

# AJLS Newsletter

Association for Japanese Literary Studies

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Edited by Eiji Sekine

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## The Seventeenth Annual Meeting “Parody”

August 19-21, 2008

University of British Columbia

### Call for Papers

As defined by Linda Hutcheon and other recent literary theorists, parody is “imitation with a critical difference, not always at the expense of the parodied text” (*A Theory of Parody*, 7). Because of parody’s perceived “critical difference,” it has been elevated in Anglo-European literary scholarship above other, similar tropes that draw connections between disparate texts in terms of content or form, such as pastiche, allusion and simulacra, which are seen as playful and apolitical at best (as in Hutcheon’s own discussion of pastiche), and politically dangerous at worst (as in Jameson’s discussion of the simulacrum).

In the context of Japanese literature and art, much attention has been drawn to the frequency of allusion and intertextuality, but it remains largely unrelated to distinctions between simple pastiche, allusion, and/or parody in their critical senses. Consideration of the nature of Japanese intertextuality in various genres and time periods raises a host of questions:

- How can we determine whether what we read as simple allusion, such as *honkadori* in a *waka*, might have had

true parodic force to its original audience? To what extent does the readers’ horizon of experience determine what distinguishes (valorized) parody and (merely formulaic) allusion? Does a literature of parody (or some other kind of intertextuality) require a small, homogeneous, and contemporaneous audience to be appreciated?

- What is the relationship between form and substance in a work of literature or art, and does a parody of form (as frequently seen in Japanese examples) have the same function as a parody of substance? Does Japanese literature and art prize form over substance, as some critics have claimed, and, if so, does that change the way parody should be conceptualized in the Japanese case?

- How has parodic intertextuality been used in times of censorship or political oppression to produce subversive messages?

- Gender parody appears in the literature and art of many periods of Japanese cultural production. What is its function in different contexts? Does its meaning depend on the readership? Is it subversive or merely playful? How can we tell?

What does such parody tell us about gender conceptualization?

- Can we consider parody in literary or artistic texts without reviving the idea of authorial intention?
- Does the ubiquity of intertextuality in Japanese literary forms indicate a lack of originality, and what value do we as critics place on the Romantic ideal of the artistic genius producing original work?
- Because tropes such as parody and pastiche are sometimes considered hallmarks of a postmodern aesthetic, what would an examination of Japanese literary and artistic parody suggest about definitions of the premodern, modern and postmodern in Japan?
- Is it only parody (“repetition with a critical difference”) that should be valorized by critics looking for social/political significance in a text (as is largely the case in Anglo-European criticism), or does the Japanese literary use of multiple forms of intertextuality suggest other possible theorizations of the relationship between text and society?

Deadline for receipt of abstracts of no more than 250 words on these and other questions is **April 1, 2008**. We welcome individual submissions as well as three- or four-person panel proposals. Presentations will be organized in 3-hour time-blocks. The conference languages are English and Japanese. Papers and panels on both Japanese verbal and visual culture are welcome.

Proposals should be submitted electronically to: [ubcajls@gmail.com](mailto:ubcajls@gmail.com)

All other correspondence may be directed to the organizers:

Joshua Mostow

([jmostow@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:jmostow@interchange.ubc.ca)) or

Sharalyn Orbaugh

([sorbaugh@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:sorbaugh@interchange.ubc.ca)).

## 2007 Meeting Report

The sixteenth annual meeting of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies was held at Princeton University on November 2-4, 2007. We were blessed with beautiful fall weather during the three day conference, which featured of a total of forty three papers and two keynote addresses, all of which, one way or another, addressed the conference theme “Literature and Literary Theory.” Keynote speakers Professor Komori Yōichi of University of Tokyo and Mizumura Minae, novelist and critic, did not fail our expectations in delivering provocative and at times controversial talks on the theme. We also had a featured panel entitled, “Rethinking Sōseki’s *Bungakuron*: A Centennial Celebration” which commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Natsume Sōseki’s theoretical treatise, *Bungakuron (Theory of Literature, 1907)*. In addition, participants engaged with a myriad of theoretical issues as they addressed ancient writings to contemporary texts, offering insightful readings of Japanese literary texts. Many presenters, along with over 110 people who attended the conference, further engaged with the issues surrounding the status of theory in our current literary practices, a dialogue of which we hope will continue at future venues. The presentations spoke to each other in fascinating ways and we anticipate an interesting conference proceedings volume.

We would like to remind the presenters that their final papers are due **February 14, 2008**.

The conference was co-hosted by Professors Atsuko Ueda and Richard Okada, and supported greatly by the staff members and students of Princeton University.

## AJLS Membership

The annual fee is \$25.00 for regular, student, and institution members (\$35.00 for overseas members outside North America). Membership provides you with:

- Panel participation for our annual meeting (if your proposal is selected).
- Two newsletters
- One copy of our latest proceedings.
- One free copy of a back or additional current issue of the proceedings if you are a student member.

Inquiries and orders (with checks payable to AJLS) should be sent to the AJLS office. Further information on our activities is available on our website: <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/fll/AJLS>.

## Call for 2009 AJLS Host

If you are interested in hosting an AJLS meeting for 2009 or later, please contact Professor Ann Sherif at: [ann.sherif@oberlin.edu](mailto:ann.sherif@oberlin.edu) or 440.775.8827.

## New Proceedings and Back Issues

The new issues of our proceedings, *Travel in Japanese Representational Culture: Its Past, Present, and Future* (PAJLS, vol. 8), will be published in January, 2008. The following back issues are available (See our website for their tables of contents). Each copy is \$10.00 for AJLS members and \$15.00 for non-members. Orders should be sent to the AJLS office. (Add \$15 for mailing if you order from outside the North American area.)

*Poetics of Japanese Literature*: vi, 207pp, 1993.

*Revisionism in Japanese Literary Studies*, PMAJLS, vol. 2: vi, 336pp., 1996.

*Issues of Canonicity and Canon Formation in Japanese Literary Studies*, PAJLS, vol. 1: vi, 532 pp., 2000.

*Acts of Writing*, PAJLS, vol. 2: ix, 428

pp., 2001.

*Japan from Somewhere Else*, PAJLS, vol. 3: vi, 158 pp., 2002.

*Japanese Poeticity and Narrativity Revisited*, PAJLS, vol. 4: vi, 344 pp., 2003.

*Hermeneutical Strategies: Methods of Interpretation in the Study of Japanese Literature*, PAJLS, vol. 5: xiii, 517 pp., 2004.

*Landscapes Imagined and Remembered*, PAJLS, vol. 6 : vii, 215 pp., 2005

*Reading Material: The Production of Narratives, Genres and Literary Identities* PAJLS, vol. 7: xiii, 149 pp., 2006.

### AJLS Membership Form

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**PAPER/PANEL PROPOSAL FORM**  
*"Parody"*  
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