

Editor's Introduction

What does “America” stand for? What is “America” and how should the rest of the world relate with this superpower? As the repercussions of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001 came to sink in, those questions came to occupy the minds of an increasing number of people in the world. After the retaliatory attacks against Afghanistan, the United States quickly set its next target on Iraq, called the Iraqi dictator the primary threat to world peace, and expressed its willingness to resort to force if the Iraqi leader did not abrogate his power of his own accord. As we finish editing this issue, we are witnessing the failure of the United Nations to solve the Iraqi problem peacefully. Standing on the eve of the American attack on Iraq, the world looks nervously into an uncertain future, in which the United States will continue to boast its military strength, unmatched by any other nation or any other nations combined.

One of the striking developments surrounding the United States after the 9.11 attacks has been how the heart-felt sympathies towards the victims and the feeling of horror shared world-wide quickly gave way to a deep-seated anti-Americanism. As the United States launched its war on terrorism, criticism against the United States’ unilateral actions mounted even among some of its closest allies. As the question “why do they hate us?”—painfully raised in the United States after 9.11—quickly came to be subsumed under the interrogating words “you are either with us or with the terrorists,” those who grieved with the United States increasingly started to question the course of American foreign policy. The gulf dividing the United States and its sympathetic opponents, as well as the gulf dividing the United States and its long-term antagonists, seems to have become deeper than ever.

“Images of ‘America’ in Conflict,” the main theme of the current issue, seeks to address the question of why America, regarded as the bastion of hope for the oppressed, has been under such a serious challenge not only at present but also in the past. For scholars who have chosen American Studies as a field this is not an easy topic to delve into. Yet exactly because it is difficult, it is our responsibility to tackle the problem at this critical point in history and share our thoughts with our colleagues all around the world.

The first and second articles in this issue are written by the presidents of the American Studies Association (USA) and the Japanese Association for American Studies, respectively. In a paper entitled “Race and Immigration in Changing Communities of the United States,” George J. Sanchez describes the recent developments in the various ethnic neighborhoods in California, and analyzes the characteristics of communities in which, due to the increase in the number of the Latino and Asian-American populations, there are no longer a single “majority” group. He concludes that contrary to the common understanding that urban neighborhoods in America have been racially exclusive, as exemplified by ghettos or barrios, more historians are finding out that those neighborhoods have always been racially mixed and that there have been various inter-racial and inter-ethnic interactions working out to build a better civil society. In “A New Social Frame of Reference for American Studies,” Kensaburo Shinkawa makes some propositions for understanding the United States as it stands at the opening of the third millennium, by referring back to the 1960s, which, he argues, was another critical decade in American history. Indicating that in the 1960s, the New Left oriented critique of power structures, the civil rights movement, and the self-criticism of American interventionist foreign policy were the three conspicuous factors that led the many social movements of the 1960s toward reforming and democratizing the United States, he concludes that the strength of American democracy, as exemplified by the system of checks and balances and the civilian control of the military, should be resuscitated while new experiments, such as the exportation of “multiculturalism” in the field of international relations should be pursued more vigorously. Shinkawa’s paper, like Sanchez’s, was presented at the annual conference of the Japanese Association for American Studies held at Meiji University in June 2002.

The next three papers are devoted to this issue’s main theme, “Images of ‘America’ in Conflict.” In an article entitled “America—Homoglossic

or Heteroglossic?" Konomi Ara delves into the question of "what America is and what it should stand for." Analyzing the genealogy of key concepts in American history such as Christianity, "e pluribus unum," and "Universal Republic," she concludes that the 9.11 may have been both a disaster and a blessing, in that America may have been given a chance to become a truly global society, "a neutral territory" as envisioned by Nathaniel Hawthorne, in which mutual development, betterment and happiness for all peoples on earth could be guaranteed. The second paper, Katsuaki Watanabe's "Welcome to the Imploded Future: Don DeLillo's *Mao II* Reconsidered in the Light of September 11," seeks to reconsider the meaning of 9.11 from a literary perspective. Juxtaposing *Mao II*, written in 1991, with the intentions of the terrorists to nullify all forms of speech in the world, the author emphasizes the significance of the novel, which, in his analysis, rejuvenates itself as a metafictional counter-narrative that exemplifies the awkward yet surmountable predicament for living language after 9.11. In "A Global Superpower or a Model of Democracy?: Images of America in Post-Cold War Japan," Fumiko Nishizaki delineates the conflicting images of America in Japan in the past decade and a half, focusing on the debates over the issues of war, peace, and historical memories. She argues that as the U.S.-Japanese military alliance came to be accepted widely in Japan and as the identity of Japan as a country with pacifist constitution weakened after the end of the Cold War, the image of America as "the Republic of Ideas" also dissipated. In other words, there are now fewer people in Japan who regard the United States as a "special country."

The next three papers deal with a variety of topics in American Studies. In "Searching for Federal Aid: The Petitioning Activities of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company," Hisayo Kushida explores the Chesapeake and Delaware Company's search for federal aid in the early 19th century. She examines how the company tried to overcome the apparent limitations posed by the United States Constitution, and how its petitions contributed to the production of Gallatin's Report on Public Roads and Canals in 1808, which is considered the first national planning initiative for roads and canals, aiming to develop communications, economic markets, and national unity. In "A Strong Man to Run a Race: W.E.B. DuBois and the Politics of Black Masculinity at the Turn of the Century," Ayumu Kaneko explores the racial discourse employed by the African-American activist and suggests that his strategy depended heavily on the language of masculinity and respectability describing

African-American middle-class men. Nonetheless, he argues, DuBois succeeded in representing himself as a “race man” because he articulated his classed and gendered position by employing the discourse of racial identification. “The Atlantic Charter of 1941: A Political Tool of Non-belligerent America,” by Yui Hatcho, discusses the political backgrounds involved in the making of the Atlantic Charter of 1941. She traces the Roosevelt administration’s intention to stand behind the British while remaining officially neutral in the war, and concludes that the Atlantic Conference, in which the United States insisted on making a specific framework while leaving the detailed negotiations for the future represented what was to become the characteristic style of American diplomacy.

This journal is conceived as an important medium for American Studies across both disciplinary and national boundaries. We welcome active responses from our readers and hope they will consider submitting their work to future issues.

FUMIKO NISHIZAKI
Editor
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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 7000 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 "call for papers" announcement with exact deadlines and special theme for the forthcoming issue.
5. The JAAS will accept inquiries through email:
jaas@cd.inbox.ne.jp