busily analyzing the Japanese language and furthering your mastery of the Japanese language, you of course were dealing with the Japanese. But do you have any impressions of Americans, generally speaking, did they tend to lead isolated lives or were they quite mesmerized and increasingly interested in Japan and the Japanese as a result of being there in an official capacity?

EJ: There's something very interesting about this in that I think America deserves a lot of credit that at a time when we went to war with Japan so much was done on an official basis to do something about teaching Japanese. So in this country it had hundreds and hundreds, thousands, of people in the military who were trained in the language whereas in Japan they were cut off from English. That generation in school simply was not being taught English any more. They were getting rid of their English long words. And you know, you had, what, was replaced by and was and so on. They wouldn't even use American long words. We did a little of that in this country when we got rid of German measles and tried to talk about liberty measles and sauerkraut was liberty cabbage and so on. But here we were seriously studying the language, so that's good. But the thing that appalled me was the number of Americans in Japan; they had not been required to study the language before they
went and so few of them were doing anything serious about the language there. And while they might have been very much taken with Kabuki and they might have been, some of them, not all of them, or flower arranging. So many of the wives began to take these courses in what, and so on. But when it came to something serious like really studying the language and trying to find out how you could better communicate directly with the Japanese, the expectation was that they were to learn English. And so I think that a lot of them were very much, that it was a kind of peripheral interest.

MM: How much proficiency could these foreign service officers attain through the kind of training they were receiving?

EJ: Well again, if they did a little bit, at least it showed the Japanese that they were interested enough to take some time, but the ones who did full-time training became very good, the ones that did the intensive all day, every day.

MM: And this intensive training which the foreign service officers received, did it draw a great deal from the wartime experience, these crash programs that were devised?

EJ: Yes.

MM: Should I call them "crash programs?"

EJ: Well, they were called that then. Now we usually use the term "intensive" except my problem with intensive is whose intensive. In some schools in this country intensive means five hours a week instead of three and for me intensive is six hours a day. So now we sometimes use "fulltime intensive" as the indication you're not doing anything else at the same time. But the people that did that kind of training turned out to be good and they are still good, and the State Department continues to turn out people like this. And it's a very, very good course.
MM: Just to complete your initial experience with first POLAD and then the Embassy, you mentioned that you were being paid by the hour. To what extent were you able to develop a program at the Embassy before you left Japan?

EJ: Oh, well, it became, as I say, bigger and bigger. We had I don't know how many people by the time the program was full-blown. And then I was taken on as a regular, what's it called, foreign service staff, but I was a local hire. So that was a slightly different category, but I was regular full-time foreign service. And in the school what had been a program, that became a school. So we had really official status, and after I left, eventually they put the school in a separate building. But while I was there, we were still in the Embassy Building.

MM: I'm familiar with the history of the Diplomatic Corps prior to the war, way back when the Student Interpreter Corps was first developed, 1906, I think it was, for Japan, maybe 1902 or so for China. And then with the foreign service reforms of the 1920's, foreign service language officers were appointed and they got two or three years of training. That is, their first two or three years on the job they did nothing but language. When we come into the period where you were working with POLAD and with the Embassy and the program was being developed, were young officers assigned then specifically to language training?

EJ: Yes.

MM: That pattern was continued?

EJ: Yes. I remember when Ambassador—when I left the Embassy Ambassador Allison was the ambassador then.

MM: Yes, he was one of those language officers back in the 1930's, 1931 or 1932.

EJ: That's right. They had a very nice ceremony when I left and he read this statement and he talked about his day when they simply arrived in Japan and
were sort of told to go out and learn the language and come back in two years. There was no formal program. They were given time to study.

MM: Oh, they found their own tutors?

EJ: They found their own tutors or whatever they did, I don't know. But it was not a regular organized program whereas now they study for about six months here in Washington at the Foreign Service Institute and then have advanced training in Yokohama at a special school. They have their own school.

MM: You don't have to answer this if you don't want to, but previously the Noganuma School had been an official school for these people. Were there any repercussions from the development of your work at the Embassy and the Noganuma School's loss of its former clients?

EJ: Well, it's one of those things that involves a study that I'm very serious about right now and that is I think people have neglected to study the relationship between a society and how it views language and how it teaches language. And I think that if you're going to teach Americans a foreign language, you must have among the staff some people who come from the same society that the students come from because Americans do not learn in the same way in which Japanese have been trained to learn. So that the Japanese view of the language is very different. It's the same language but it's the same reality. I always use the example of the moon. I mean, we look at the moon and we talk about the Man in the Moon and the Japanese see a rabbit. And I can't see a rabbit and they can't see a man, and it's the same moon. And this is what you get when you get an adult. He's a product of his society and he's accustomed to certain kinds of analysis, certain ways of looking at things, certain ways of being taught. And I just think that this is the problem for Americans with a great many of the schools in Japan, that there is no one there that really understands America
and Americans.

MM: Do you find what you have just said something difficult for the Japanese to assimilate, the Japanese language teachers in Japan who are teaching Americans Japanese?

EJ: Well, they feel that it's their language and they must know how to do it. Well, they must know how to do it for the Japanese but they do not approach things the same way that we do.

MM: And they're having difficulty, in other words, accepting or understanding this argument then that you're making?

EJ: Yes, very much so, and also since it is their language and they have an emotional reaction to it, they tend to be much more prescriptive, that is, this is the way foreigners should talk. And while we don't in any way want to talk in a way that is not appropriate, we have to understand lots of different varieties of Japanese. And if we listen only to this cleaned-up version, we're never going to be able to understand what's going on around us.

MM: I know that's true in my case. I can't understand what the teenaged boys are saying to each other in a train.

EJ: And then from the Japanese point of view, well, is it really necessary? Well, from our point of view, yes, we're curious. We want to be able to watch television and understand what's going on. And also, there are all sorts of things that we are analyzing now that they have never analyzed, all these things that they do totally out of consciousness: the analysis of the hesitation noises. These have to be studied, these have to be drilled, and it's very hard to get a Japanese to drill people on a and this sort of thing. Oh, well, that comes naturally. It comes naturally to them but not to us. So we must analyze, we must work on these things.
MM: Do you find that teachers of French, teachers of German, teachers of Spanish, have this particular problem to quite the same degree?

EJ: Not quite because there are certain areas where we do share a basic culture, I mean, if it's only Christian culture. But there are certain things that we can more or less assume that they will go along with. I think the attitude toward language is crucial here because we believe that if we are not precise, that it's our fault but that language is a precise instrument. The Japanese, I'm convinced, have exactly the opposite point of view that language is second best, that if you're really in communication with somebody, there's no need for language, that if you're really in tune, and this is the whole basis of

MM: How soon did you arrive at the sorts of things you're telling me now?

EJ: These things are recent.

MM: Very recent? It's not things that you were thinking in 1949, 1950, 1951?

EJ: What I was talking about last night, I want to tell you there are three stages and the first stage, which was, I assume, you just have to translate. Then hitting Japan and realizing that there are all these situations and it's the question of what does the Japanese say in this situation? Stage three now is this business of a very complex kind of analysis of the very close relationship between a society and its language and how do these things affect the way people talk, the way they construct a conversation, the way they construct a written piece of material and so on. It's just all different.

MM: Well, I want to thank you very, very much for a most fascinating interview. And I wish I knew enough about language and linguistics to pursue this much further.

END OF INTERVIEW