

Report on the International Symposium/Workshop in Japanese Literary and Visual Studies
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I felt that the 2020 Columbia/Waseda Symposium and Workshop presented an incredible opportunity for advanced PhD students in particular because it was formal and large enough to test one's presentation skill on a level above the average graduate student conference and yet allowed for the sort of feedback on individual papers that is generally unprecedented for organized events held at this scale. In my case, this was the first time I was able to present my in-progress work at a venue where the audience consisted of not only other graduate students or professors already familiar with my work, but also of experts in genres and fields far different from my own. This, in turn, had a considerable effect on both the manner in which I prepared for the presentation and the way in which I internalized the comments and feedback. For one, it forced me to reframe my work using a format that could reach and appeal to a larger range of listeners, which is a skill that will invariably go a long way once I near the completion of my program and advance onto job interviews that will likely feature a committee with diverse backgrounds. In retrospect, I realize that I could have gone even further in making my presentation more listener-friendly by narrowing down the scope of my examples and shortening the content; however, all of this amounted to a learning experience and I am grateful for having gone through it in such a friendly and encouraging setting. Next, as far as the feedback is concerned, the diversity of academic interests in the room and the fact that the symposium was explicitly about topics in literary *and* visual studies allowed me to reexamine my topic more critically and from angles that I had not considered before. Up until that point, my project began with literature and ended with literary permutations and criticisms of that literature, leaving me with little room or confidence to go beyond that. Yet receiving many thought-provoking questions and comments from academics in the visual field allowed me to reexamine my analytical framework and rethink the ways in which they could be extended to the visual receptions of my base materials, opening my eyes to the many overlaps and common points between the two fields. In the case of graduate students, the work that they presented on ultimately cycled back to their dissertation projects and I would say that this kind of exposure to external review was timed perfectly in the sense that it left ample opportunity to internalize and incorporate the feedback either into the writing process or into job presentation practice. All in all, I believe that the extension of the symposium and workshop to include graduate student presentations afforded the students with a wonderful learning environment without the usual pressures and stress of such affairs and I cannot reiterate enough how thankful I am to have gotten to be a part of it.