

Summation of the NASSS International  
Graduate Students Seminar  
Literature and Culture Workshop  
July 27, 2010

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There were seven participant-presenters in the literature and culture session of this year's NASSS graduate student seminar, representing the United States, Japan, and Germany. The morning session of the seminar was moderated by Professor William PURCELL of Nanzan University, and the afternoon session was moderated by Professor NAGASAWA Tadashi of Sugiyama Women's University. The sessions were also joined by Professor Marianna TORGOVNICK, a conference's keynote speaker, and Professor LEE Yu-cheng, one of the conference's invited scholars. There were three presentations during the morning session and four more in the afternoon.

The morning session's first speaker was Ms. Jessica BARDILL, a PhD candidate at Duke University. Her presentation was titled "Hafu Walking Between Two Worlds: Gerald Vizenor's Hiroshima Bugi and the (Re) Production of Nuclear Fallout." Focusing on Vizenor's *Hiroshima Bugi Atomu 57*, Ms. Bardill's paper examined the issue of "belonging" as related to racial/national/ethnic identity and its implications for the construction of common memories of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima at the end of World War II. Expanding on Vizenor's concept of "stories in the blood," or memories of common experiences that link all Native American peoples, Ms. Bardill then exploits this concept to show how Vizenor attempts in his novel to construct a common understanding of the war, the atomic bombings, and the occupation as experiences shared by Japanese and Americans alike.

After a brief break the second presentation was made by Ms. SHIMANUKI Kayoko, a PhD candidate at Kyoto University. Her presentation was titled "Time, Place, and Memories in William Faulkner's Works." The paper focused on Faulkner's construction of Yoknapatawpha County as a living memory of the stories of the American South. She drew particular attention to the chronology of Quentin Compson's life across the relevant stories and the development of Faulkner's writing style. In particular she demonstrated how the earliest story, *The Sound and the Fury*, begins as a family memory in which Quentin is the narrator, and moves through the later stories towards a collective memory in *Absolam, Absolam!*, in which the role of Quentin shifts between that of narrator and not-always-willing listener.

The third speaker of the morning was Ms. YUASA Kyoko, a PhD student

at Hokkaido University. Her paper was titled “The Multiple Voices of Joy Davidman as a Writer and Editor: From Hidden Truth Seeking to Blessed Defeat” and sought to establish the significance of Davidman in the development of C.S. Lewis’s vision of gender. Davidman is best known today as Lewis’s wife, her own career as a poet, editor, and writer overshadowed by the reputation of her second husband. Primarily bibliographic and biographic in nature, Ms. Yuasa’s paper sought first to reestablish Davidman’s reputation as a writer in her own right, and to retrace her own spiritual journey from childhood secular Judaism, through atheism and Communism, to what Davidman herself termed her “blessed defeat” by theism leading eventually to Christianity. She also attempted to show how Davidman, working as an editor for Lewis’s last novel, influenced her husband’s understanding of gender.

After a two-hour lunch break, the afternoon session started; Professor Torgovnick and Professor Lee continued to attend the session as advisors, and were joined by Prof. NAGAHATA Akitoshi of Nagoya University and Prof. Nagasawa, with Nagasawa serving as moderator. Four students read their papers in diverse topics and themes ranging from the historical/sociological documentary on a religious community to theoretical approaches to a literary work. All of the participants gave comments and suggestions helpful to each presenter.

The first presentation was made by Mr. Kevin RIORDAN from the University of Minnesota, titled “The Case of Michio Ito: Espionage and the Artistic Temperament.” Mr. Riordan summarized the biography of Ito, an internationally-acclaimed pre-war Japanese dancer, describing his artistic achievements. Mr. Riordan focused especially on analyzing Ito’s internment file, which shows how Ito had been under monitoring and investigation by the FBI even before Pearl Harbor. Through examining the documents, Mr. Riordan illustrated the paranoiac, isolationist bureaucracy of the U.S. in the period.

The second presenter, Ms. NOMURA Nao of the University of Tokyo read her paper “Touring the Amish: Ongoing Negotiations between the Amish and ‘English’ tourists in Shipshewana, IN.” Ms. Nomura deliberately described the history of the Amish quilts and interactions between the Amish community and the outer society, mainly based on the information she collected through her fieldwork in a community in Indiana. Although the Amish are widely regarded as isolated from the mainstream American society, examining the Amish and their quilt-making tradition reveals not only the mutual influence between the community and the outer world, but also the process of romanticizing the American past and folk culture. There were many questions and comments from professors, including those on the politics of “tourism” and on the cultural and historical backgrounds of quilt-making.

After a few minutes’ break, the session resumed. The next presenter, Ms. Julia Isabel FAISST of Harvard University, focused on Ralph Ellison’s relationships with photography, both personal and artistic, in her presentation titled “Ralph Ellison, Photographer.” Ms. Faisst pointed out that most critics and

scholars ignored his background as photographer in discussing Ralph Ellison's classic, *The Invisible Man*. She related the invisibility in the novel to the "open self-concealment" of a photographer; citing passages concerning photographs and their manners, she tried to conceive the invisibility not as "marginality" but as a potential "space of expressivity and imagination." In closing her presentation, she mentioned the promising possibility of rethinking modernist literature through photographic influence.

Mr. OGURA Michiaki of Rikkyo University made the last presentation, titled "Melville's Ambivalent Attitude toward Nationalism: The Representation of the Sea in *Moby Dick*." Through the close examination of the text, Mr. Ogura argued that the representation of the sea in Melville's novel is equal to those of the landscapes painted in the mid-19th century in the sense that both are expressions of the expansionist ideology in the period. Mr. Ogura concluded his presentation by stating that the sea represents Ahab's feeling of alienation. In the Q&A, Professor Torgovnick indicated that the tranquil, transparent images pervaded in the landscape paintings should be compared to Ahab's state of mind.

After all the presentations were delivered, we had several minutes to conclude the session, in which Professor Torgovnick, Professor Lee and three mentors gave some remarks and advice. We believe all the participants were fully satisfied with the all-day session. The moderators express deepest appreciation to all the participants for active, devoted participation in the discussion, hoping the experience will contribute much to the students' academic career in the future.