

Editor's Introduction, 2008

After having dedicated our eighteenth volume of the *Japanese Journal of American Studies* to the proceedings of the international symposium to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Japanese Association for American Studies, volume nineteen now returns to our regular format with a special theme as well as general topics from the members. We also include in this issue the address delivered by the ASA president at the 2007 JAAS annual meeting at Rikkyo University.

This issue takes up "The City" as the special theme. From the heavenly Jerusalem, "the City of God," in the Judeo-Christian tradition to the golden city in Greek and Roman myths, the city in its conceptual aspect holds a celestial dimension reflecting an ideal dwelling place in eternity, as well as a terrestrial one as the center for economic and social activities promising affluence and a better life. With their hope of reaching "great cities and towns" in the province of "Catayo" [Cathay], the fifteenth-century European explorers crossed the Atlantic and encountered an unknown continent and its people; religious visionaries ventured into the "wilderness" to build a typological "City upon a Hill" in the New World Canaan. From the colonial period when Europeans eagerly searched for the land of gold and gospel, America has provided the sites both for real as well as for imagined heavenly cities. Since then "the City" in America has been conceptualized and idealized as well as invented and exploited by dreamers, seekers, and others who have crossed the borders from many parts of the world with their own visions, dreams, and desires. Such historical backgrounds have endowed the cities in America with multi-layered meanings. The contributors in this volume elaborate these meanings through their literary, cultural, political, and geographical analysis.

The first article in this issue, "Terror, Aesthetics, and the Humanities in the Public Sphere" was delivered as a presidential address by Emory Elliott from the American Studies Association (USA). In this essay, Elliott introduces us to the dystopian post-9/11 New York City that Don DeLillo depicts in his *Cosmopolis* (2003). Elliott argues that DeLillo as well as Phillip Roth in their post-9/11 novels employ an "aesthetics of astonishment to prompt readers to examine the realities of their society and the failures of their leaders," just as Melville and

Twain attempted social criticism in their novels in nineteenth-century America. Elucidating jeremiads from the past and from contemporary American writers, Elliott emphasizes the power of letters and reminds us of the significant roles which scholars in the humanities can play in a time of crisis such as the United States is now facing.

The next ten articles are devoted to the special theme of the current issue; seven of them deal with literature. The first two articles analyze two major novels by Nathaniel Hawthorne in relation to the nineteenth-century urban reform movements. Both articles refer to efforts to create an idealistic public space and their failure. In "Sex and the City: The Reconstruction of Middle-Class Urban Consciousness in *The Scarlet Letter*," Naohika Takao focuses on the two "displacements" in the preface to Hawthorne's novel and argues that such displacements intrinsically relate to a nascent urban, middle-class consciousness emerging out of one of the first cityscapes in the United States. He specifically analyzes how Hawthorne positions the three main characters in the public sphere of Puritan Boston, and shows how the writer's experience of being dismissed from public office connects to the double displacements to create a novelistic criticism of antebellum urbanity.

In "Reading *The House of the Seven Gables* in the Context of the Nineteenth-Century Urban Burial Reform Movement," Shitsuyo Masui contextualizes Hawthorne's novel in the burial reform movement in the Northern cities during rapid population growth. Comparing articles concerning death and burial practices in the period with the *Seven Gables*, she maintains that the prevalent domestic ideology is at work in these texts to form citizens into a national body as an extended family through a healthy feeling of sympathy. She argues that Hawthorne resists the powerful rhetoric of domesticity by creating a bizarre domestic space in which underworld elements destabilize the everyday world of the living and reveals the psychological thresholds mid-nineteenth-century individuals had to cross as they tried to demarcate supernatural elements to adjust to modern rationality.

The next two articles deal with two late-nineteenth century cosmopolitan writers, Henry James and Constance Fenimore Woolson, who had several themes in common. In "From City of Culture to City of Consumption: Boston in Henry James's *The Bostonians*," Yuko Nakagawa argues that James chose Boston as the setting for his "very American tale" to depict how it had changed from a city of culture marked by the New England mindset to a city of consumer culture, vulgar and immoral. Nakagawa asserts that such a transition is embodied in the city's landscape and in the two *Bostonians*: Olive Chancellor, one of the Boston elites and a feminist, who resists but eventually assimilates to the culture of consumption, and Verena Tarrant, a talented young speaker and one of James's American Girls, who easily becomes a model consumer both in Boston and in New York but ends up in a marriage with no bright prospects as a result of her

insensitivity to humanity. Nakagawa reads the novel as James's critical comment on the transition Boston went through. It can also be said that to James, with his cosmopolitan background, Boston was "provincial" just as America itself was.

Befriended by James in their Florentine expatriate circle, Woolson presents American Girls in her texts differently from the way James does. Yuko Matsukawa, in "Defining the American *Flâneuse*: Constance Fenimore Woolson and 'A Florentine Experiment,'" argues that the representation of the *flâneuse* (the female counterpart to the urban stroller, the *flâneur*) in Woolson's writing reconfigures our understanding of not only modernity but the construction of female subjectivity. Focusing on Woolson's short story, Matsukawa discusses how Florentine urban spaces and their subjection to the expatriate female gaze provide Woolson and her *flâneuse* protagonist with the means of addressing their identities as American upper-middle-class women and of reinventing themselves in Florence, a foreign city that itself symbolizes artistic rebirth.

The next two articles deal with writers from the Midwest: Theodore Dreiser and Gwendolyn Brooks. In "Dreiser and the Wonder and Mystery and Terror of the City," Kiyohiko Murayama shows that Theodore Dreiser, the so-called founder of the city novel, was not a mere recorder of facts. Murayama argues that Dreiser constructively borrowed literary precedents, such as the formulaic seduction story of the sentimental novel, the novel portraying a young artist afflicted with alienation in the city, and the literature of slumming that was conducive to the aesthetics of the urban sublime which, remodeled from the pastoral tradition, served to foster proletarian literature. In "Space, Class, City: Gwendolyn Brooks's *Maud Martha*," Julia Leyda applies the concept of the "imagined geography" in her reading of the novel. Leyda argues that representations of the characters' imaginative geographies express their spatial and classed identities in relation to the body. She proposes a way of reading that considers both kinds of geographies produced within the novel's pages: through characters' spatial imaginaries, as well as those that can be produced by the readers' engagements with the literary text.

The eighth article deals with the Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical of 1996, *Rent*, which celebrates the lives of artists living in the East Village, New York, in the 1990s, in the midst of problems that arise with gentrification and AIDS. Naomi Tonooka, in "Art and Urban Space: *Rent*, the East Village, and the Construction of Meaning," argues that in its unprecedented commercial success in spite of its emphasis on the artist's aesthetic autonomy, the musical epitomizes art's ambiguous relationships to processes of commoditization. Yet, Tonooka asserts, this musical also contains an internal critique of such relationships, and by designating the gaps between the artist's vision of the world and the vaster, unrepresentable realities, it mediates the cognitive map of the East Village and the city, and ultimately enables the individual subject to map and reconfigure her or his relationship to social space.

Two papers offering political perspectives on the theme of “the City” follow the literary analysis. In “The American Welfare State and the City: The Politics of the Social Welfare Policy in New York City under the Lindsay Administration,” Takayuki Nishiyama notes an irony afflicting the American welfare state: state and local governments that have structural difficulty in adopting redistributive policy have the responsibility to implement the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. This article explores the nature of the American welfare state by examining the politics of social policy in New York City under the Lindsay Administration (1966–1973), which started an ambitious campaign to sign people up for welfare. The conclusions point to the importance of looking at the politics of social policy at the local level to understand the nature of the American welfare state.

In “City-County Separation and Consolidation in the United States: The Impact on Urban Growth,” Masaharu Yasuoka examines the advantages and disadvantages of city-county consolidation, in which some eleven US cities since 2006 have joined together with their neighboring counties to form a single government. By comparing consolidated and independent cities, Yasuoka outlines the complicated arguments for and against consolidation: for example, cities are more likely to experience fiscal stress because of their responsibility for road construction and maintenance. But Yasuoka concludes from the mixed results of the comparison that city type alone does not satisfactorily explain the variations in socioeconomic conditions among US cities. His conclusion calls for future researchers to explore how to integrate the city types as an intervening variable into the analytical models for urban study.

The last of the papers on the special theme is from the discipline of historical geography. In “Origins of Cities and Urbanization in Nineteenth-Century Southern California: Regional Changes in the Context of Three Economic-Cultural Regions of the Americas,” Noritaka Yagasaki gives a geographic interpretation of the urban development of the Americas as a whole and the nature of southern Californian cities. Focusing on the origin of cities and urbanization in southern California in the nineteenth century, he maps the historic-geographic process of urbanization and examines the driving force behind the establishment of cities. Yagasaki divides the urbanization of southern California into four periods: the Spanish-Mexican period, the emergence of American cities in the 1850s and 1860s, the steady increase of planned cities in the 1870s to mid-1880s, and the boom of the late 1880s and rapid urban development. Rather than examining individual cities, he attempts to elucidate the context of regional changes in order to verify that southern Californian cities in the nineteenth century reflected the overall economic and cultural transitions taking place in the Americas.

The last two papers, by Wakako Araki and Ichiro Miyata, focus on the South

and the issues of gender, class, and race. In "Gender, Race, and the Idea of Separate Spheres: Neo-Abolitionist Work in South Carolina Sea Islands," Wakako Araki contends that the idea of separate spheres as a gendered, raced and classed concept is key to understanding the course of neo-abolitionist aid and educational work for freed people in the post-emancipation South. Araki argues that freedwomen were not subsumed under Barbara Welter's notion of true womanhood and examines how white women struggled with the discourse of the separate spheres as well. Her study demonstrates that the construct of separate spheres was more contested in the 1860s than previous studies have shown.

In "Manufacturing Segregation: The Birth and Death of Underground Atlanta, 1969–1981," Ichiro Miyata demonstrates that Underground Atlanta, a tourist attraction, was destined to fail because of its futile attempt to create a white middle-class space in downtown Atlanta, where the effects of post-war deindustrialization, including unemployment, homelessness, and the presence of poor racial/ethnic minorities, were becoming apparent. The developers and politicians who endeavored to build the tourist enclave claimed that Underground Atlanta was a family-oriented, "everybody's" entertainment district but it only welcomed middle-class white consumers. Underground Atlanta built fences and gates around its property when the visibility of the homeless population, mostly black, increased, which ironically represented Underground's failure to keep their "healthy" downtown for middle-class people; they eventually closed their gates for good in 1981.

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SHITSUYO MASUI
Editor

For those who wish to submit a manuscript to the *Japanese Journal of American Studies*:

1. Contributors must be dues-paying members of the JAAS.
2. Contributors are expected to observe our time schedule. They must first submit the title and abstract (about 300 words) by mid-January. We are unable to accept the manuscript without this procedure.
3. The final manuscript (maximum 8000 words including notes) is due early May. The editorial committee will inform each contributor of the result of the selection process by the end of June. If accepted, the paper will be published in June the following year.
4. The fall issue of the JAAS Newsletter will carry a “call for papers” announcement with exact deadlines and the special theme for the forthcoming issue.
5. The JAAS will accept inquiries through email:
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