

Editor's Introduction

“The real war will never get in the books,” said Walt Whitman. Yes, he is speaking about the Civil War, but it can probably be said of any other war. Of the same war, Herman Melville sang about the people who were baffled and turned away by “mysteries dimly sealed,” while “musing on right and wrong” of the war. Again, this has been the experience of all who have tried to penetrate the mysteries of wars ever since Paleolithic times. This year's issue of the *Japanese Journal of American Studies* combats this old but ever-intriguing and always-perplexing conundrum.

As always, our front is multifold. The journal's engagements with the question of war are fought in several theaters: political, historical, and literary. Reading through the following essays, however, one will be struck by literary authors' (probably futile) attempts to reach out for war's “mysteries dimly sealed,” while being impressed by historical and political studies showing the difficulty of putting great human struggles neatly in the books. Of course, the researchers' methodologies may differ greatly; some endeavor to understand how certain authors envisioned war in their works, and some focus on how certain wartime organizations managed their functions or how warring factions' decisions affected the course of the history, and still others show how personal lives were altered because of the hostilities between countries. But all suggest the manifold aspects of war as an activity of man as aggregate existence. War is quite beyond the control of individuals in governments or organizations, and it demarcates a psychologically totalitarian state where individual human beings become less like what they are in ordinary society. And such a state may defy scientific description based on modern (individualist) rationality.

After all is said, war will never be fully described, nor will its mysteries ever be uncovered by scientific research such as ours. But these descriptive endeavors are necessary and worthwhile (I believe) in curbing the actions of warring factions and in bringing the course of hostilities back within the

bounds of rationality. Now that Japan's political leaders, conservative and radicals alike, are considering the possibility of amending the Constitution so that it can create all-new armed forces to be ranked among the already crowded military powers of the world, this issue of the *JJAS* will hopefully be a soft small voice of reason.

The essays are arranged roughly in chronological order by their topics, except for the two preceding pieces by former president of the JAAS, Eisaku Kihira, ("The Politicization of the Slavery Issue in the Early American Republic") and by former president of the American Studies Association, Priscilla Wald, ("Botanophobia: Fear of Plants in the Atomic Age"). The two essays are based on the Presidential Addresses given at JAAS's 46th annual meeting held in Nagoya. Though uninformed of this year's topic of the journal, the two presidents dealt with issues very much at the heart of the question of war in American Studies.

These two presidential essays are followed first by Yukiko Oshima's "Herman Melville's 'Pequot Trilogy': The Pequot War in *Moby-Dick*, *Israel Potter*, and *Clarel*," in which Oshima discusses what she terms Herman Melville's "Pequot trilogy." In these three major works, she argues, Melville makes use of a Native American tribe, the Pequot, who were declared extinct after the Puritan-Pequot War of 1636–37. She shows that some aspects of the retributive violence are transposed in *Moby-Dick* and *Clarel* in the way that the "ghost" of the Pequot seems to find fit agents in Captain Ahab in *Moby-Dick* and Nathan in *Clarel*. On the other hand, according to Oshima, the third work, *Israel Potter*, demonstrates Melville's unconventional sympathy toward the Pequot.

Moving forward a few decades, we encounter the first organized and professional "angels of war" in Yoshiya Makita's "Professional Angels at War: The United States Army Nursing Service and Changing Ideals of Nursing at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." In this essay Makita examines the changing ideals of female nursing in the United States through an analysis of the organization of the Army Nursing Service at the turn of the twentieth century. In parallel with the domestic institutionalization of nursing education since the late nineteenth century, Makita argues, wartime emergencies provided the thrust to propel the professionalization of American women nurses. By focusing on the nursing service during the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the Russo-Japanese

War in 1904–5, he demonstrates in this essay that wartime activities of American women nurses facilitated a conceptual rearticulation of nursing as a gendered “profession” in transnational milieus.

We then move to the various aspects of the two world wars. First, Shusuke Takahara’s “America’s Withdrawal from Siberia and Japan-US Relations” examines America’s withdrawal from Siberia and its impact on Japan-US relations during 1918–20. Because of the shifting international environment, domestic pressure, and the rapid military developments in Siberia, President Woodrow Wilson decided to withdraw from Siberia. Takahara shows how America’s sudden withdrawal forced the Japanese government single-handedly to undertake the defense of Siberia and the Trans-Siberian and the Chinese Eastern Railways by sending reinforcements. In addition, the withdrawal damaged the Hara Cabinet’s pro-American policy in Siberia and impeded its foreign policy decision making vis-à-vis the Imperial Japanese Army. Lack of mutual trust prompted unilateral actions of both countries in Siberia, which damaged Japan-US relations.

Takeya Mizuno’s “A Disturbing and Ominous Voice from a Different Shore: Japanese Radio Propaganda and its Impact on the US Government’s Treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II” examines how a Japanese shortwave radio propaganda network, known as Radio Tokyo, reported about mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. From the earliest phase of the war, Radio Tokyo saw the US federal government’s discriminatory policy toward Japanese Americans as a bonanza of propaganda opportunities. Mizuno’s findings demonstrate that Japanese American mass incarceration was actually a policy that involved dynamic global propaganda warfare.

Hiroo Nakajima’s “Beyond War: The Relationship between Takagi Yasaka and Charles and Mary Beard” focuses on the personal friendship between Takagi Yasaka, a founder of American Studies in Japan, and the prominent American historians Charles and Mary Beard. Nakajima argues that Japanese-American cultural relations continued in spite of the Pacific War. For Takagi, the war between the two countries was an aberration. At the same time, Charles Beard staunchly criticized President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who led the nation into the war with Japan, a country he had visited twice with his wife Mary in the early 1920s. As the relationship

between Takagi and the Beards resumed after the war, Wilsonian internationalism regained momentum in Japan, which testifies to the continuity of Japanese-American cultural relations.

Takakazu Yamagishi's "War, Veterans, and Americanism: The Political Struggle over VA Health Care after World War II" demonstrates how the idea of Americanism impacted the development of Veterans Administration health care. As an unprecedented number of soldiers began to come home after World War II, the issue of VA health care caused a heated debate. While veterans who fought the war to protect Americanism asked for the expansion of VA health care as a compensation for their sacrifice, their opponents criticized it as "socialized medicine," which, they claimed, was a threat to Americanism. By focusing on the political struggle over VA health care after World War II, this article shows that both the founding principles of the United States and international relations constrained what veterans organizations could say and do. Yamagishi also makes theoretical contributions to the studies of health-care policy development.

Finally, turning back again to the literary front concerning World War II, Takayoshi Ishiwari's "Rainbow's Light: Or, 'Illuminations' in Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*" shows how the image of "light" plays a crucial role in Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. One can see what makes this novelistic encyclopedia of World War II "postmodern," that is, "post-World War II," by looking at the ways in which Pynchon uses the metaphor of light. On one hand, Pynchon's paranoid vision of the war "breaks," just as day or light does at the break of dawn. On the other, the entire novel might be read as an attempt to throw light on the author's own stream of consciousness, or his vision of the war that demands to be communicated in narrative form. The unique play of these two types of "illumination" comes from Pynchon's longing to see World War II for what it is.

To round up this year's volume on war, we have an essay apiece on the Cold War and the Vietnam War. Itsuki Kurashina's "'Let the MLF Sink Out of Sight': The Cold War and Alliance under the Johnson Administration" examines the policy of the Johnson administration toward the proposed Multilateral Force. MLF was designed to avoid nuclear proliferation within the US-led alliance and to tighten its unity. Yet, the proposal failed to calm frictions among the allies. The eventual abortion

of this project reveals an important aspect of the Cold War. It sat at the juncture of superpower relations and intra-alliance relations. Its eventual fate was largely influenced by their mixture.

And Takeshi Uesugi's "Is Agent Orange a Poison?: Vietnamese Agent Orange Litigation and the New Paradigm of Poison" focuses on the US Federal court case, the *Vietnamese Association for the Victims of Agent Orange (VAVA) v Dow Chemical et al.* (2004). The case brought to the fore the paradox of adjudicating across a scientific paradigm shift, in which the concept of poison changed drastically. Uesugi argues that the characterization of Agent Orange—the chemical herbicides used by the US military during the Vietnam War—as a poison was crucial for the plaintiffs' international law claim but that it was not as self-evident before the 1960s as it may seem now. Often mediated through the environment, and having a latency of up to decades, the toxic effects of the new type of poison that emerged in the 1960s were discernible only through the statistical patterns of diseases.

Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge Katy Meigs for her continuing assistance as copy editor for the journal. Most of the articles published in the *Japanese Journal of American Studies*, including those from back issues, are now freely available on the Internet (<http://www.jaas.gr.jp>). And this year I am happy to report that articles in the recent issues will soon be searchable in EBSCO Publishing's database services too. We invite responses and criticisms from our readers and hope that the journal will continue to be an important medium for American Studies.

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