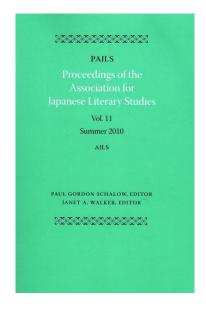
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*PAJLS* 11:*Rethinking Gender in the Postgender Era.*Ed. Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet A. Walker

## PAJLS

### Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies

Rethinking Gender in the Postgender Era Vol. 11 Summer 2010

AJLS

# PAJLS Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies

# Vol. 11 Summer 2010

## AJLS

#### PAUL GORDON SCHALOW, EDITOR JANET A. WALKER, EDITOR

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#### EDITORS' PREFACE

#### PAUL GORDON SCHALOW JANET A. WALKER

**Rutgers University** 

he eighteenth annual meeting of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies was held at Rutgers University on November 6–8, 2009. The theme of the conference was "Rethinking Gender in the Postgender Era," and the conference featured a total of twelve panels. The papers ranged over the whole trajectory of Japanese textual production, and over many genres and media—from *monogatari*, novels, short fiction, poetry, and poetic diaries to theater, film, *anime*, *manga*, and the cell-phone novel.

A special focus of the conference was the life and works of Ōba Minako (1930– 2007); one panel, "Writing as Performative Reproduction: Gender, Genre and Literary Models in Ōba Minako's Work," was devoted to this author, and another paper explored Oba's poetry beyond gender. In addition, a keynote address, given by Professor Mizuta Noriko (Chancellor of Jōsai International Educational Corporation), was entitled "The Life and Literary Legacy of Ōba Minako (1930–2007)." Prof. Susan Napier (Tufts University) gave another keynote address, with the title "Lady Eboshi's Secret Garden: Gender, Space, and Fantasy in the Works of Miyazaki Hayao."

Of the thirty-four papers presented, four treated Heian-period works. The papers in the panel "Bad Mothers?: The Emergence of Transgressive Parenting in Late-Heian Narrative" treated gendered parenting in the *Tale of Nezame*, the *Jōjin azari no haha no shū*, and *Ariake no wakare*. Another paper dealt with Minamoto Shitagō and his female aristocratic patrons. The three papers on Edo-period works treated parodic constructions of masculinity in early modern *kibyōshi*, the female *kanshi* poet Hara Saihin's masquerade of masculinity, and moral certainty and gender indeterminacy in Bakin's *Eight Dogs*. The remainder of the papers treated works of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, examining the topics of the genre fiction of Hirabayashi Taiko and Tsuboi Sakae; the gendering of children's literature; Sata Ineko's *Kurenai* and representation; the cultural politics of the "girl" in postbubble Japan; Japanese ecofeminisms; the gendering of Enchi Fumiko's *Onnagata Ichidai*; love in the cell-phone novel; the Osaka man in trans-war fiction; Mori

Makiko's Yellow Harlot Collection; Takeda Yuriko's photographic eye; the women writers Kawakami Hiromi, Tawada Yōko, and Osaki Midori; femaleness, desire, and identity in Yi Yang-Ji's Yuhi; Shōno Yoriko and the imaginary to overcome neo-liberalism; gendered virtue and social progress in Otto no teisō; the hermaphrodite in Tanizaki's early decadent literature; and Tachibana Teijirō and Shinpa melodrama. Two papers dealt with cross-cultural subjects in the medium of film: the Chinese filmmaker Hou Hsiao-Hsien's imagining of the Tokyo woman of Ozu's films, and allied masculinities in Clint Eastwood's films *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Letters from Iwo Jima*. One panel, an homage to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, read manga, Sōseki, *shōjo* culture, and Izumi Kyōka in relation to the theories of that critic.

Participants came from Canada, Italy, Japan, the U.K., and the United States. An exhibition of materials related to William Elliot Griffis (1843–1928), a graduate of Rutgers in 1869 who formed significant contacts between Rutgers and Japan in the Meiji period and authored the noted work *The Mikado's Empire* (1876), was on display at the entrance to Alexander Library, where the conference was held. The exhibition of these materials from the Griffis Collection, a collection of Griffis' personal papers and Meiji-period objects, was curated by Fernanda Perrone, Curator, Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.

In its goal of rethinking gender in the postgender era, the 2009 AJLS Annual Meeting encouraged participants to define new methods and subjects of literary analysis invoking Women's and Gender Studies. Early on, Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) proposed a three-stage model of the growth of feminist theory, beginning with an androgynist poetics, then a feminist critique and female aesthetic, and finally gender criticism. If feminist theory could but explain gender relations, the promise of eliminating inequality between the sexes seemed within reach. Perhaps contrary to Showalter's expectations, the trajectory of gender studies in the intervening three decades moved it away from feminist theory and in other directions.

Several forces motivated this shift, including the theoretical focus on gender identity and sexual difference in the 1980s, and the growing perception in the 1990s that gender was also a men's issue. Gayle Rubin's "Thinking Sex" (1984) rejected the feminist assumption that sexuality is simply derived from gender and argued that gender relations alone could not account for the complexity of sexual behaviors. Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble* (1990), further identified subversive strategies of gendered performance, such as parody and drag, as central to understanding how the codes of gender work in creating normative and non-normative identities.

The recent postgenderism movement, galvanized by Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1991), advocates the voluntary rejection of biologically or socially normative sexual and gender identities altogether in favor of an understanding of human fulfillment outside the bounds of the male/female, man/woman binary. In the context of Japanese literary and visual culture, scholarship on gender reflects a close engagement with these trends and is producing numerous new critical approaches and concepts. Studies have addressed topics such as: literary

"intersexuality," defined as representations of ambivalence towards or rejection of categories of sex; the "postgender" phenomenon of ambiguously gendered or ambiguously sexed bodies in popular media; and narrative constructions of gender as a complex and porous "labyrinth" rather than a simple binary; to name but a few.

The conference began with a set of questions: How do texts and images work to create gender identities or postgender alternatives to them, and for what purposes? How are those gender or postgender identities related to or distinct from sexual, national, ethnic, and other identities? What is the history of these questions we inherit, and how does that history complicate our attempts to address Japanese literary and visual culture? Conversely, what questions has Japanese literary and visual culture raised about gender, and how can they challenge our inherited set of questions?

The 2009 AJLS Conference at Rutgers welcomed proposals approaching gender in innovative ways and examining its relationship to, or intersection with, any issue relevant to Japanese literary and visual culture: the construction, representation, and performance of femininity and masculinity; female and male authorship; "voice" in oral performance, such as *biwa hōshi, ningyō jōruri*, and kabuki; readership; escaping the limitations of gender binary, including gender-bending, gender-blending, and postgenderism; literary genres; analysis of media such as film, theater, and *anime*; race and ethnicity; the rhetoric and ideology of nationalism, including the production of national language; the rhetoric of desire (for example, within the triangular relationship as described by René Girard); the construction of pre-modern or modern subjectivities and identities; normative and non-normative sexualities; place, space, and landscape; diaspora; and Japan and Japaneseness.

We are happy to note that, out of thirty-four papers presented at the conference, twenty-seven papers were submitted for publication in these Proceedings, each of them a significant contribution to the understanding of gender and how it functions in Japanese literary and media culture, past and present.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of grants from the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission/Northeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies, and the Japan Foundation-New York, as well as from several Rutgers University sponsors including the Committee to Advance Our Common Purposes, the Executive Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and the Asian Studies Program. Special thanks go to Kathleen Licinski, Administrative Assistant in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, for her unstinting help at every stage; and to Bahareh Sehatzadeh for her superlative work creating the 2009 Annual Meeting website, producing the program booklet, and helping each day at the registration desk. Eiji Sekine and Ann Sherif always answered our questions about the nitty-gritty details of running the AJLS annual meeting, and Atsuko Ueda gave us useful guidance based on her experience hosting the annual meeting at Princeton University in 2007. Finally, we wish to thank Marilyn Campbell and Anne Hegeman at Rutgers University Press for their help with the production and printing of these Proceedings.