

Report of Proseminar 2023

2023 Tokyo Proseminar

Date: June 5, 2023

Time: 14:00-17:00

Venue: Rikkyo University (Conference Room 1&2, Building No. 12)

Commentators:

Prof. Anna Mae Duane (University of Connecticut/ASA)

Prof. Simeon Man (University of California, San Diego/ASA)

Prof. Jane Kamensky (Harvard University/OAH)

Prof. Patricia Ventura (Spelman College/ASA)

Chair:

Prof. Hiro Matsubara (Rikkyo University)

14:00-14:10	Opening remarks
14:10-14:25	Presentation 1 Mamiri Imai (PhD candidate, Rikkyo University, graduate) “Sense of Citizenship in the Early Republic—The Taste and Behavior of Republicanism—”
14:25-14:35	Comment Prof. Jane Kamensky
14:35-14:50	Open Discussion
14:50-15:05	Presentation 2 Yoshie Nijima (Jumonji University) “Conservative Populism- victimized majority identity discourse”
15:05-15:15	Comment Prof. Patricia Ventura
15:15-15:30	Open Discussion
15:30-15:50	Break
15:50-16:05	Presentation 3

	Erika Kato (PhD candidate, University of Cincinnati) “The Whiteness of African Sons: Racial Ambiguity in Mark Twain’s <i>Pudd’nhead Wilson</i> ”
16:05-16:15	Comment Prof. Anna Mae Duane
16:15-16:30	Open Discussion
16:30-16:45	Presentation 4 Yuki Takauchi (Hirosaki University) “Across Borders, Among Patriarchies: Women’s History of Immigration in Occupied Okinawa, 1945-1972”
16:45-16:55	Comment Prof. Simeon Man
16:55-17:10	Open Discussion
17:10-17:15	Reflections & Closing remarks

2023 Kyoto Proseminar

Date: June 9, 2023

Time: 14:00-17:30

Venue: Ritsumeikan University (Zonshinkan Room ZS405)

Commentators:

Prof. Anna Mae Duane (University of Connecticut/ASA)

Prof. Simeon Man (University of California, San Diego/ASA)

Prof. Patricia Ventura (Spelman College/ASA)

Chair:

Prof. Fumiko Sakashita (Ritsumeikan University)

14:00-14:10	Opening remarks
14:10-14:35	Presentation 1 Shintaro Mizushima (Ritsumeikan University) “The Beat Generation and Kasutori Culture: Dissent and Carnal Hedonism an Ocean Apart”
14:35-14:50	Comment Prof. Anna Mae Duane
14:50-15:10	Q & A
15 min	Break
15:25-15:50	Presentation 2 Jung-Eun Lee (Kinugasa Research Organization, Ritsumeikan University) “U.S. Base, Postcolonialism, and English Education: How South Koreans Reconstruct the Philippines as a Destination to Study English Abroad”
15:50-16:05	Comment Prof. Simeon Man
16:05-16:25	Q & A

15 min	Break
16:40-17:20	Open Discussion (All participants) “Current Status of American Studies” Topic provider: Prof. Patricia Ventura
17:20-17:30	Reflections & Closing remarks

2023 Tokyo Proseminar Report

Yuki Takauchi (Hirosaki University)

The proseminar in Tokyo this year was a great opportunity to share my work and receive feedback. I presented my paper, “Across Borders, Among Patriarchies: Women’s History of Immigration in Occupied Okinawa, 1945-1972,” which analyzes the history of immigration and the family register (koseki system) in occupied Okinawa. Focusing on the experiences of women from Amami Island, I argued that the systems of control and surveillance that these women faced were not merely American, but rather an entanglement of American and Japanese colonialisms.

I greatly appreciated the helpful feedback and questions I received. Professor Simeon Man's (UC San Diego) recommendation that I emphasize the importance of multi-lingual and multi-sited research in American Studies scholarship, as well as his comments on “racial capitalism,” have encouraged me to deploying the analytic in my own research. Professor Jane Kamensky (Harvard University) also generously provided insightful feedback on my use and reading of primary sources. I am very thankful for the feedback and comments, which I will take into consideration as I revise the paper for future publication.

Not only was my own experience of very productive, but the atmosphere of the entire seminar was similarly fantastic. Although it is always nerve-racking to share a work in progress, all four guest commentators from the United States and the chair of the session made sure that presenters felt safe to open their own work to constructive criticism. It was clear from their attentive listening and pointed questions that their aim was to help develop the work further. It was a great demonstration of what mentorship should look like.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to the Japanese Association of American Studies, American Studies Association, Organization of American Historians, and Japan-US Friendship Commission for all their support in organizing the proseminar.

2023 Tokyo Proseminar Report

Mamiri Imai (Ph.D. Candidate, Rikkyo University)

The JAAS Proseminar was a great opportunity for me to receive feedback on my research project from leading American History and American Studies scholars from ASA and OAH. The event was face-to-face this year, which allowed for impassioned presentations and active discussions. I am grateful to the ASA and OAH professors—especially Prof. Jane Kamensky as the commentator for my session—for giving me insightful comments on my presentation. And I greatly appreciate the efforts of Prof. Satoko Ezaki, Prof. Hiro Matsubara, and all the staff involved in organizing the event as well.

The comments that I received from the professors were constructive for deepening discussions in my dissertation. My presentation, “Sense of Citizenship in the Early Republic—The Taste and Behavior of Republicanism,” will be part of my dissertation. Prof. Kamensky’s comments helped me to look more closely at the chronological context of the 1820s-1830s—unstable social, economic, and political shifts—, and she also suggested that I focus more on the regionality of culinary culture. I also appreciate that Prof. Anna Mae read my paper and gave me feedback despite not being the commentator for my session. Prof. Duane’s comment was helpful for me to think about Child’s cookbook and its relationship to her social movements; abolitionism, women’s rights, Native American rights, etc. All these valuable comments prompted me to reposition Child’s cookbook within a larger framework of the history of the Early Republic. I also appreciate that Prof. Patricia Ventura introduced me to a research book related to my study after my presentation.

Overall, the JAAS Proseminar was a great opportunity for me to present my research in English and share my research with American History and American Studies scholars in Japan and the United States. I could receive constructive feedback from prominent scholars and this seminar led me toward the next steps in writing my dissertation.

2023 Tokyo Proseminar Report

Erika Kato (Ph.D. candidate, University of Cincinnati)

The JAAS Pro-Seminar provided me with a great opportunity to learn as well as to get constructive feedbacks. As a Ph.D. student who explore the interrelation between literary works and historical backgrounds, I learned a lot from the ways in which other presenters approach their social topics within historical contexts. All of presenters' research areas are different, so the seminar was really helpful for me to think how to raise a question and how to reach the conclusion. I appreciate the ASA and OAH professors for giving me insightful comments, Prof. Satoko Ezaki and Prof. Hiroyuki Matsubara for giving me such a great opportunity.

The comments that I received were very helpful for me to prepare my dissertation. I presented a paper titled "The Whiteness of African Sons: Racial Ambiguity in Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*." Prof. Anna Mae Duane's comments on freedom made me reconsider the main character's agency. Whether the slave mother Roxana has a choice or not is still difficult to determine. Yet, I hope to explain how Roxana is motivated to switch her slave baby with the white master's legitimate child, in the future in my dissertation. Prof. Duane also suggested the importance of the main character's control over domesticity as a servant, which made me look at the fluidity of the power-relationship between the white master and the black servant. Prof. Duane's another comment about the case of Pressy vs. Ferguson also helped me to consider how the racial identity is represented in the novel.

Again, I express my gratitude for this wonderful opportunity. I was glad to share my concern with American Studies scholars in Japan and the United States.