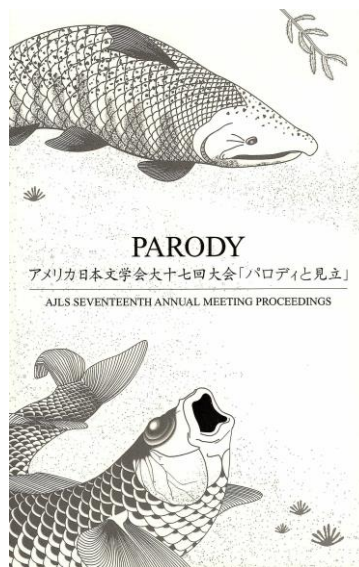


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PARODY

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EDITORS' PREFACE

Sharalyn Orbaugh and Joshua S. Mostow
The University of British Columbia

The seventeenth annual meeting of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies was held at The University of British Columbia on August 19–21, 2008—the first such meeting in Canada. The theme of the conference was “Parody” and featured a total of forty papers, and a keynote address by Prof. Noriko Yamashita (Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shiryōkan) on “Edo-period *Mitate* and Parody.” Presentations included organized panels on “Writing Parody in Meiji Japan,” “Proving Parodies in Edo Literature, Drama, and Public Storytelling,” “Verbal/Visual Parody Interplays in Late Edo-period Woodblock Prints,” and “Murdering the Original—Corpses and Translations in Modern Japanese Literature.” As can be seen, presenters considered parody in both visual and written texts. Participants came from half a dozen countries, including Austria, Italy, and Japan. Twenty-seven of the papers considered modern Japan, twelve Edo, and one the Heian period. There was lively discussion on the various theoretical approaches to the related concepts of parody, pastiche, *mitate*, and *yatsushi*. An exhibition, “Juxtaposition (*Mitate*) and Slumming (*Yatsushi*) in Early Modern Japanese Culture,” curated by Joshua Mostow, was on display in the Asian Library and included an illustrated catalogue in the form of a *sugoroku* board-game.

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 seemed to us to raise a host of questions:

- How can we determine whether what we read as simple allusion, such as *honka-dori* 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?

Participants in the annual meeting addressed some of these and other questions. While no conclusive answers were reached, there was a wide variety of perspectives and exchange of views that, we hope, enriched everyone's appreciation of the issues involved.

We are grateful to the Toshiba International Foundation and Japan Foundation for major funding for the conference, which was recognized as an official event in the celebration of the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Japan. We would like to acknowledge the generosity of the Asian Library, and its librarian, Eleanor Yuen, Japanese Librarian, Shirin Eshghi, and other staff, for their cooperation with the accompanying exhibition. We would also like to thank the staff of the Asian Studies Department: Maija Norman, Lonnie Chase, Shirley Wong, and Mina Wong; as well as the student helpers who kept everything running: Nick Hall, Gergana Ivanova, Masumi El Khoury Abe, Kaori Yoshida, Douglas Lanam, Motoko Tanaka, and especially Nathen Clerici. Thanks also go to Julien Butterlin for his design of both the conference and exhibition materials. Eiji Sekine was a support throughout, and we would particularly like to thank Joyce L. Detzner for her superlative job as production editor.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE ASSOCIATION FOR JAPANESE LITERARY STUDIES: The annual fee is \$25.00 for regular, student, and institution members. Membership includes two issues of the AJLS Newsletter and one issue of the PAJLS (Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies). Student members receive one free copy of the back or current issues of the proceedings. The shipping cost is included in the membership fees for North American subscribers. Oversea members from other regions should add \$10.00 to the above annual fee for postage. Please make checks payable to AJLS. Correspondence and payments should be addressed to: AJLS, Purdue University, 640 Oval Drive, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2039, U.S.A.; (phone) 765/496-2258; (fax) 765/496-1700; and (e-mail) esekine@purdue.edu.

AJLS ANNUAL MEETING: An annual meeting is organized by an elected Chair and held at the Chair's institution. A call for papers is announced in the Spring issue of the AJLS Newsletter. Selection of proposed papers for the meeting is made by the Chair and Vice Chair (a chair-in-waiting for the coming year's meeting) of each annual meeting. A program of the meeting is published in the Fall issue of the Newsletter. Unless invited by the Chair, all panel participants must become AJLS members before their presentations.

PAJLS PUBLICATION: All papers presented during the annual meeting can be included in the PAJLS. All contributors are allowed to revise their papers after their presentation. The proceedings of the annual meeting is published the following year.

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