UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities:
Decolonial Possibilities through Japanese Brazilian Literature

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature with a Specialization in Critical Gender Studies

by

Shannon Welch

Committee in charge:

Professor Daisuke Miyao, Co-Chair
Professor Andrea Mendoza, Co-chair
Professor Ignacio López-Calvo
Professor Wendy Matsumura
Professor Erin Suzuki

2022

The dissertation of Shannon Welch is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

University of California San Diego

2022

DEDICATION

There are many people without whom this dissertation would not have been possible. I will not name them all here, but I believe they know who they are. I would like to dedicate this project to my family—my parents, Lori and Richard, and my sisters, Kelleigh and Corie—who have provided me with unconditional love, support, and much-needed humor throughout the process. I would also like to dedicate my dissertation to the love of my life, my husband, Ryota Kojima, who has wanted nothing less than to see my dreams come true. Thank you for always being there for me and for the care, patience, and love you have given me along the way.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the incredible support and generosity I received from my co-chairs, Daisuke Miyao and Andrea Mendoza, throughout the dissertation-writing process. This project would not have been possible without their insightful feedback, words of encouragement, and willingness to read my drafts. I am also sincerely appreciative of the writing, research, and professional support I received from my committee members, Ignacio López-Calvo, Wendy Matsumura, and Erin Suzuki.

I would further like to acknowledge Kobe College Corporation- Japan Education Exchange (KCC-JEE) and the organization's generous graduate fellowship that enabled me to conduct research for this dissertation for one year at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan. Moreover, I am grateful to the UCSD Department of Literature for its Dissertation Fellowship that allowed me to focus on my writing and research for one year to complete this project.

The Introduction, in part, will be a reprint of the material as it will appear in the forthcoming "Belonging Beyond Borders: Japanese Brazilian Stories of Diasporic Return without a 'Homecoming'" in Verge: Studies in Global Asias 9.1, 2023. Welch, Shannon. University of Minnesota Press, 2023. The dissertation author was the primary author of this paper.

Chapter 3, in part, will also be a reprint of material from the same forthcoming publication in Verge: Studies in Global Asias 9.1, 2023. Welch, Shannon. University of Minnesota Press, 2023, but from a different section of the paper. As stated above, the dissertation author was the primary author of this paper.

VITA

2013	Bachelor of Arts, Villanova University
2014	Fulbright Brazil English Teaching Assistant, University of Maranhão, São Luis, Brazil
2016	Master of Arts, Dartmouth College
2016	Graduate Research Assistant, Dartmouth College (Summer)
2016- 2018	Teaching Assistant, University of California San Diego
2018- 2019	Nippon Foundation Fellow, Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies
2019- 2020	Teaching Assistant, University of California San Diego
2020	Graduate Research Assistant, University of California San Diego (Summer)
2020- 2021	Kobe College Corporation Japan Education Exchange Graduate Fellow, Waseda University
2021- 2022	UCSD Literature Department Dissertation Fellow, University of California San Diego
2022	Instructor of Record, University of California San Diego (Summer)
2022	Teaching Assistant, University of California San Diego (Fall)
2022	Doctor of Philosophy, University of California San Diego

PUBLICATIONS

"Belonging without Borders: Japanese Brazilian Stories of Diasporic Return without a 'Homecoming.'" *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 9.1 (Spring 2023), edited by Tina Chen. (forthcoming).

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Literature

Studies in Comparative Literature
Specialization in Critical Gender Studies
Professors Daisuke Miyao, Ignacio López-Calvo, Wendy Matsumura, Andrea Mendoza, Erin Suzuki

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities:
Decolonial Possibilities through Japanese Brazilian Literature

by

Shannon Welch

Doctor of Philosophy in Literature with a Specialization in Critical Gender Studies

University of California San Diego, 2022

Professor Daisuke Miyao, Co-Chair
Professor Andrea Mendoza, Co-chair

In the early twentieth century, the Japanese empire colonized extensive regions in East Asia and the Pacific, while its state government simultaneously sponsored and managed Japanese immigration to Brazil. Despite the continuity between these imperial expansionist practices, dominant historical narratives do not usually portray Japanese immigration and imperialism in connection with one another. The discrepancy stems largely from disciplinary boundaries based upon geopolitical divisions of the world that separate Asian and Latin American concerns from one another. However, *Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities: Decolonial Possibilities through Japanese Brazilian Literature* addresses this oversight by examining Japanese Brazilian literature within the context of Japanese imperialism and

illustrating how certain literary texts illuminate the veiled links between immigration and empire. The dissertation engages a transpacific vantage point grounded in feminist and decolonial analytics to read a multilingual archive that juxtaposes 20th century Japanese Brazilian prose fiction with dominant sociopolitical discourses found in Japanese and Brazilian newspapers, migration advertisements, and government reports. It unpacks how the literary stories—in comparison with the dominant accounts—provide an alternative picture of Japanese immigration to Brazil by calling attention to the racialized, gendered, and sexualized dynamics of the Japanese state-managed, settler colonialist system. In particular, it focuses on literary texts that follow the experiences of queer and female subjects "anomalous" to the traditional heteronormative, male-centered immigrant narrative, as well as texts that detail encounters between Japanese immigrants and racialized figures of "alterity" like Afro-Brazilians, Native Brazilians, and Okinawan immigrants. Through utilizing an intersectional lens, *Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities* unpacks the incommensurate experiences of power at the limits of the Japanese Brazilian community between *anomalous* subjects just *inside* its imagined boundaries and *subaltern* subjects *outside* them. The comparison between these various positionalities, as argued in the dissertation, brings into focus the multiple modes of accountability required to address Japanese imperialism's mutual constitution by heteropatriarchy and colonial racial capitalism and make strides toward decolonial liberation in the transpacific.

INTRODUCTION to Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities: Decolonial Possibilities through Japanese Brazilian Literature

Anomaly, n:

> "a. irregularity, deviation from the common order, exceptional condition or circumstance"[1]

Alterity, n:

> "The fact or state of being other or different; diversity, difference, otherness; an instance of this."[2]

What does it mean to label something an "anomaly?" For example, what is suggested when the story of a militant modern Japanese Brazilian woman in 1930s São Paulo is called an "anomaly" within the history of the Japanese diaspora in Brazil? On the one hand, the term implies a difference from a more "traditional" identity. As an "exception" or "abnormality," the classification of "anomaly" presumes that this modern woman diverges from the "usual" Japanese Brazilian subject—a heteronormative, male subject. On the other hand, the label does not necessarily exclude the "anomaly" from the group in question. Though her story may be marginalized within Japanese Brazilian historical accounts, the modern woman is still considered part of the diasporic community in comparison to say, Native Brazilians and Afro-Brazilians who are "too different" to be included. "Alterity" names the stronger sense of "otherness" attributed to these two racialized minorities—"alterity" as an "irreducible" difference that exceeds the limits of a certain categorization. Looking at these two racialized groups in comparison to the Japanese Brazilian woman, we may then conclude that an "anomaly" marks the boundary of an identity from the *inside*, while "alterity" marks it from the *outside*.

[1] "anomaly, n.". OED Online. September 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/8043?redirectedFrom=anomaly (accessed October 21, 2022).
[2] "alterity, n.". OED Online. September 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/5788?redirectedFrom=alterity (accessed October 21, 2022).

Yet how are these degrees of belonging determined—who decides who and what qualifies as exceptions to the rules and who and what are disbarred completely? And do anomalies always remain neatly contained within their conceptual and identitarian boundaries or are there possibilities for their spillover beyond the seals of confinement? If they do cross categorical lines, how might they relate to alterities on the other side? What alliances may be possible between anomalies and alterities to call attention to the processes that regiment, restrict, and repudiate?

I start with these questions about anomalies and alterities to begin thinking through the decolonial possibilities that may emerge when critical attention is placed on the categorical margins and the excesses, erasures, exclusions, insurgencies, and alternatives that exist in tension there. Decoloniality, as simultaneous theory and praxis, refers to efforts to interrogate the power structures of modernity that include but are not limited to colonization, settler colonialism, imperialism, racial capitalism, cisheteropatriarchy, heteronormativity, while also thinking and living a plurality of knowledges, social practices, and community relations—especially those that have been marginalized and erased by a U.S. and Eurocentric universalizing frame of knowledge. The scrutiny of categories and dominant identity formations is significant to these endeavors since it provides an opportunity to consider how singular ways of conceptualizing and understanding the world can reinforce asymmetric systems of power. It further helps us to contemplate what social transformations are possible if we engage with and learn from multiple ways of life, which may be considered "anomalous" or "other" under the rubric of U.S. and Eurocentrism.

Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities proposes a close examination of Japanese diasporic literature in Brazil as one way (among many) through which we may engage in some of the

critical, reflective, and imaginative tasks required to work toward decoloniality. Here, decoloniality is not as a finite, achievable goal but rather an ongoing process that requires intellectual and interpretative vigilance, reevaluation, and revision. Japanese Brazilian literature offers an opportunity to employ these contemplative practices, utilizing the concepts of anomaly and alterity to think through decolonial possibilities within the localized context of the transpacific. It serves as one specific case study, but the hope is for its analytical efforts to inspire future conversations and projects that take up questions of decoloniality in the transpacific and beyond.

A study of Japanese Brazilian literature is rich with occasions to ruminate on the categorical margins. As a look at perhaps a less familiar body of literature and a manifestation of a traditionally uncommon pairing of Asia and Latin America, the study already appears as relatively anomalous within the global academy; yet this may be further compounded by the complexity of its historical backdrop. Japanese immigration to Brazil began in 1908 and as early as 1916, members of the immigrant community began printing Japanese-language newspapers, featuring poetry and serialized prose fiction. Many of these early literary texts were produced at a time when the Japanese empire began to directly involve itself in immigration to Brazil (from 1924) by sponsoring emigrants and managing immigrant settlements there as part of a larger strategy of imperial expansion. Already the Japanese empire had begun colonizing parts of East Asia, and its promotion of migration-colonization (移植民 *ishokumin*)[3] in Brazil functioned in continuation with its aims to magnify its material, territorial, and political power in the world.

[3] The term *ishokumin* combines the Japanese words "*imin*" meaning migration and "*shokumin*" meaning colonization to describe the Japanese practice of migration-led expansionism. See Eichiro Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 5.

Despite the entanglement of Japanese immigration and imperialism, the two phenomena are not usually scrutinized in connection with one another. This stems largely from disciplinary divisions and constricted practices of knowledge-production in a U.S.-dominant academy. The discipline of area studies in particular has distanced East Asia and Latin America, so that Japanese colonialization in the Pacific appears as a distinct phenomenon from Japanese immigration to the Americas. Additionally, other academic fields like postcolonial studies and ethnic studies have traditionally drawn from U.S. and European models to theorize colonialism and immigration, which, too, have overlooked Japan's specific case of migration-colonization (移植民 *ishokumin*) or what others have termed: "migration-led settler colonialism."[4] However, various Japanese Brazilian literary texts illuminate the veiled link between Japanese immigration and imperialism and intervene in the dominant narratives surrounding this history. In this dissertation, I analyze these works to reflect on under what conditions Japanese imperial formations in Brazil have been rendered an object of nonknowledge in the transpacific and, therefore, have impeded decolonization there following World War II. My entry into a movement toward decoloniality then begins with a look at the legacies of Japanese imperialism, its ties to the U.S. empire, and how both have contributed to hegemonic social and epistemological formations in the transpacific.

In addition to its disruptions to dominant historical discourses, Japanese Brazilian literature presents the opportunity to interrogate the classification of the Japanese diaspora in Brazil as an imagined community and its collective literary and cultural identity. Again, I turn to the perspectives on the periphery to examine how the borders around a cohesive diasporic

[4] See Ibid. and Sidney Xu Lu, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

identity are constructed and represented through anomalous figures and external "others." Each story that I will read contains or itself seems to be an anomaly within the canon of Japanese diasporic literature in Brazil. I focus on narratives that highlight the perspectives of female and queer immigrants and the relationship of the diasporic community with other racialized groups in Brazil, such as Indigenous Brazilians, Afro-Brazilians, and the Okinawan diaspora in Brazil. These texts bring to the forefront issues of gender, sexuality, race, capitalism, and imperialism, thereby accenting the intersecting systems of power in the transpacific that shape hegemonic formations both within the Japanese diaspora and between the diaspora and other minority groups. Their literary representations invite speculations into relationality in the transpacific and how we might imagine alternatives to the modern/colonial gender system.

To begin this innovative work, *Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities* draws from various interdisciplinary methodologies taken from transpacific studies, decolonial theory, and transnational feminism to engage a multi-perspective critique attuned to the stealthy workings of power. It takes an intersectional approach in its analysis, asserting that the different axes of identity cannot be considered in isolation and must be looked at as mutually constitutive and overlapping in complex and uneven ways. In other words, it centralizes the social categorizations of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. in its interrogation of imperialism, colonialism, and global capitalism in the transpacific. The pairing of this critical vantage point with the concepts of "anomaly" and "alterity" generates an opportunity to call into question the categories, concepts, and epistemological frameworks that sustain U.S. hegemony in the transpacific. It contributes to an unlearning of restrictive conceptualizations of the planet and its histories, as well as to a relearning of a myriad of knowledges and social relations that function beyond the logics of marginalization and exclusion. As the Japanese Brazilian stories offer narratives often erased

within hegemonic discourse, they will permit us to engage in creative and contemplative labor that can lead to bolder and more transformative social change.

Japanese Brazilian Literature

Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities takes as its focus the body of literature associated with the Japanese diaspora in Brazil. More specifically, it looks at prose fiction written by or about the Japanese Brazilian community. However, this grouping of literary texts is not a self-evident category but rather a construction marked by numerous imaginations of a Japanese Brazilian literary identity that have changed over time and across different spaces. Such volatility and multiplicity become apparent when looking at the variety of names given to this collection of texts. Writers, critics, scholars, etc. have referred to the Japanese Brazilian community's body of literature by three main names throughout its development: *shokumin* (colonial) literature, *koronia* (enclave) literature, and *Burajiru Nikkei* (Nikkei Brazilian) literature.

The first, *shokumin* literature, designates texts during the prewar period that appeared mainly within Japanese-language newspapers and magazines in Brazil, such as *Burajiru Jihō* (Brazil Times) and *Nōgyō no Burajiru* (Agricultural Brazil).[5] "*Shokumin bungaku*" (colonial literature)[6] takes its name from early Japanese immigrants settlements called *shokuminchi* (colonies),[7] which Japanese Brazilian literary critics encouraged writers to represent in their

[5] Serialized short fiction and poetry had been published in newspapers in Meiji Japan since 1886 and the Japanese immigrants continued this tradition by including a literature and arts column in the periodicals they started in Brazil as early as 1916. See Edward Mack, *Acquired Alterity: Migration, Identity, and Literary Nationalism* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022),

[6] Sometimes it is also called "ishokumin bungaku" (migration-colonization literature).

[7] "*Shokuminchi*" does not translate precisely to "colony" and the way the term has been used to describe primarily European models of colonization. Although "*shokumin*" (colonization) and "*imin*" (immigration) have been thought to be distinct based upon the empire's control of the process of colonization and its lack of involvement in immigration, the line of separation has not always been so clear in Japanese history. One of the leading thinkers of colonial studies during the Japanese empire's reign, Yanaihara Tadao (矢内原忠雄, 1893-1961), theorized that "*shokumin*" could also encompass the meaning of "*imin*" when it referred to group migration and permanent

works. Most early writers were considered "amateur" authors, meaning they did not have previous experience within the literary world and they wrote as a form of diversion rather than as an occupation.[8] This classification, largely based upon literary standards of the Japanese *bundan* (literary society),[9] indicates the elitism built into understandings of "good" writing.

In 1932, the *Burajiru Jihōsha* (Jihō) newspaper established the *shokumin* literature short story award to help raise the quality of "literariness" amongst immigrant writers. This prize, as well as similar awards that followed it, became integral to increasing the production of literature in the diasporic community. In this dissertation, Hayashi Ise's "Natsuyo" (chapter 1), Sonobe Takeo's "The Age of Agricultural Gambling" (chapter 2), and Tanabe Shigeyuki's "A Certain Settler's Death" (chapter 3) are all prize-winning stories from *Jihō*'s 1932 and 1933 *shokumin* literature competitions. As the primary platforms of publication at the time, Japanese-language newspapers in Brazil and other print media played a major role in the development of Japanese Brazilian literature, as well as in connecting Japanese immigrants scattered across Brazil to allow them to see themselves as a part of a diasporic community.[10]

However, with this reliance on newspapers and journals for dissemination, the production of *shokumin* literature suffered during Getulio Vargas's "Brazilianization" campaign, when foreign-language publications were banned. Even following World War II, when Japanese-language newspapers resumed publication in 1946, conflicts within the Japanese Brazilian community curtailed literary production as its media split into two separate networks based on

settlement abroad. See Hosokawa Shūhei, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron]* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013), 12.

[8]Hosokawa Shūhei, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1: nihongo no nagai tabi[rekishi]* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2012), 44.

[9] The *Bundan* (文壇) emerged during the Meiji era and was composed of Japanese literary critics and writers who had a large influence over publications, literary awards, and conceptualizations of "good" literature.

[10] Zelideth María Rivas, "Songs from the Land of Eternal Summer: Beyond Duality in Japanese Brazilian Publication and Colonia Man'yōshū," *Comparative Literature Studies* 53, no. 4(2015), 789-795.

which supported the belief that Japan won the war and which accepted Japan's defeat.[11] As these divisions resolved, newspapers such as *Paurisuta Shinbun* and *Nihhaku Mainichi Shibun* sought to bring the Japanese diasporic community together and accelerate literary production through the creation of new literary prizes that encouraged writers to depict their postwar experiences.

Their efforts moved slowly until the 1960s ushered in what Hosokawa Shūhei and Arata Sumu refer to as "the Golden Age of *Koronia Bungaku* (*koronia* literature)."[12] Lasting from 1966 to 1977, the period coincides with the establishment of the *Koronia Bungakukai* (*Koronia* Literary Association) in 1966 and the publication of its literary journal, *Koronia bungaku*. "*Koronia*" (コロニア), sometimes called the *Nikkei koronia* (日系コロニア), became popularized as the name for the Japanese Brazilian community following the war. Differing from *shokuminchi*, *koronia* is a Japanese loan word that originates from the Portuguese "colônia," which designates a group of people who have settled outside their home country or the place where a group of immigrants has put down its roots.[13] It is closer to the English equivalents "enclave" or "settlement" rather than the cognate "colony." In selecting this name, members of *Koronia bungakukai* redefined *koronia* literature as an ethnic minority literature, a sub-category of Brazilian literature as opposed to Japanese immigrant literature.[14]

With the inception of the literary organization in the mid-1960s, the first director, Suzuki Teiti, recognized the success of the Japanese Brazilian art movement[15] and worked to propel

[11] Hosokawa, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1*, 210.
[12] See Ibid. and Arata Sumu, *Burajiru Nikkei koronia bungei, ge* (São Paulo: Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, 2008).
[13]Hosokawa Shūhei, *Tooki ni aritetsukuru mono: nikkei burajirujin no omoi · kotoba · geinou* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2008), 10.
[14] Maeyama Takashi, "Imin bungaku kara mainoritī bungaku he," in *Koronia shōsetsu senshū (dai* 1 *kan*) *paurisuta bungakushō izen,* ed. Koronia bungakukai (Sao Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975), 306-307.
[15] Informalist abstraction painters such as Tomie Ohtake, Tikashi Fukushima, and Manabu Mabe had first earned recognition in Brazil before emerging as pioneering artists on the international stage. See Pedro Erber, *Breaching the Frame: the Rise of Contemporary Art in Brazil and Japan* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).

prose fiction forward in a similar direction to produce "professional" writing that would garner similar international attention.[16] Furthermore, at this time, anthropologist and literary enthusiast, Maeyama Takashi, took on a leading role within the *Koronia Bungakukai* and emphasized the importance of preserving the history of *koronia* literature and its Japanese-language heritage. Together with the *Koronia bungakukai*, he worked to compose three anthologies of short stories in the 1970s titled *Koronia shōsetsu senshū*.[17] The three short stories from the *shokumin* literature award mentioned above, as well as Arai Chisato's "Homecoming" (chapter 3), appear in these anthologies.

In 1999, the *Koronia* Literary Association changed its name to *Burajiru Nikkei bungaku-kai* (ブラジル日系文学会) or the Brazilian Nikkei Literary Association to reflect the current state of the Nikkei community more adequately. Since *koronia* connotes having emigrated from Japan, *Burajiru Nikkei* appears as more inclusive of later generations of Japanese immigrant descendants.[18] Moreover, their organization is now bilingual and its magazine, *Burajiru Nikkei Bungaku*, features essays, short stories, and poetry in both Japanese and Portuguese.

Scholars of Japanese diasporic literary and cultural production in Brazil have tended to characterize their studies according to the language in which the texts they analyze are written. Japanese literary scholar and musicologist Hosokawa Shūhei's two volume series, *Nikkei Brazilian Immigrant Literature I&II: the Long Journey of the Japanese Language* (2012 and 2013), focuses on Japanese-language works with an extensive examination of the history of literary production, the lives of Japanese Brazilian and Okinawan Brazilian writers, and an expansive range of poems and prose fiction on their own terms. Literary scholars Edward Mack

[16] Hosokawa Shūhei, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2,* 265.
[17] Ibid., 266.
[18] Hosokawa, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1,* 142.

and Seth Jacobowitz have similarly engaged with Japanese diasporic literature in Brazil from the perspective of Japanese studies, even while not necessarily arguing for the collection of texts to be considered Japanese national literature.

On the Portuguese-language side of literary analysis, Ignacio López-Calvo, in his investigation of Japanese Brazilian cultural production since the 1980s, argues that the Portuguese-language texts by Nikkei Brazilian writers "should be considered Brazilian (and by extension, Latin American) cultural production, rather than Japanese literature, particularly when considering authors born in Brazil."[19] Through his expansive studies, he looks at how Japanese Brazilian literature illustrates the way Japanese immigrants negotiated their identities and asserted their place within the Brazilian national project. Luiz Ruffato (2013) and Cecily Raynor (2017) have also noted how Japanese Brazilian writers, primarily due to their linguistic differences, did not emerge on the Brazilian literary stage until second-generation authors like Eico Suzuki, followed by Marília Kubota and Oscar Nakasato, began writing in Portuguese.[20]

Literary scholar Zelideth María Rivas bridges the linguistic divide in her work as she engages with both Japanese and Portuguese-language texts and takes a genealogical approach to her studies of the Japanese Brazilian community. She argues that the immigrant community transitioned from a collective identity tied to a Japanese national origin to one premised on a duality of both Japanese and Brazilian histories, cultures, and languages.[21] That is, she finds Japanese Brazilian cultural production to represent the diaspora's communal memory in a way

[19] Ignacio López-Calvo, *Japanese Brazilian Saudades: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Production* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2019), 9.
[20] See Luiz Ruffato, "Imigrantes na literature brasileira," *África 21 Online* (2013). and Cecily Raynor, "Representations of Home in Obasan and Nihonjin: The Issei, Nissei, Sansei of Canada and Brazil," *Canada & Beyond: A Journal of Canadian Literary and Cultural Studies* 6 (2017): 36.
[21] Rivas, "Songs," 789.

that exceeds identification with either Japanese or Brazilian national histories and asserts its own collective identity as its own united Japanese Brazilian community.

The differences in name and conceptualization we see here reflect Edward Mack's assertion that the act of naming a collection of texts is a political move that involves a strategic selection of certain characteristics to associate with the group of texts and other traits to disregard.[22] In this dissertation, I choose to refer to the body of literature associated with the Japanese diasporic community in Brazil as either Japanese Brazilian literature or Japanese diasporic literature in Brazil, utilizing current appellations used by the Japanese Brazilian community and scholars researching the subject. However, at the same time, I recognize that these names are historically contingent constructions that group together a heterogeneous array of literary works that do not necessarily share common characteristics or a cohesive identity.

Additionally, I do not wish to categorize Japanese Brazilian literature within a singular national or diasporic context. Rather I argue that this grouping of literature should be considered as multiply-situated within several geopolitical, temporal, linguistic, and cultural contexts. For this reason, I emphasize reading these texts through a transpacific optics to think multi-directionally and beyond area, national, and diasporic community boundaries. To put it differently, I analyze the stories on their own local terms, while simultaneously taking into account their navigations within and across imagined community borders and other social formations in Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas. As I will later unpack in detail, I advocate for a conceptualization of the transpacific that includes Latin America.

Another linguistic choice that I have made in *Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities* is to use "Japanese Brazilian" instead of "Nikkei Brazilian." While the terms "Nikkei" or "Nikkeijin"

[22] Mack, *Acquired Alterity*, 203-206.

(individuals of Japanese descent) often appear in conjunction with the Japanese diaspora, Mexican Japanese scholar Jessica A. Fernández de Lara Harada notes that not all persons with Japanese ancestry identify themselves as "Nikkei," especially given the presumption of many elite self-identified Nikkeijin to exclude "mixed-race" and working-class persons from the ethnic categorization.[23] I follow Fernández de Lara Harada and utilize "Japanese Brazilian" to account for the social asymmetries within the community. Moreover, as especially seen in my final chapter on Okinawan writer Medoruma Shun's short story "My Brazilian Grandad's Sake" (1999), I try my best to differentiate between Japanese Brazilians and Okinawan Brazilians when such a distinction can be discerned. I do this to account for the differences in their experiences of migration to and life in Brazil, as well as the complex ways in which Okinawan Brazilian individuals have chosen to self-identify as Japanese or Okinawan Brazilian or both.

In this way, my dissertation endeavors to maintain an awareness that diasporic identity formations are contingent and unstable, even if they may be strategic for counter-hegemonic movements. In particular, it follows the work of Mieko Nishida, whose ethnographic research on the Japanese Brazilians in both Japan and Brazil emphasizes the need to think of the concept of "diaspora" as heterogeneous without any guarantee of collective agency or belonging.[24] Though "diaspora" signals to a positioning—a distance from a shared space of ancestry or cultural identity—that on some occasions may unite a diasporic community, I concur that it is important to recognize that any diasporic cohesion is imagined and internal differences still exist within it.

My focus on "anomalies" and "alterities" inside and outside of the Japanese Brazilian community especially assists with the sustainment of a critical awareness of the diaspora's

[23] Jessica A. Fernández de Lara Harada, "Unstable Identities in Search of Home: Introduction,"ASAP/ Journal. Online (2021): <https://asapjournal.com/tag/unstable-identities-in-search-of-home/>.
[24] Mieko Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 15.

heterogeneity. The stories I have selected to examine closely span from publication in 1932 to 2011 and include works written in both Japanese and Portuguese. Their authors are first, second, and third generation Japanese Brazilian women and men from different regional, class, and education backgrounds, as well as Okinawan writer Medoruma Shun, who depicts Okinawan and Japanese migration to Brazil. The selected texts also feature a similar range of characters across gender, sexuality, race, and class identities in both urban and rural settings in Japan and Brazil. The diversity of perspectives drives this dissertation's insistence on maintaining the irresolvability of incommensurability between different transpacific actors and challenging the assumption that these persons can be categorized into a stable and cohesive communal identity. I, therefore, engage in a disentanglement of these multiply-structured social relations, arguing that working toward decoloniality in the transpacific needs to pursue multiple modes of accountability to address all facets of domination such as heteropatriarchy and colonial racial capitalism inextricably tied to Japanese, Brazilian, and U.S. national and/or imperial formations.

History of Japanese Immigration to Brazil

The process of Japanese immigration to Brazil emerged from negotiations between the Brazilian and Japanese governments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Various Brazilian ideologues and policymakers advocated for bringing more white European immigrants to Brazil to both replace its plantation workforce after the abolition of slavery in 1888 and remove the nation's "backward black stain."[25] Many Brazilian plantation owners, however, were dissatisfied with the European workforce—primarily Italian immigrants—who often protested their harsh labor conditions. The suggestion by Japanese diplomats that the Japanese were "the

[25] Lamonte Aidoo, "Diluting the 'African' Nation: European Immigration, Whitening, and the Crisis of Slave Emancipation," *alter/nativas* 8 (2018): 12-13.

'whites' of Asia" and a hardworking people then sat well with the Brazilian elite.[26] The Japanese state, too, found immigration to Brazil to be an attractive solution to address problems of overpopulation and poverty in rural Japan, especially after the U.S. implemented restrictions on Japanese immigration with the 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement.

Due to the frequency with which single European migrants fled Brazilian-owned plantations, the Brazilian government also decided to require Japanese immigrants to migrate in family units of three to ten members with a married male head of household.[27] Japanese state officials, too, supported family-based migration as they believed it would guarantee moral stability within the Japanese settlements and prevent immigration restrictions like the one in the U.S.[28] Although many of the immigrant families were "constructed" and were not true nuclear families, the familial structure contributed to the persistence of heteropatriarchal norms within the Japanese Brazilian communities.

On June 18, 1908, the *Kasato Maru* ship brought the first immigrant families from Japan—781 persons total (355 of whom were Okinawans)—to the port of Santos in the state of São Paulo, Brazil.[29] During the early years of migration (1908-1923), about 32,266 Japanese immigrants entered Brazil to work primarily as *colonos* or contract laborers on Brazilian-owned plantations. Yet like their European immigrant predecessors, many Japanese workers found their labor conditions to be unfavorable and protested or abandoned their positions. Following such conflicts, the Brazilian and Japanese governments turned toward Japanese-run colonies that

[26] Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity : Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 82-84.
[27] Mieko Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity*, 24.
[28] Azuma. *In Search of Our Frontier*, 130-135.
[29] Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity*, 86.

allowed Japanese migration companies to purchase land from the Brazilian state and manage the Japanese agricultural settlements themselves.

The Japanese government decided to take on a more direct role in managing emigration in 1924 after the Great Kantō Earthquake (1923) exacerbated demographic crises and the U.S. passed the 1924 Immigration Act. Scholars Endoh Toake (2016), Eiichiro Azuma (2019), Sidney Xu Lu (2019), and Fujinami Kai (2020) argue that Japanese state-sponsored migration to Brazil at this moment should be understood as a practice of imperial expansionism continuous with Japanese colonization in East Asia and the Pacific. Azuma and Lu use the term "settler colonialism" to describe the migration system that appropriated local and/-or indigenous lands to build up an agricultural economy abroad. Reflecting on Japanese migration-colonization first in Hokkaido, then followed by similar pursuits in the Americas and Manchuria, Azuma writes:

> agrarian settler colonialism was always integral to modern Japanese imperialism, and it constituted one of the many ways in which state officials and social leaders adopted policies and initiated reforms that were intended to both defend the nation against being colonized by western powers and demonstrate that they were worthy imperialists as well in the Eurocentric international order of the time.[30]

Various Japanese political actors, therefore, looked upon migration as not only an opportunity to support the empire's material and territorial growth, but also a way for the nation to showcase its development capabilities as a modern power.

State-managed migration evinced several contradictions. Migration recruiters specifically targeted their efforts toward the prefectures of Hiroshima, Kumamoto, Fukuoka, and Okinawa, claiming that they contained population "surpluses" responsible for Japan's demographic crises. However, these regions were also home to Japan's working class, the *Burakumin* caste, indigenous Okinawans—peoples considered superfluous to the nation's central elite.[31]

---

[30] Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier,* 2.
[31] Endoh Toake, *Nanbei "kimin" seisaku no jisō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2016), 114-120.

Additionally, these regions had a history of worker resistance that Japanese officials feared as a threat to the nation's stability.[32]

Despite the insinuation that emigrants were "excess," state officials still recognized them as a necessary faction within its expansionist enterprise. They sought to maintain the emigrants' loyalty to the nation through establishing pre-departure education facilities to "instill a nationalist sense of 'duty' in the mind and heart of every imperial subject."[33] For Okinawan immigrants in particular, the pre-departure training wielded colonialist violence, as it promoted assimilationist education that meant an erasure of their indigenous languages and culture.

Migration advocates further endeavored to portray migration as a heroic national mission in which emigrants would act as "*kaitakusha*" (pioneers) braving the Brazilian "frontier" to bring civilization there.[34] They constructed a discourse that mobilized the expressions of "overseas development" and "coexistence and coprosperity"[35] to construe Japanese migration-colonization as benevolent assistance to the "backward" Brazilian people. At times, the discourse further made claims that the Amazonian indigenous people were ancient Asiatic descendants who would welcome "their superior brethren."[36]

From within Brazil, Japanese immigrants experienced racialization and assimilationist forces that conflicted with the Japanese state's nationalist pressure. During the 1930s under the Getúlio Vargas regime, the Brazilian government imposed a series of laws to "nationalize" non-Brazilians by banning foreign-language education to non-Portuguese speakers and placing

[32] Ibid., 123-138; Fujinami Kai, *Okinawa diasupora nettowāku : gurōbaru-ka no naka de kaikō o hatasu Uchinānchu* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2020), 84-89.
[33] Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*, 131.
[34] Hosokawa, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1*, 17.
[35] This slogan was mentioned in Brazil as early as the 1920s, yet further illustrates the ideological links between immigration and imperialism as the concept became foundational to Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. See Lu, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism*, 1-2; 206-222.
[36] Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*, 146.

restrictions on immigration. Then with the establishment of the *Estado Novo* (New State) dictatorship in 1937, Vargas initiated the *Brasilidade* (Brazilianization) campaign that took even harsher assimilationist measures that outlawed Japanese schools, Japanese-language newspapers, and even the congregation of more than two people speaking Japanese in public.[37]

World War II escalated the surveillance and policing of the Japanese Brazilian community—Brazilian authorities searched the homes of Japanese immigrants, forced thousands of Japanese and German immigrants to relocate, and took control of Japanese agrarian operations in the interior of São Paulo.[38] The racialized structural violence in addition to everyday discrimination pushed Japanese diasporic subjects to decide whether they would consent to assimilate fully into Brazilian society or assert their Japanese identities to resist Brazilianization.

Some of the Japanese immigrants who resolutely affirmed their "Japaneseness" began publishing underground newspapers in the 1940s that castigated immigrants who they felt wavered in their loyalty to the Japanese empire. Due to the official ban on foreign-language media, these nationalist newspapers managed to perpetuate rumors of Japan's victory in World War II, which took hold amongst a portion of the Japanese Brazilian community. Eventually the community would split into two factions: "*kachigumi*" (victorist) who believed Japan won the war and *"makegumi*" (defeatist) who accepted Japan's loss.[39] Furthermore, some *kachigumi* members developed secret societies, one of which was the notorious Shindo Renmei, which engaged in assassinations and kidnappings to punish whom they considered "Japanese traitors" from 1946 to 1950.

[37] López-Calvo, *Japanese Brazilian Saudades*, 23.
[38] Rivas, "Songs," 111-113.
[39] Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 171.

After a period of interruption during the war, Japanese immigration to Brazil resumed in 1952. Many of the same prewar migration agents took up similar leadership positions, while justifying migration with repeated claims that Japanese immigrants would benevolently bring development to "backward" civilizations in need of assistance. Officials also returned to targeting emigration toward "surplus" populations associated not only with overpopulation, but also marginal class and racial identities. Lu asserts that these consistencies are "crucial for our understanding of the trans-Pacific legacies of Japanese settler colonialism in the postwar era."[40] One important difference was that Japanese discourses no longer portrayed the U.S. and Europe as competitors, but rather embraced U.S. hegemony and "the role of a 'surrogate for the whites' in developing Latin America.[41]

Yet also at this time, large numbers of prewar immigrants and their descendants had migrated from rural regions of Brazil into major cities—especially São Paulo—and actively integrated themselves into mainstream Brazilian society. They embraced a new postwar identity as evidenced by the increased use of "*koronia*" to refer to the Japanese Brazilian community. With the arrival of the postwar generation of Japanese immigrants, prewar immigrants found that their limited knowledge of Portuguese and Brazilian culture aggravated discrimination and longstanding accusations within Brazilian society that the Japanese were "unassimilable." For this reason, some prewar immigrant leaders pressured Japanese newcomers to assimilate quickly into Brazilian culture.

The sixties and seventies became Brazil's "Diaspora Decades," in which Japanese Brazilians found opportunities to shape Brazil's international connections and renegotiate their

[40] Lu, "The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism," 239.
[41]Toake Endoh, *Exporting Japan: Politics of Emigration to Latin America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 193.

identities in local Brazilian society.[42] With the start of Brazil's military dictatorship in 1964, many young Japanese Brazilians seized the chance to move up the social ladder through pursuing higher education and adhering to the political regime's promotion of discipline and conformity as paths to success. Japan's economic growth additionally influenced the perception of Japanese Brazilians as a "model minority," which exhibited a major change from the discrimination and racialized oppression experienced by prewar immigrants.

Moreover, Japan and Brazil forged greater economic networks at this time, and Japan especially increased its investments in Brazil. These economic ties generated more commercial flights in the 1970s, which made travel between Japan and Brazil more convenient and affordable.[43] At this time, many more immigrants did find the opportunity to visit Japan compared to prewar immigrants. The "return migration" of Japanese Brazilians only continued to grow, especially with the Japanese state's revision to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990,[44] which permitted *Nikkeijin* or persons with Japanese ancestry (to the third-generation) to obtain renewable visas for temporary residence and work abroad. To date, over 300,000 Japanese Brazilian "return migrants" have taken advantage of this opportunity to reside in Japan.

Japanese Brazilian visa holders primarily work as what is called *dekasegi*, which literally means "working away from home," but usually refers to temporary, unskilled laborers. Japan's economic growth in the mid-1980s, alongside other demographic factors such as an aging population, a declining birth rate, and a diminishing rural workforce, created extreme labor

[42] Jeffrey Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora: Japanese Brazilians and the Meanings of Ethnic Militancy, 1960-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 1-24.
[43] Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity*, 63.
[44] This law went into effect in1990, but Japanese Brazilians had started migrating to Japan since the mid-1980s through dual citizenship, spouses with citizenship, or overstaying their visas. See Daniel Touro Linger, *No One Home: Brazilian Selves Remade in Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 23.

shortages, especially in construction and manufacturing industries.[45] This forced the Japanese government to reconsider its immigration policies and allow foreign workers to fulfill these vacancies. However, as seen in the above-mentioned amendment to the Immigration Act, only *Nikkeijin* were given the privilege to work temporarily in Japan. State officials justified this restriction with the argument that the shared ethnicity between *Nikkeijin* and Japanese citizens would allow for these "return" migrants to easily assimilate into Japanese society and avoid racial discrimination. Their logic reflects racial essentialism aligned with Japanese postwar nationalist understandings of ethnicity, as well as a sense of Japanese superiority reminiscent of earlier Japanese imperialist ideologies.

However, despite the claim that the ethnicity of *Nikkeijin* will guarantee their belonging in Japan, many Japanese Brazilians who have taken up *dekasegi* work have found that this is not the case. Historians and social scientists, including Daniel Linger (2001), Joshua Hotaka Roth (2002), Jeffrey Lesser (2003), and Takeyuki Tsuda (2003), have elaborated various examples of Japanese Brazilians struggling to feel at "home" in their ancestral homeland due to Japanese and Brazilian cultural disparities. In particular, Tsuda notes how feelings of "unhomeliness" in Japan have led many Japanese Brazilian *dekasegi* workers to assert their "Brazilianess" in Japan rather than identify with their ethnic heritage.[46]

Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities reads Japanese Brazilian literary texts within this history of multidirectional movement, generational changes, and complex power entanglements. It considers how the literature engages with these transpacific social relations to inspire both critique and creative transformation to move toward transpacific decoloniality.

---

[45]Takeyuki Tsuda, "The Permanence of 'Temporary' Migration: The 'Structural Embeddedness' of Japanese-Brazilian Immigrant Workers in Japan," *The Journal of Asian* Studies 58, no.3 (1999): 693.
[46] Takeyuki Tsuda, *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Return Migration in Transnational Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 50.

Transpacific Studies and Japanese Brazilian Literature

In this dissertation, I turn to transpacific studies as a vantage point to examine Japanese diasporic literature in Brazil in a way that accounts for the multiple and intersecting systems of domination between Japan and Brazil that the literary texts bring into focus. Transpacific studies emerged in the global academy around the turn of the millennium as a field working to investigate the social, political, and economic relations within and across Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific Islands. While the "Trans-Pacific" as a geopolitical region between "Asia" and "America" has long been imagined as a site of capitalist development and conquest under names like the Pacific Rim and the Pacific Basin, transpacific studies build off previous scholarship such as Edward Said's critique of "Orientalism" (1978) and Arif Dirlik's genealogy of the "Pacific Rim" (1998) to scrutinize patterns of movement, sites of encounter and conflict, and the forces of imperialism, capitalism, and militarism in the Pacific region. It, therefore, approaches the Pacific as both a physical, material space, and a flexible idea capable of illuminating or imagining the intimacies between Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific Islands.[47]

Transpacific studies developed in response to the field of area studies and its traditional organization of knowledge based upon regional divisions of the globe. In other words, it works to question area and nation-based frameworks that have come to bear on the ways in which we understand and interact with the world. Scholars such as Rey Chow (2006), Naoki Sakai (2010), Lisa Yoneyama (2016; 2017), and Harry Harootunian (2019) have shed light on the regimes of knowledge supported by area studies and its impact on global material and social relations. First, each has been careful to pinpoint the emergence of area studies within the context of the Cold

[47] Chiara Olivieri and Jordi Serrano-Muñoz, ed., 2022. *East Asia, Latin America, and the Decolonization of Transpacific Studies* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 7.

War and illuminate its link to U.S. imperialism. The discipline, financially supported by U.S. capital, was established to generate knowledge about enemy nations or desired territories as a way to aid U.S. military operations and support the central ideology of U.S. imperialism: U.S. exceptionalism.[48] In Asia, area studies has helped justify the establishment of U.S. military bases in emerging nation-states formerly colonized by the Japanese empire under the guise of U.S. benevolence and liberation.

Additionally, Chow asserts that the knowledge-production of area studies was and continues to be militaristic and violent, as it aims to "know" other cultures only by consolidating them into target fields that can then be silenced and destroyed.[49] Sakai similarly posits that its hegemonic practices of comparison deny agency and humanity to the peoples it studies. He looks at how area studies perpetuate the dominant discourse of "the West and the Rest" by reserving the position of observer/researcher for the "Westerner" and marking the regional native as an object to be observed.[50] "The West," though merely a discursively constituted object referring to an ambiguous geographical entity, comes to appear as putatively unified with the status of being "the universal." The nations of "the Rest," on the other hand, receive the assignment of particularities, which remain "different" and "lesser" in comparison to "the West."

To overcome the shortcomings and oversights of area studies, transpacific studies has proposed looking at the Pacific as a site of movement and flows, as well as a space of encounter between various peoples, cultures, materials, and ideas. Questions of transnationalism, diaspora, and immigration are prominent to its reorientation of the globe around multiple focal points that

[48] Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016): 62-63.
[49] Rey Chow, *The Age of the World Target* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 40-41.
[50] Naoki Sakai, "Theory and Asian humanity: on the question of *humanitas* and *anthropos*," *Postcolonial Studies* 13, no.4 (2010): 457.

disobey the fixity of national borders. Not to mention, transpacific studies engage a multiplicity of methodologies, epistemologies, and other analytical practices that cut across disciplinary boundaries and inspire innovative ways of thinking.

Scholars including Lisa Yoneyama (2017) and Tina Chen (2020) have outlined genealogies of transpacific scholarship, highlighting its shifts from work that recharts encounters in and across the Pacific to analytical practices that utilize "the transpacific" as a methodology for interrogating the function of mapping and its relationship to hegemonic knowledge production. Specifically, Yoneyama notes the potential of a transpacific methodology to scrutinize the geohistorical conditions under which the space emerged as "an object of knowledge and nonknowledge" and imagine alternatives to the Cold War and U.S.-Japan inter-imperial formations active in the region.[51] Chen also adds the possibility for a transpacific methodology to condition new mappings of social relationships that can disrupt current injustices tied to militarism, environmental harm, and colonialism in the region.[52] My engagement with the transpacific continues this critical work by utilizing it as a set of methodologies that allow me to bring together conversations around the questions of gender, sexuality, and race related to Japanese imperialism and its extension into Latin America.

This engagement is further inspired by literary scholar Andrea Mendoza's description of the transpacific as a "reorientation," which "moves beyond the inflections of area and nation-based scholarship and turns toward decolonial analyses of the effects created by the imagined boundaries of communities and bodies."[53] Specifically, the transpacific reorientation in this

[51] Lisa Yoneyama, "Toward a Decolonial genealogy of the Transpacific," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2017): 472.
[52] Tina Chen, "(The) Transpacific Turns." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature (2020): https://oxfordre.com/literature/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-782.
[53] Andrea Mendoza, "Confronting 'the Ends' of Area: Murmurs Toward a Transpacific Phenomenology," In *East Asia, Latin America, and the Decolonization of Transpacific Studies*, ed. Chiara Olivieri and Jordi Serrano-Muñoz (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 20.

dissertation brings together "Asia" and "Latin America" as a decolonial move to denaturalize the divisions between geopolitical regions and nation-states and rethink the ways these separations have shaped our understandings of the world and the everyday social relations happening in it. In doing so, it contributes to recent scholarship working to extend the scope of transpacific studies into Latin America. Scholars such as Junyoung Verónica Kim (2017), Andrea Bachner (2017), Andrea Mendoza (2017; 2022), Chiara Olivieri and Jordi Serrano-Muñoz (2022) have called attention to how research in transpacific studies has primarily focused on the relationship between the U.S. and East Asia, and even when the Pacific Islands have received attention, the U.S. still serves as the central reference point for imperialism and militarism. When the Japanese diaspora in Brazil has received critical attention, as Junyoung Verónica Kim points out, it has usually been read within established frameworks of comparison that translate its "particularity" into "universal" notions of immigration and diaspora based on U.S. models.[54] Kim notes how this sustains the hegemonic structure of the global academy through continuing to uphold "the West" (U.S. and Europe) as the universal point of reference, so that even when "the West" is absent from considerations of Japan and Brazil, it acts as "the invisible yet naturalized context that makes this comparison possible."[55]

Yet by bridging the seemingly disparate regions of "Asia" and "Latin America," scholars such as Andrea Bachner and Pedro Erber have pointed to the potential of this work to denaturalize boundaries not only between geopolitical regions of East and West, North and South, but also between disciplines and methodologies. In other words, it can occasion a way to rethink the methodologies we use for comparison and the ways we understand and experience

[54]Junyoung Verónica Kim, "Asia-Latin America as Method: the Global South Project and the Dislocation of the West," *Verge Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 99.
[55] Ibid., 99.

relationality beyond traditional geographic and cultural orientations.[56] Chiara Olivieri and Jordi Serrano-Muñoz further see this act of considering Latin America within the transpacific as a decolonial move that seeks to emancipate the "dynamics of knowledge production and reproduction from North-centric epistemological cages" and "vivify and dignify experiences arisen from disqualified peoples, social actors, artists, communities, and epistemes."[57]

In *Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities*, I build off these scholarly engagements with an Asia-Latin American framework, especially expanding on Olivieri and Serrano-Muñoz's vision of a transpacific studies that includes epistemologies of the Global South. As I explore stories about migratory routes in the transpacific that do not transit through the so-called "West," I analyze how the texts represent imperialism, diaspora, nation, gender, race, etc. in ways often not commensurate with U.S. and Eurocentric paradigms. That is, while still accounting for the global force of white supremacy and the knowledge it has produced in line with the discourse of "the West" and "the Rest," I look at how modern/colonial logics have been mediated, appropriated, and localized in ways that have created distinctive hegemonic formations across different time-spaces. For example, in chapter three, I compare how the concepts of "home" and "family" have been used as models for imagining a Japanese national community and a Brazilian national community. While each draws from distinctly gendered understandings of "home" and "family," the concepts have been fused differently with racialized logics, so that a Japanese national "family" is pictured as racially homogeneous in contradistinction to Brazil's mixed race one.

---

[56] Their co-edited issue of *Verge: Studies in Global Asias*, "Between Asia and Latin America: New Transpacific Perspectives," provides several examples of the opportunities created by an examination of Asia-Latin America connections. See Andrea Bachner and Pedro Erber,"Remapping the Transpacific: Critical Approaches between Asia and Latin America," *Verge Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): xiii.

[57] Their recently edited volume, *East Asia, Latin America, and the Decolonization of Transpacific Studies*, advocates for transpacific scholars to pursue studies that acknowledge a plurality of perspectives in ways that accommodate "analogous, tangential, and even contradicting approaches to the studies of our ideas." See Jordi Serrano-Muñoz and Chiara Olivieri, "When East is North and South," in *East Asia, Latin America, and the Decolonization of Transpacific Studies*, ed. Chiara Olivieri and Jordi Serrano-Muñoz (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 8-9.

Looking at the experiences of Japanese immigrants moving between these two national communities, as I will show, provides an opportunity for comparative work with the potential for re-envisioning community-building beyond both narrow racialized and gendered boundaries.

Additionally, I utilize a transpacific optics to consider interrelations between Japan, the U.S., Okinawa, and Brazil, which are also entangled with histories of African slavery and European settler colonialism in Brazil. As I read Japanese Brazilian literary texts within their historical context, I pay close attention to the everyday experiences of transpacific power that the narrators bring into focus and how this affects social relations not only on a global scale but also in daily interactions. Especially by concentrating on perspectives from the social margins, I am able to show how cross-cultural and transnational connections occur even in local encounters. The reorientation of "Asia" and "Latin America," in this dissertation, therefore, engages the transpacific as a multi-scalar analytic to shed light on the effects of demarcating borders ranging from the global context of geographical areas to the scale of the body as a privileged site of social differentiation.

Transpacific Decoloniality

Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities argues that moving toward decolonial liberation in the transpacific requires a critique of all facets of Japanese imperialism including its practice in Brazil, as well as the modern/colonial systems of domination such as heteropatriarchy and colonial racial capitalism inextricably tied to these imperial formations. As I reflect on these decolonial possibilities throughout this dissertation, I distinguish between "decolonization" and "decoloniality." Decolonization refers to the material processes of dismantling settler colonialist (or other colonialist) structures to (re)build Indigenous futurities, while decoloniality functions as

both a theory and a praxis for pursuing social change based on transforming modern/colonial systems of power and honoring epistemic and cultural plurality. While at times, both may carry the same goals, I choose to differentiate them to clarify the decolonial work I am attempting in this project.

My use of decoloniality emerges largely from entering into conversations with Latin American theorists such as Aníbal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, and María Lugones who have put forward critical scholarship aimed at what they call "modernity/coloniality," a compound indicting that "coloniality is constitutive, not derivative, of modernity."[58] Coloniality or "the coloniality of power," as termed by Quijano, speaks to the global matrix of power organized according to racialized classifications that support a Eurocentric, capitalist world-system.[59] It pervades all aspects of society from labor to subjectivity to resource access to knowledge-production, and is especially buttressed by hegemonic narratives of modernity that claim Europe as the center of the modern world.

I also consider decoloniality to include liberation from "colonial racial capitalism," which Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson define as a "convergence of settler colonialism, imperialism, anti-Blackness, and capitalism."[60] Their theorization of this multi-constituted system recognizes racial capitalism as a colonial relation, asserting that Indigenous dispossession has always been structured into capitalism—not as prior stage in capitalism's development but instead as part of primitive accumulation, which, too, is an *ongoing* process. Yet while scrutinizing colonial racial capitalist relations as they are represented

[58] Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Modernity/ Coloniality/ Decoloniality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 4.
[59] See Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentricism, and Latin America," *Nepantla: View from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533-580.
[60] Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson, "Introduction," in *Colonial Racial Capitalism*, ed. Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022), 1.

in Japanese Brazilian literature, I emphasize cisheteropatriarchy as an axis of power that cannot be overlooked. I draw largely from María Lugones's theorization of the modern/colonial gender system, which complicates Quijano's initial conceptualization of coloniality by highlighting the entangled logics of racialization, heterosexuality, and capitalism that animate this global matrix of power.[61] I utilize the work of Lugones and other decolonial feminists to think about liberation in the transpacific from an intersectional perspective and account for the varied experiences of persons uniquely positioned in the modern/colonial gender system.

While this use of decoloniality aligns closely with Olivieri and Serrano-Muñoz's theorization of a decolonial transpacific that includes Latin America, I am hesitant to call this dissertation's work "a decolonization of transpacific studies," as they do. This is because Indigenous scholars and activists like Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang have argued that turning decolonization into a metaphor interferes with movements for Indigenous sovereignty. Decolonization, as they explain, requires material transformation such as the repatriation of land (in the case of settler colonialism) and thus is not equivalent to other non-Indigenous movements for social justice.[62] While this dissertation aims to disrupt the hegemonic systems of knowledge-production that sustain settler colonial formations, its interventions still take place within academia in the form of reflection, critique, and imagining otherwise. It, therefore, engages in efforts toward transpacific decoloniality by thinking through possibilities for alternative ways of living on this planet in relation to others that would include the well-being of everyone.

At the same time, I hope to think about *Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities* as an opportunity for solidarity in which my reflections on decoloniality might support the goals of

[61] See Maria Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial / Modern Gender System," *Hypatia* 22, no. 1 (2007): 186-209.
[62] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 3.

decolonization. In "Decolonization is not a metaphor," Tuck and Yang rethink solidarity not in terms of commonalities but rather of asymmetries and tensions and propose "an ethic of incommensurability" to recognize alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and activists as "strategic and contingent," and maybe even undesirable, knowing that different counter-hegemonic movements may never align.[63] This ethic requires recognition of "what is distinct, what is sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based social justice projects."[64] As I hope to reflect critically on social justice from the vantage point of transpacific decoloniality, it is imperative to practice this ethic of incommensurability to think about decolonial liberation in ways accountable to Indigenous peoples. Especially with my own positionality as a white settler completing my dissertation on Kumeyaay lands, I recognize that not understanding Indigenous movements for decolonization as a particular form of resistance only repeats my complicities with settler colonialist structures and interferes with Indigenous futurities. I am well aware that this dissertation does not absolve my complicities, yet I maintain a hope that it can, on occasion, become a pathway toward decolonial solidarity.

Furthermore, as literary scholar Erin Suzuki has argued in *Ocean Passages: Navigating Pacific Islander and Asian American Literatures*, "scholarship that frames itself as 'trans*pacific*' *must* engage with Indigenous Pacific histories, frameworks, and methodologies, or else the term loses its unique critical purchase."[65] I keep this in mind as I examine Japanese Brazilian literature, considering not only relationships between Japanese immigrants and Native Brazilians, but also Indigenous epistemologies that provide insight into alternatives to past and current forms of hegemony. For example, while scrutinizing Japanese imperialism in the

[63] Ibid., 28.
[64] Ibid., 28.
[65] Erin Suzuki, *Ocean Passages: Navigating Pacific Islander and Asian American Literatures* (Philadelphia:Temple University Press, 2021), 4.

transpacific, I zoom in on practices of Japanese migration-led settler colonialism in Brazil and reflect on the Native Brazilian peoples who often are left out of Japanese Brazilian literary narratives. Particularly in chapter one, I look closely at the discursive violence perpetuated within the Japanese imperial archive as Brazil is portrayed as a "virgin land"—an expression that erases Native Brazilian rights to the land under the gendered pretense that the Native Brazilian woman is open to penetration and possession by the Japanese male explorer. At the same time, I turn to Native Brazilian understandings of spatio-temporal relations to land to challenge the settler colonialist logics animating these "claims" to "virgin land." Furthermore, in chapter five, I work through the complexity of Okinawan participation in settler colonialism in Brazil, as also entangled with Japanese colonialism in Okinawa as a force propelling Okinawan migration to Brazil in the first place. In these chapters, Indigenous Pacific understandings of relationality become especially salient to the decolonial work I push for.

Yet in *Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities*, my reflection on liberation is not meant to be accountable only to Indigenous peoples. It is intended to consider possibilities for social transformation from a plurality of perspectives—women, queer subjects, Afro-Brazilians, Native Brazilians, Okinawans; that is as mentioned previously, this dissertation employs the concepts of "anomaly" and "alterity" as tools for interrogating the construction of categorical boundaries and reflecting on ways to complicate, challenge, and imagine alternatives to them. While I use these two terms, I am not suggesting that they correspond to a finite identity or accurately represent a particular subject-position. Instead, I am using them to think critically about the workings of power intwined with the labels "anomaly" and "alterity" and the collusions between actors, social systems, regimes of knowledge, etc. that create these categorizations.

More specifically, when utilizing anomaly as an analytical concept, I consider its disruptive potential as an internal "other" within a certain classification or communal identity. As Andrew Leong has delineated, anomalies not only inhabit a space in close proximity to formal dividing lines, but also many times spill over and surpass the categorical containment.[66] The overflow then can lead to clashes and tensions that question the very regulatory processes of categorization. Within a transpacific context, I further look at anomalies in relation to Lisa Yoneyama's transpacific theorization of transnationality, as "insurgent memories, counterknowledges, and inauthentic identities that have been regimented by the discourse and institutions centering on the nation-states. Transnationality, in other words, points to the presence of excess in…[hegemonic] epistemic and material formations."[67] I trace these moments of surplus throughout this dissertation to interrogate the representative authority of not only Japanese and Brazilian national discourses and structures, but also dominant Japanese diasporic formations in Brazil. Moreover, I am interested in what coalitional work may be enabled by moments when the difference that marks a subject as "anomalous" also creates a moment for transgressing the border and connecting to alterities on the "other side."

Yet at the same time, I chose to distinguish between "anomaly" and "alterity" to call attention to differences in experiences of liminality—that some beings may be marginalized yet have relative privilege when compared to others. This is not to say that a person cannot be an anomaly in one context and an alterity in another (because this is certainly a possibility); rather, the distinction is used to emphasize the necessity of approaching an analysis of transpacific power with positionality and incommensurability in mind. Alterity, in this dissertation, then

[66] Andrew Leong, "Anomaly without Analogy: Morimoto Tazuko's U.S.-Mexico Border Tanka," *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 64.
[67] Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins*, 7.

becomes a name for a more radical form of difference that extends beyond mere exceptionality. It is important to perceive this distinction because, as Lugones has argued and I concur, decolonial feminism starts with seeing the colonial difference—a construction of alterity that has reduced certain peoples to "less than human"—and then learning from others *dwelling within* this space of difference to begin resisting the modern/colonial gender system in coalition with others.[68] In other words, decolonial alliances necessitate a recognition of the most violent forms of "othering" so that movements toward liberation address the distinct needs of all its members, especially persons in the most precarious and vulnerable positions within the current global matrix of power.

Additionally, listening to and amplifying the voices of subaltern subjects provides insight into how coalitional work must be approached with caution. In the narratives I analyze, the perspectives from the most peripheralized positions demonstrate an acute attunement to the ways in which the pursuit of liberation for one group, does not necessarily guarantee liberation for everyone. Put differently, the subaltern experiences in these stories clarify how some movements for social justice may actually inflict harm on another group of human or non-human beings, despite having "good-intentioned," counterhegemonic goals. For instance, in Chapter 5, I examine the positionality of an Okinawan immigrant in Brazil and unpack how his participation in a Brazilian workers movement engages in anti-capitalist resistance, yet also destroys the homes of Indigenous non-human beings during a labor protest. In this example and throughout this dissertation, I utilize the distinction between "anomaly" and "alterity" to home in on the complex relational entanglements between differently marginalized beings that do not neatly follow the binary logic of "victim/ perpetrator." In other words, the comparison between the two

[68]María Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 754.

concepts illuminates how positions of domination and subordination do not merely exist in a vertical structure but can also shift and intertwine in a multi-relational and multi-directional network of power.

For this reason, I argue that multiple modes of accountability are necessary to address the violence, harm, oppression, and marginalization of the modern/colonial gender system and work toward transpacific decoloniality. I use accountability to refer to a recognition of one's complicities with hegemonic systems of power *and* efforts to transform them by taking responsibility for one's actions/inactions and the impacts they have on others (particularly human and non-human beings in more precarious positions than oneself). Accountability then is a critical condition for ensuring that decolonial work will be liberatory for everyone, in addition to serving as the foundation for building relationships of solidarity between differently-situated persons that can materialize alternatives to coloniality. In this way, carefully listening to the cacophony of voices on the social margins—just inside, outside, across, and over hegemonic border constructions—insists on maintaining a multiplicity of ways of thinking, relating, and living with one another that defy the violence of singularity perpetuated by the modern/colonial gender system.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter one, "Decolonizing Japanese 'Overseas Development' in Brazil" brings together two contrasting viewpoints of Japanese immigration to Brazil. It looks at Hayashi Ise's short story "Natsuyo" (1933), which offers a Japanese women's perspective on migration as a forced consequence of heteropatriarchal victimization, alongside early 20th-century Japanese journal articles that, in contrast, promote migration as a heroic "pioneering" and nationalist

mission to bring development to Brazil. Through performing a queer reading of the protagonist's experience, I illustrate how her counternarrative exposes the limitations of the pioneering discourse as applicable only to male, heterosexual subjects and thus, questions the presumed universality of heteronormativity underlying the logic of Japanese expansionism in Brazil. I then interrogate her story next to Indigenous Brazilian women represented in the journal articles to emphasize their distinct experiences of oppression and underscore the increased vulnerability of Indigenous women due to the intersection of heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism.

In **Chapter two**, "Migrations of the Modern Girl," I examine the short story, "The Age of Agricultural Gambling" (1932), by Sonobe Takeo, which features a strong-willed Japanese woman in São Paulo who challenges the capitalist exploitation and female subordination central to the Japanese state's migration apparatus. Since the protagonist differs from most female immigrants depicted by dominant Japanese and Brazilian narratives, I argue that her politicized agency brings to light the everyday contributions of women to shaping modern life, which have been obscured by these national archives. I then bring the literary representation into conversation with two 1930s media tropes—the Japanese "Modern Girl" and the Brazilian "Paulista Woman"—to interrogate the discursive regimentation of modern female subjectivity and speculate about alternative genealogies of transpacific feminist resistance.

Next, **Chapter three**, "Belonging Beyond Borders" compares Arai Chisato's short story "Homecoming" (1974) and Tsuchida Machie's autobiographical memoirs, "I Cannot Sing the National Anthem" (2007), both of which represent the experiences of working-class Japanese Brazilian women who return to Japan in the 1970s. The marginalized class and gender perspectives of the texts' narrators shed light on the discursive processes that construct dominant national and diasporic identities through the exclusion of "others." In particular, the chapter

zooms in on how the notions of "home" and "family have been used as models for imagining a national community in Japan and a Japanese diasporic community in Brazil, and scrutinizes the racialized and gendered implications of these terms.

Chapter four, "Pitfalls and Possibilities for Afro-Asian Coalitions," then juxtaposes Tanabe Shigeyuki's story, "A Certain Settler's Death" (1932), and Oscar Nakasato's novel, *Japanese Person* (2012) to scrutinize how the texts represent encounters between Japanese immigrants and Afro-Brazilians. I argue that these depictions across different eras continue to relegate Black characters to stereotypical, supporting roles that help the Japanese protagonists undergo moral development into "proper" Brazilian national subjects; the works promote a surface-level interracial friendship, which reinforces the Brazilian myth of "racial democracy" that upholds white hegemony.

Finally, **Chapter 5**, "The Transpacific on Fire" looks at the story "My Brazilian Grandad's Sake" (2002), by Medoruma Shun, zooming in on the Okinawan diaspora in Brazil. Its analysis disentangles the complex web of social relations existing in and across Okinawa, Japan, Brazil, and the U.S. that the story brings to light and considers the challenges of working toward decoloniality when resistance against only one form of domination might infringe upon someone else's liberation in another context. In particular, it critically reflects on moments of anti-capitalist resistance in the story that harm Indigenous humans and nonhumans, as well as non-capitalist, small producers and pushes for multiple modes of accountability in practices of decolonial solidarity.

Bibliography

Aidoo, Lamonte. "Diluting the 'African' Nation: European Immigration, Whitening, and the Crisis of Slave Emancipation," *alter/nativas* 8 (2018): 1-18.

"alterity, n.". OED Online. September 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/5788?redirectedFrom=alterity (accessed October 21, 2022).

"anomaly, n.". OED Online. September 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/8043?redirectedFrom=anomaly (accessed October 21, 2022).

Arata Sumu. *Burajiru Nikkei koronia bungei, ge*. São Paulo: Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, 2008.

Azuma, Eichiro. *In Search of our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2019.

Bachner, Andrea and Pedro Erber. "Remapping the Transpacific: Critical Approaches between Asia and Latin America." *Verge Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): vi-xiii. doi.org/10.5749/vergstudglobasia.3.2.00vi.

Chen, Tina. "(The) Transpacific Turns." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature (2020). Accessed 18 July 2022. https://oxfordre.com/literature/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-782.

Chow, Rey. *The Age of the World Target.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Endoh, Toake. *Exporting Japan: Politics of Emigration to Latin America.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Endoh, Toake. *Nanbei "kimin" seisaku no jisō.* Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2016.

Erber, Pedro. *Breaching the Frame: the Rise of Contemporary Art in Brazil and Japan.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2015.

Fernández de Lara Harada, Jessica A."Unstable Identities in Search of Home: Introduction." In *ASAP/ Journal.* Online (2021). Accessed on 11 October 2022. <https://asapjournal.com/tag/unstable-identities-in-search-of-home/>.

Fujinami, Kai. *Okinawa diasupora nettowāku : gurōbaru-ka no naka de kaikō o hatasu Uchinānchu.* Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2020.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1: nihongo no nagai tabi[rekishi].* Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2012.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron].* Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Tooki ni aritetsukuru mono: nikkei burajirujin no omoi · kotoba · geinou*. Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2008.

Kim, Yunyoung Verónica. “Asia-Latin America as Method: the Global South Project and the Dislocation of the West.” *Verge Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 97-117.

Koshy, Susan, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson. Introduction to *Colonial Racial Capitalism*. Edited by Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson, 1-30. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022.

Leong, Andrew. 2017. “Anomaly without Analogy: Morimoto Tazuko’s U.S.-Mexico Border Tanka.” *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 63-66.

Lesser, Jeffrey. *A Discontented Diaspora: Japanese Brazilians and the Meanings of Ethnic Militancy, 1960-1980.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Lesser, Jeffrey. *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Lesser, Jeffrey. *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Lesser, Jeffrey, editor. *Searching for Home Abroad: Japanese Brazilians and Transnationalism.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Linger, Daniel Touro. *No One Home: Brazilian Selves Remade in Japan.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

López-Calvo, Ignacio. *Japanese Brazilian Saudades: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Production.* Louisville: University of Colorado Press, 2019.

Lu, Sidney Xu. *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Lugones, María. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial / Modern Gender System." *Hypatia* 22, no. 1 (2007): 186-209. Accessed March 14, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4640051.

Lugones, Maria.“Toward a Decolonial Feminism.” *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 742-759.

Mignolo, Walter D. and Catherine E. Walsh. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Nishida, Mieko. *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Mack, Edward. *Acquired Alterity: Migration, Identity, and Literary Nationalism.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2022.

Maeyama, Takashi. "Imin bungaku kara mainoritī bungaku he." In *Koronia shōsetsu senshū (dai 1 kan) paurisuta bungakushō izen*. Edited by Koronia bungakukai. Sao Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975.

Mendoza, Andrea. "Confronting 'the Ends' of Area: Murmurs Toward a Transpacific Phenomenology." In *East Asia, Latin America, and the Decolonization of Transpacific Studies,* edited by Chiara Olivieri and Jordi Serrano-Muñoz, 20-41. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

Olivieri, Chiara and Jordi Serrano-Muñoz. "When East is North and South." In *East Asia, Latin America, and the Decolonization of Transpacific Studies,* edited by Chiara Olivieri and Jordi Serrano-Muñoz, 1-19. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

Quijano, Aníbal. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: View from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533-580.

Raynor, Cecily. "Representations of Home in Obasan and Nihonjin: The Issei, Nissei, Sansei of Canada and Brazil." *Canada & Beyond: A Journal of Canadian Literary and Cultural Studies* 6 (2017): 35-45.

Rivas, Zelideth María. "Songs from the Land of Eternal Summer: Beyond Duality in Japanese Brazilian Publication and Colonia Man'yōshū." *Comparative Literature Studies* 53, no. 4 (2015): 787-817.

Ruffato, Luiz. "Imigrantes na literature brasileira." *África 21 Online* (2013). https://www.buala.org/pt/a-ler/imigrantes-na-literatura-brasileira.

Sakai, Naoki. "Theory of Asian humanity: on the question of humanitas and anthropos." *Postcolonial Studies* 13, no.4 (2010): 441-464.

Suzuki, Erin. *Ocean Passages: Navigating Pacific Islander and Asian American Literatures*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2021.

Tsuda, Takeyuki. *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Return Migration in Transnational Perspective.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Tsuda, Takeyuki. "The Permanence of 'Temporary' Migration: The 'Structural Embeddedness' of Japanese-Brazilian Immigrant Workers in Japan." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no.3 (1999): 687-722.

Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization is not a Metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1-40.

Yoneyama, Lisa. *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Yoneyama, Lisa. 2017. "Toward a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific." *American Quarterly,* vol. 69 no. 3: 471-482. doi.org/10.1353/aq.2017.0041.

The Introduction, in part, will be a reprint of the material as it will appear in the forthcoming "Belonging Beyond Borders: Japanese Brazilian Stories of Diasporic Return without a 'Homecoming'" in Verge: Studies in Global Asias 9.1, 2023. Welch, Shannon. University of Minnesota Press, 2023. The dissertation author was the primary author of this paper.

CHAPTER 1

Decolonizing Japanese "Overseas Development" in Brazil: Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy in Hayashi Ise's "Natsuyo" (1933) and the Japanese Imperial Archive

In the early twentieth century, various Japanese government officials, business elites, migration company agents, and intellectuals began to push for an increase in Japanese migration overseas to support the expansion of the Japanese empire's territorial, political, and economic influence.[1] Their descriptions of Japanese migration-colonization in Brazil, however perpetuated a positive capitalist and cooperative imagination of transpacific migration that screened out the violence of settler colonialism and imperialism active across the space. Writing in Japanese in periodicals like *Rikkō Sekai* 力行世界 (Striving World) and *Kaigai no Nihon* 海外之日本 (Overseas Japan) and Japanese-language newspapers in Brazil, they constructed a discourse that pivoted on the ideas of "pioneering" (*kaitaku* 開拓) and "overseas development" (*kaigai hatten* 海外発展) to portray the work of Japanese immigrants as not only economically beneficial, but also heroic and morally meaningful in its contribution to the advancement of the world at large.

"Pioneering," in these sociopolitical texts, denoted a kind of agricultural-based conquest of nature in which the Japanese people braved the "wilderness" spaces of Brazil to take up the challenge of bringing civilization to them.[2] Their collective engagement in "overseas development" was said to fulfill Japan's racial obligation (*minzoku sekimu* 民族責務) as a

[1] The advocacy of these numerous actors culminated in the Japanese government's decision in 1924 to take a more direct role in the management of migration and incorporate migratory affairs into its national policy.
[2] Hosokawa Shūhei, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron]* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013), 17.

modern nation to spread infrastructural, institutional, and intellectual progress to all of humanity.[3] This notion went hand-in-hand with the phrase "co-existence and co-prosperity" (*kyōzon kyōei* 共存共栄),[4] utilized to express the intention of Japanese immigrants to live with the members of Brazilian society and work to provide them with peace, prosperity, and happiness.[5] In this way, Japanese migration promoters forwarded a capitalist fantasy of economic opportunity and collaboration that endeavored to differentiate Japan's "peaceful expansionism" through migration from the militarist and aggressive form of colonization practiced by Europe and the U.S.[6]

Yet a very different representation of Japanese immigration to Brazil appeared alongside these dominant descriptions on the pages of the Japanese-language newspaper in Brazil, *Burajiru Jihōsha* (abbreviated *Jihō*).[7] Contrasting the migration pull factors of heroism, wealth, and global progress, this text, Hayashi Ise's 1933 short story "Natsuyo," written under the pseudonym Katayama Yōko, recounts the compounding moments of hardship and victimization that push a Japanese woman, Keiko, to leave Japan for Brazil. Narrated in first-person by Keiko, the work especially differs from the discourse of "pioneering" and "overseas development" in its female perspective that brings into focus dominant ideologies of heteropatriarchy[8]—a socio-political

[3] Toake Endoh, *Exporting Japan: Politics of Emigration toward Latin America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 193-194.
[4] Although this slogan summarized the defining ideology of the Japanese empire's "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," it was actually used previously in the early 1920s within the Japanese-Brazilian migration-colonization context by migration agents Nagata Shigeshi and Wako Shungorō. See Sidney Xu Lu, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 206.
[5] Ibid, 206; 212-213.
[6] Eichiro Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 16.; Endoh, *Exporting Japan*, 191.; Sidney Xu Lu, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism*, 3.
[7] The Portuguese title of this newspaper is *Notícias do Brasil.*
[8] The term combines heterosexuality/heteronormativity and patriarchy to imply their co-constitution and mutual reinforcement of one another.

system founded upon male, heterosexual dominance—that circulated within and between Japan and Brazil in the early twentieth century.

The story begins with Keiko describing her relationship with Natsuyo, her family's maid, who had worked for Keiko's husband since his first marriage to a woman with whom he had two children before she passed away from influenza. When he and Keiko get married, Keiko becomes the stepmother to his children, but she struggles to feel like she can adequately fulfill the role because Natsuyo seems like a more adept caregiver. Eventually, Natsuyo decides to leave her job, which causes Keiko to feel even more helpless without her support, especially after she suffers two major tragedies. First, the Great Kantō Earthquake[9] destroys her home and her husband's textile business, and then she has two miscarriages that severely weaken her health. When Keiko starts to recover, she goes on an outing to Tokyo one day, where she runs into her husband, Natsuyo, and a three-year-old boy whom she discovers is his child from an ongoing affair. The narrative ends with a short description in which Keiko explains that she now lives in a *shokuminchi* (植民地 colony)[10] in Brazil and the story she just told was why she came to be there.

"Natsuyo" was first published as part of the *Jihō* newspaper's second annual *shokumin* (colonial) literature short story award[11] in 1933, where it was awarded first place. However, despite this recognition, it received criticism from its reviewers (all male) for its lack of adding something "new" to the developing body of *shokumin* literature.[12] They remarked that it

[9] This earthquake took place in 1923.
[10] Hayashi Ise, "Natsuyō," in *Koronia shōsetsu senshū 1*, ed. Koronia bungakukai (Sao Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975): 34.
[11] The history of this competition is described in the introduction to this dissertation.
[12] This point was reiterated by other Japanese immigrant literary critics, not associated with the competition, who tried to define *shokumin* literature. For example, Seth Jacobowitz mentions that Sugi Takeo, a prolific writer of both fiction and literary criticism within the prewar Japanese Brazilian community, referred to "Natsuyo" as "'something

followed the trends of modern Japanese popular culture, especially through adhering to the style and themes of "Women's Writing" (*joryūbungaku* 女流文学).[13] This category of Japanese literature, constructed by a male-dominated literary establishment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, lumped all female writers into a single grouping under the presumption that their writing reflected women's "gentleness."[14] It was characterized by a soft, lyrical tone, which appealed to the emotions, as well as "trivial" themes of love, marriage, and family life that depicted women as self-sacrificing, submissive, and vulnerable to victimization by men. Yet as Yukiko Tanaka argues in her survey of Meiji and Taishō women writers, the suffering of women in these texts generally encouraged moral reform for the patriarchal figure rather than suggest a critique of the patriarchal system itself.[15] The association of "Natsuyo" with the style and themes of "Women's Writing" in Japan then suggests that the *Jishō* reviewers interpreted Hayashi's writing as delicate and uncritical and read Keiko as a character in line with the literary tradition of female martyrs sacrificed to strengthen the morality of Japanese patriarchy.

However, Hayashi herself did not adhere to the gender and sexuality norms of her generation in Japan nor the Japanese diasporic community in Brazil. Similar to her protagonist Keiko, Hayashi immigrated to Brazil by herself after separating from her husband in 1926[16] and

---

to read' (*tan naru yomimono*) but unworthy of serious literary consideration." Seth Jacobowitz, "A Bitter Brew: Coffee and Labor in Japanese Brazilian Immigrant Literature," *Estudos Japoneses*, no. 41 (2019): 22.

[13] Hosokawa Shūhei, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1: nihongo no nagai tabi[rekishi]*, (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2012), 67.

[14] As Rebecca Copeland explains, "gentleness" was understood at the time as giving rise "to other subsidiary qualities such as modesty, altruism, and devotion to home and family and made the woman particularly susceptible to emotion and sensitive to beauty." Rebecca Copeland, "A Century of Reading Women's Writing in Japan: An Introduction," in *Woman Critiqued: Translated Essays on Women's Writing*, ed. Rebecca Copeland (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 5.

[15] Ibid., 10.

[16] Hosokawa *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1*, 68.

then worked at a hotel and a newspaper to support herself.[17] Japanese Brazilian literary scholars such as Edward Mack and Hosokawa Shūhei speculate that much of her writing that spotlights "untraditional" Japanese women is semi-autobiographical. Additionally, Hayashi was the younger sister of the famous Japanese author Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, but she chose to keep this relationship a secret when she first started her writing career in Brazil.[18] This action could be read as Hayashi's attempt to maintain her autonomous voice as a writer, asserting her non-normative female point of view into a male-dominated literary sphere that was taking shape within the Japanese immigrant community in Brazil.

In this chapter, I read Hayashi's "Natsuyo" from a contemporary perspective to consider a subversive re-interpretation of the text that diverges from the reviews it received from its contemporaneous readership and acknowledges its possible alignments with Hayashi's break from heteropatriarchal norms. In particular, I juxtapose the short story with the Japanese imperial archive to investigate how the anomalous perspective of the story's female protagonist troubles the dominant imaginations of Japanese immigration to Brazil as a heroic task of overseas development and an opportunity for pioneering a bright future. I ask: what alternative ways from those of Japanese immigrants related to Japanese nationalism and imperialism does the character of Keiko bring to the surface? How does her experience complicate heteropatriarchal assumptions surrounding the gendered division of labor within Japanese overseas development work? What are the critical limitations of Keiko's perspective as a Japanese settler when we consider "Natsuyo" and the discourse of pioneering within the context of Japanese migration-led settler colonialism in Brazil?

[17] Edward Mack presumes this to mean that Hayashi paid for her own passage to Brazil since she was not contractually obligated to work on a plantation. See Edward Mack, *Acquired Alterity: Migration, Identity, and Literary Nationalism* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022), 131.
[18] Arata Sumu. *Burajiru Nikkei koronia bungei, ge* (São Paulo: Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, 2008), 46.

I approach these questions through a queer feminist analytic that also draws from Indigenous and decolonial scholars and activists to consider the intersections of heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and settler colonialism within and across Japan and Brazil. The term "queer" here does not necessarily refer to a homosexual identity, but instead, names a broader social and political critique that, as David L. Eng, J. Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz posit, works toward unsettling all "normalizing mechanisms of state power to name its sexual subjects: male or female, married or single, heterosexual or homosexual, natural or perverse."[19] Through reflecting on how Keiko diverges from Japanese gender and sexuality norms, I argue that her story queers the heteropatriarchal, colonial racial capitalist logics that undergirded Japanese nationalism at a crucial moment when the Japanese state began to turn this national project outward in its pursuit of imperial expansionism in the transpacific.

As summarized in the introduction to this dissertation, when Japanese migration to Brazil adjusted to an official government policy and came under direct state management in 1924, migration destinations shifted as well toward the Brazilian "frontier"—particularly the Amazon basin that migration promoters like Fukuhara Hachirō regarded as "'the only place that has been left open for Japanese racial development' in the white-dominated world."[20] While sometimes Japanese depictions of the Amazon erased the presence of the land's Indigenous nations, other times Japanese migration promoters forwarded claims that the Amazonian Indigenous peoples were ancient Asiatic descendants "who would look up to Japanese newcomers as their superior brethren."[21] Both racialized arguments functioned as justifications for Japanese migration-led settler colonialism into the northwestern region of Brazil. Moreover, to rationalize expansionism

[19]David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz, "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?" *Social Text*, vol. 23, no. 3-4 (2005): 1.
[20] Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*, 146.
[21] Ibid., 146.

in Brazil, Japanese migration promoters drew directly from U.S. concepts of the "frontier" and its "development" that were introduced to Japan in the late 1860s from translations of English texts and studies of the American conquest of the western frontier.[22] They utilized the historical precedent to construct their own version of a Japanese "manifest destiny" in the Americas and assert Japan's global position as "a nation 'racially endowed' for expanding to frontiers all over the world with a superior civilization."[23]

I turn to the juxtaposition of "Natsuyo" and migration journal articles from the Japanese imperial archive to explore how the short story disrupts the visions of these imperial texts that project a "universal" capitalist futurity in their discussions of development. Following Aimee Bahng, I use "futurity" to signal to the constructedness of the future, which emphasizes both that there is no singular future and that "narrative constructions of the future play a significant role in materializing the present."[24] Capitalist futurity presumes a linear understanding of time through which humankind progresses forward by constantly making life better and more efficient. However, as Marxist feminist Silvia Federici has argued, this kind of future-oriented capitalist development depends on primitive accumulation—a historical process of expropriation, exploitation, and enclosure—that when viewed from the perspective of women, appears at every stage of capitalist development. Federici redefines Marx's concept of primitive accumulation to include:

> (i) the development of a new sexual division of labor subjugating women's labor and women's reproductive function to the reproduction of the work-force; (ii) the construction of a new patriarchal order, based upon the exclusion of women from waged-work and their subordination to men; (iii) the mechanization of the proletarian body and

[22] Ibid., 13-16.
[23] Ibid., 16.
[24] Aimee Bahng, *Migrant Futures : Decolonizing Speculation in Financial Times*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 2.

> its transformation, in the case of women, into a machine for the production of new workers.[25]

Understood in this way, the linear timeline of capitalist progress cannot be regarded as a "universal truth" because women experience exploitation at the hands of primitive accumulation at *all times* under capitalism. With Federici's theoretical intervention in mind, I unpack how Keiko's way of being in time diverges from the capitalist futurity associated with the Japanese pioneer, and how her lived difference exposes the gendered division of labor within the Japanese imperial expansionist project in Brazil.

Moreover, I interrogate how Keiko is not only excluded from the male sphere of nationalist labor that would allow her to act as an agent of progress, but also how she experiences abjection due to her non-engagement in reproduction. Since capitalist development is contingent upon the appropriation of women's reproductive function, capitalist futurity cannot be delinked from what queer theorist Lee Edelman calls "reproductive futurism." "Futurism," as another construction of futurity, refers to the notion that life's purpose or meaning lies in the future which, in the case of reproductive futurism, is to secure the well-being of future children. As Edelman argues, the discourse of reproductive futurism constructs the figure of "the Child" as an image of absolute innocence and casts it as "the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention." In other words, "The Child" serves as the orientating logic for the political sphere, so as to grant absolute privilege to heteronormativity and make the value of reproductive futurism appear unquestionable. I utilize this temporal framework to scrutinize how the dominant discourse of pioneering justifies Japanese overseas development through a narrative of reproductive futurism and how Keiko's break from heteronormative social relations helps to disclose the constructedness of this futurity.

[25] Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), 12.

Her story overall invites a critique of the heteropatriarchal, capitalist structure that connects Japan to its migration-colonies in Brazil by disclosing the harm it causes to those who deviate from its set of social standards.

Yet in addition to working through the critical implications of Hayashi's short story, I concurrently contemplate the limitations to its critique that addresses male, heterosexual dominance only as experienced by a female Japanese settler. Through reading the discourse of pioneering and overseas development against the grain, I pinpoint its demonstration of settler colonialist logic that works with and through heteropatriarchy, thereby producing a distinct form of violence against Indigenous women incommensurate with Keiko's experience. As various Native feminists and queer Indigenous scholars have argued, heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism are co-constituted systems that mutually animate one another. Heteropatriarchy "naturalizes" social hierarchies that colonialism requires to wield power, while colonialism enforces compulsory heterosexuality and unequal gender relations to discipline and control both Native and non-Native peoples to fit within its structure of domination. The intersection of these two systems of power then is what accounts for the disparate experiences of heteropatriarchy between settler and Indigenous women. As queer Native feminist Chris Finley notes, though "the logics governing Native bodies are the same logics governing non-Native people,…[the] colonizers may feel bad, stressed, and repressed by self-disciplining logics of normalizing sexuality, but Native people are systematically targeted for death and erasure by these same discourses."[26] These differences then propound that addressing heteropatriarchy as experienced

[26] Chris Finley, "Decolonizing the Queer Native Body (and Recovering the Native Bull-Dyke): Bringing 'Sexy Back' and Out of Native Studies' Closet," *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and* Literature, ed. Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauria Morgenson (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011), 34.

by non-Native people will not necessarily change the heteronormative settler colonialist structure that subjugates Native people.

Keeping in mind these intersections, I argue that, though "Natsuyo" presents a challenge to the heteropatriarchal, colonial racial capitalist futurity constructed by the Japanese imperialist discourse of pioneering and overseas development, it does not question the settler colonialist logics of this timeline nor does it offer an imagination of an alternative way of being in time that would include Indigenous futurities. In this way, the story's queer feminist critique is incommensurate with the goals of decolonization. As Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill argue, "decolonization requires imagining and enacting a future for Indigenous peoples—a future based on terms of their own making."[27] In the context of Brazil, Native feminists have called for a future in which Native peoples regain sovereignty over their lands, enabling them to rebuild their communal and reciprocal ways of life and end the structural violence against Native women imposed by settler colonialism.[28] Part of this project, as Native Terena scholar Linda Lili Sebastião describes, is also recognition of Native feminist ways of understanding time as circular, which provides important knowledge about using memories and connections with one's ancestors to work toward future possibilities for "perceiving how we can live well together in the world."[29] Drawing from this temporal framing, I illustrate how the inward focus of Keiko's account neglects to consider time as a shared relation with others, and therefore, closes itself off from other imaginations of the future that would be liberatory for Indigenous peoples, as well as Keiko herself. Ultimately, through grappling with the counterhegemonic possibilities and

[27] Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections Between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," *Feminist formations* 25, no. 1 (2013): 24.
[28] "Final Statement of the First Indigenous Women's March: 'Territory: our body, our spirit," *Articulação dos povos indígenas do* Brasil, August 15, 2019, https://apiboficial.org/2019/08/15/final-statement-of-the-first-indigenous-womens-march-territory-our-body-our-spirit/?lang=en.
[29]Lindomar Lili Sebastião, "O protagonismo das seno têrenoe—Mulheres Terena" (PhD dissertation, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 2018), 100-103.

limitations of the critique that "Natsuyo" makes of heteropatriarchy, I begin a reflection on what steps need to be taken to make strides toward decoloniality in the transpacific, and in this case, particularly within and across Asia and Latin America.

Heteropatriarchy as a Push Factor of Japanese Immigration to Brazil

From the beginning of the story, Hayashi's "Natsuyo" spotlights the pervasiveness of the Japanese heteropatriarchal ideology in early twentieth-century Japan succinctly summarized by the expression: "good wife, wise mother" (*ryōsai kenbo*"良妻賢母). When Keiko first introduces Natsuyo, she refers to her as a good-natured and wise woman (気だての良い賢い女 *kidate no yoi kashikoi onna*) who would make a splendid wife and mother (婦人であり、母であった *fujin de ari, haha de atta*). Her description seems to draw directly from the four-character compound (known in Japanese as *yojijukugo*) of "good wife, wise mother," indicating that Natsuyo is an ideal female national subject. As Keiko measures herself against Natsuyo, she grows increasingly uncertain that she can equally live up to the national standard of domesticity.

The "good wife, wise mother" ideology, to which Keiko alludes, emerged in Meiji Japan in the late nineteenth century at a time of rapid modernization and national consolidation. As state actors worked to fashion the archipelago of Japan into a modern nation-state, they attempted to turn women into national subjects who would contribute to the nation through their work in the home and within the institution of the family. Women were then expected to engage in reproduction and perform household duties, but also support their husbands' work and raise

Japan's next generation to be strong and loyal citizens.[30] For this reason, the Ministry of Education during the Meiji period expanded girls' education, so that women could gain the knowledge they would need to engage in their gendered duties properly and effectively. In this way, as Koyama Shizuko argues, the "good wife, wise mother" ideology assured a gendered division of labor within modern Japanese society that separated the paid, productive work of men from the unpaid, reproductive, and supportive labor of women.[31]

The gender and sexuality norms constructed by the discourse of "good wife, wise mother" had further significance with regard to Japanese militarization in the early twentieth century, which sheds light on why the ideology appears to cause Keiko so much anxiety. At this time, the Meiji state pushed Japan to become a "wealthy nation, strong army" (*fukoku kyōhei* 富国強兵),[32] which reinforced the gendered division of labor that gave male and female work different nationalist purposes. Men were called upon to serve as soldiers—the military heroes of the nation—while women were deemed "mothers of the military nation" (*gunkoku no haha* 軍国の母) with the role of reproducing the nation and raising strong sons.[33] Keiko finds herself surrounded by these militarist and nationalist ideologies since, as she informs us, she comes from a family of military men—her deceased father, uncle, and brothers all served or currently serve in the Japanese army.[34] We therefore, may infer that her preoccupation with her capabilities as a

[30] Koyama Shizuko, *Ryosai Kenbo: the Educational Ideal of "Good Wife, Wise Mother" in Modern Japan*, trans. Stephen Filler (Boston: Brill, 2013), 48.
[31] Shizuko Koyama, "Domestic Roles and the Incorporation of Women into the Nation State: The Emergence and Development of the 'Good Wife, Wise Mother' Ideology," in *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*, ed. Andrea Germer, Vera Mackie and Ulrike Wöhr (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 91.
[32] Andrea Germer, Vera Mackie and Ulrike Wöhr, "Introduction," in *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan* (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 4.
[33] Ibid, 5.
[34] Hayashi, "Natsuyo," 29.

wife and mother arises in part from her upbringing and the pressure put on her to fulfill her duties to the nation.

As the story unfolds, we witness Keiko's insecurities amplify until they eventually drive her into a self-imposed exile to Brazil. These feelings largely stem from the comparisons she draws between herself and Natsuyo. For example, Keiko remarks that Natsuyo possessed adept domestic talents and was always the one teaching her how to be a better housewife.[35] This causes Keiko to feel a sense of unease and self-doubt, which makes further sense when we look at Keiko's experience alongside Miri Nakamura's scholarship on the labor of maids and housewives in modern Japan. Nakamura explains how the term "*shufu* 主婦" (housewife) became more prominent in the 1880s and took on a meaning that defined the roles of middle and upper-class women as "a wife who served as the head of domestic laborers, a manager of maids."[36] As was the case with Natsuyo, many young, working-class women were often sent by their families to work as maids, but also as "apprentices" to housewives who taught them the skills and morals they would need to be good wives. The arrangement worked to incorporate maids into the growing system of education for women that started in the Meiji era, so that they, too, could contribute to strengthening the nation and upholding its foundational family structure.

To that end, the expectation placed on Keiko as a housewife was for her to take charge of Natsuyo's training within the home in a way that would reflect her own capacity as a wife and national subject. Yet we learn from Keiko that Natsuyo often acted as the instructor instead of the apprentice, which threatens the wife-maid hierarchy and invokes anxiety in Keiko. The household system itself ensures this kind of conflict and competition between women due to its

[35] Ibid, 30.
[36] Miri Nakamura, "The Cult of Happiness: Maid, Housewife, and Affective Labor in Higuchi Ichiyō's 'Warekara,'" *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 41, no. 1 (2015): 60, accessed on March 17, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1353/jjs.2015.0024.

vertical structure that separates them based on class distinctions. Rather than be a reciprocal process of skill sharing between the two women, the system requires top-down instruction in order for Keiko to gain recognition as a contributing member of the nation, while also guaranteeing through the power dynamic that the logics of heteropatriarchy are passed on to Natsuyo. Put differently, despite sharing the experience of gendered labor within the domestic sphere, Keiko and Natsuyo miss the opportunity to develop feminist bonds of friendship due to the hierarchical social relations—not just between men and women, but also between women and women—fostered by heteropatriarchy and its intersections with nationalism and capitalism.

While her "inadequacies" in household work and childrearing greatly concern Keiko, biological motherhood seems to be the tipping point that drives her decision to leave Japan. When Keiko happens upon Natsuyo, her husband, and the illicit couple's son, before the feelings of shock and betrayal set in, she experiences a moment of clarity and realization. She makes out her husband and the youthful Natsuyo walking side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder, in perfect unison. The image insinuates that Natsuyo is a better match for Keiko's husband and can act as a stronger supporting partner. Above all, she recognizes the young boy with them as "the spitting image of her husband" from a photograph she recalls of him when he was child with his nursemaid.[37] It is during this instance that we witness Keiko's desire to be a biological mother, so she can literally see herself as part of her husband's family in the face of a child that is her own. She also looks upon the obvious connection that Natsuyo has with her son with longing, wishing she could have a similar relationship with a child she gives birth to.

Keiko's understanding of what it means to be a mother should be interpreted within the sociohistorical context of the story since, as Japanese feminist Ueno Chizuko argues,

[37] Hayashi, "Natsuyo," 33.

motherhood is a historical context subject to change across time and space.[38] Rather than be a "natural destiny" of women, mothering is "a role that is learned and then internalized in the process of gender socialization."[39] Keiko's view of reproduction as essential to both assuming the role of a proper, nurturing mother and supporting the perpetuation of her husband's lineage are modern notions of motherhood that Ueno and Koyama Shizuku trace to the Meiji era, when the institution of the family was redefined and the "good wife, wise mother" ideology emerged.[40] Before this time, women in Japan concerned themselves less with "motherly" duties that followed giving birth, and upper-class women often left breastfeeding or other childrearing work to nursemaids.[41] There appears an interesting tension in the text, then, with Keiko's mention of the nursemaid in the photograph. This woman's presence calls to mind a previous understanding of motherhood or even a suggestion that Keiko need not be a biological mother to connect with a child,[42] if that is what she desires. However, Keiko's fixation on the boy's face that overlooks the nursemaid implies her internalization of a heteropatriarchal notion that there exists a "natural" mother-child bond.

The moment of encounter in the mall puts on display in front of Keiko a way of life that she wishes she could embody, yet she is unsure if she can ever experience after having two miscarriages. It is this devastating possibility of not being able to be a biological mother, coupled with her husband's unfaithfulness, that pushes Keiko to choose to migrate to Brazil. When she reveals that she now lives in Brazil, Keiko shifts the tone of her narration to one of humble defeat as she describes through Japanese honorifics how the events of her past forced her to give

[38] Ueno Chizuko and Richard F. Calichman, eds. "In the Feminine Guise: A Trap of Reverse Orientalism." In *Contemporary Japanese Thought* (Columbia University Press, 2005), 246-248.
[39] Ibid., 246.
[40] Koyama, *Ryosai Kenbo*, 11.
[41] Ueno, "In the Feminine Guise," 249.
[42] The freedom Keiko would have to make this choice, however, is privileged given her middle-class status.

up her home and her former way of life. She appears to largely blame herself for her present situation and the constant homesickness she feels. The sense of disempowerment she illustrates suggests her internalization of dominant gendered ideologies that shape her negative evaluation of her own self-worth, according to how she cannot fulfill her role as a wife and mother who supports her family and, in turn, her nation.

At the same time, Keiko does hold a small hope of finding a new start in Brazil. Her act of migration thus demonstrates a tension between the agency in her decision to break from her past and her perceived lack of agency from feeling forced into exile. Yet in either case, her choice brings her further away from supporting Japan's heteropatriarchal system and demonstrates a divergence from Japanese cultural norms. Within prewar Japanese modern society, infertility was a common reason for divorce due to the weight placed on family lineage and giving birth to a male progenitor.[43] However, given that Keiko's husband already has a successor, it is not likely that he would have ended their marriage because of her miscarriage and poor health. Even if he had pursued a separation, Japanese women who were divorced were returned to their family of birth as arranged by the two heads of household (husband and father or eldest brother). This practice differs from Keiko's, who leaves her natal family, too, when she moves to Brazil, and continues to refuse her brother's offer to bring her back to Japan to live with him.[44]

Her decision to migrate also diverges from prewar Japanese social norms when it was not uncommon for a husband to have a mistress and, in fact, was not legal grounds for a divorce

[43] Harold Fuess, *Divorce in Japan: Family, Gender, and the State, 1600*-2000 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 77-78.
[44]Hayashi, "Natsuyo," 34.

unless the husband was first "sentenced for illicit sexual intercourse."[45] Japanese women were expected to overlook their husbands' infidelity for the good of their families. However, this practice appears intolerable to Keiko since she chooses to separate from her husband and stepchildren and live independently in Brazil. She engages in subjective practices that exceed the regimented boundaries of the subject positions constructed through Japanese nationalist discourses interpellating women to be "good wives" and "wise mothers." Her alternative way of life then not only demystifies heteronormativity's presumed "universality," but it also pushes us to question the hegemonic system altogether due to the devastation Keiko endures on account of being considered non-normative.

Disrupting Capitalist Futurity

When "Natsuyo" is read alongside the Japanese discourse of "pioneering" and "overseas development," the juxtaposition draws out a directional dissonance. Since Keiko focuses most of her account on the events leading up to her move to Brazil, she clarifies her perception of migration as a feeling of being "pushed away" from Japan. In contrast, within journal and newspaper articles from the Japanese imperial archive, numerous migration promoters detail what might "pull" Japanese citizens toward Brazil. Their descriptions paint a positive vision of prosperity, wealth, and national glory available overseas, which coincides with the temporal and spatial logics of colonial racial capitalism that center on progress and accumulation.

For example, in his article "The Value of Overseas Development," Tsuzaki Naotake writes, "cultivating the world's undeveloped lands to contribute to humankind's well-being and

[45] The wife, on the other hand, could be divorced for adultery without a court sentence. See Fuess, *Divorce in* Japan, 117.

to build a new global civilization are essential conditions of Japanese overseas development."[46] He makes use of common capitalist tropes tied to "newness" and "building/creating," which forecast a vision of progress that will continue to unfold as time passes. In other words, he affirms the linear timeline of capitalism concerned with constant accumulation and growth as human civilization advances into the future. As is also perceptible here, development takes on significance beyond an individual's or nation's economic status as Tsuzaki speaks of prosperity as a global phenomenon. The "inclusion" of all of humankind within this imaginary functions to screen out the violence underlying overseas development as a practice of settler colonialism that works through capitalist extraction.

Other migration journals include characterizations of the pioneer figure, such as Furuta Junzō's remarks that a pioneer is "someone who blazes a trail through the virgin forest…and turns it into a lucrative plot of land."[47] He, too, focuses on the future potential of development work as it constructs new forms of civilization that will yield a profit and enable "limitless progress."[48] The rhetoric of "the virgin forest" that he uses appeared frequently throughout many Japanese migration texts to define the pioneer's relationship to Brazilian "frontiers"—spaces imagined as "empty" and "open" to limitless accumulation. At the same time, as literary scholar and musicologist Hosokawa Shūhei posits in his extensive survey of Japanese Brazilian literature, "as the saying 'virgin' forest suggests, his [the pioneer's] ability to clear the undeveloped lands was emphasized as masculine and sometimes both realistically and figuratively violent."[49] I will later discuss the implications of referring to rural Brazil as a "virgin

[46] Tsuzaki Naotake, "Kaigai hatten no kachi,"*Rikko Sekkai* 335, November 1932, 9.
[47] Furuta Junzō, "Kaitakusha tare," *Rikko Sekkai* 327, February 1932, 20.
[48] Ibid., 21.
[49] All translations are my own unless otherwise cited.「「処女」林という言い方があるように、未開を切り開く男性的な、時には暴力的な力が現実にも、言説的にも強調される。」See Hosokawa, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2*, 17.

forest" with regard to Indigenous Brazilians, but concerning Japan's migration system, Hosokawa's comment helps us to infer that the figure of the pioneer is gendered male through the image of conquest pictured in the feminized imagination of nature. In this way, the discourse of pioneering and overseas development centers the Japanese male immigrant within its narrative of capitalist futurity and characterizes him as the heroic agent of progress.

Yet when we juxtapose Keiko's brief account of her life in Brazil with this dominant imagination of Japanese migration, a discernable contrast between the two perspectives emerges. Though Keiko wants to believe that she might find Brazil to be a "virgin land" on which she can cultivate a new sense of self, she confronts the reality that this opportunity is not available to her. The final passage of "Natsuyo" illustrates her cognitive dissonance between a desire to cultivate a new life in Brazil and her sense of dislocation. She first mentions that in Brazil, she now works as a teacher to pursue a "refreshing" (さわやか sawayaka) way of life, which resonates with the Japanese notion of "pioneering" (開拓 *kaitaku*) and the way it opens up a stimulating sense of change and newness. However, Keiko then follows this statement with an expression of regret, stating, "This quiet, yet monotonous life makes me, and at times, causes me intolerable homesickness."[50] The contradiction between the two statements hints at how Keiko tries to convince herself that there is a possibility for escape and rejuvenation and how this diverges from her lived experience.

In particular, the repetitive sense of time connoted by monotony suggests that Keiko experiences, not a forward progression through time toward a bright future like the male pioneer, but rather a cyclical temporality. The dissonance between the two perspectives can be interpreted

[50] 「静かな、しかし単調な生活は、私をして、時にたまらない望郷の念を起きさせます。」See Hayashi, "Natsuyō," 34.

through Anne McClintock's theorization of nationalism's temporal contradictions that depicts the nation's "people" as both embodying a "timeless" national culture and progressing forward together through time. McClintock argues that these inconsistencies are worked out through "the representation of *time* as a natural division of *gender*."[51] Women are portrayed as guardians of traditions and morals, outside of national history, in a permanent time of the past. Their past temporality, however, is what allows the male subject to be pictured as the agent of national progress who moves forward in time by serving as the oppositional point of reference.[52]

In the case of Japanese migration-colonization, Japanese immigrant women were expected to take on roles within the family to perform tasks similar to what McClintock describes. Migration promoters and state officials believed that the long-term success of Japanese overseas development depended on migration being permanent and the agrarian communities maintaining strong Japanese values like hard work and perseverance. Their arguments also conveniently assisted the state in its nation-building and imperialist ambitions, as it hoped to preserve the diaspora's Japanese identity to mobilize it in order to gather resources for the metropole and earn the nation international prestige for its success abroad.[53] State officials regarded the institution of the family as imperative to preserving the immigrant community's ethnic identity, which led the Japanese government to pass the Imperial Ordinance on the Overseas Emigration Association in 1927 that required migration to Brazil to take the form of "permanent, family-based migration" with families of three or more members.[54] Additionally, the state implemented a system of pre-departure education to prepare immigrants

[51] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest*, New York: Routledge, 1995, 359.
[52] Ibid., 358-359.
[53] See Endoh, *Exporting Japan*, 8-9.
[54] Ibid., 71.

to better serve as positive representatives of Japan,[55] and devoted particular attention to women's education to equip them to be educators of ethics. The state, therefore, expected Japanese women to take on roles, like McClintock describes, that helped preserve Japan's "timeless" cultural traditions and morals.

Although Keiko separates herself from familial relations and responsibilities, she continues to engage in a feminized form of labor that serves a nationalist purpose by working as an elementary school teacher. During the early twentieth century, as more women began to enter the workforce, the Japanese male elite tried to maintain a division between male and female labor and only supported women taking jobs outside the home if it was seen as financially necessary. The Home Ministry designated "acceptable" occupations for women—with mainly middle-class women in mind—which official Tago Kazutani summarized as "social work, midwifery, or primary school teaching, that suited their essential mission."[56] Keiko's job teaching children in Brazil, thus, can be read more as a repetition than an escape from the heteropatriarchal, capitalist structure of labor and the gendered ideologies that define her work as suitable to her nurturing and gentle "nature." In addition, Japanese schools in Brazil at the time were expected to teach a nationalist curriculum that included passing on the *mother* tongue and providing a moral education (修身 *shūshin*) based on the Imperial Rescript on Education.[57]

Keiko's profession, in other words, involves many of the same nationalist duties assigned to

[55] The efforts placed on safeguarding familial relations resulted largely from Japanese exclusion from the U.S. with the passing of the 1907 Gentleman's Agreement and the 1924 Immigration Act. These policies caused anxiety among migration promoters that a similar fate awaited Japanese immigrants in Brazil if the male workers did not reform their immoral, sojourner lifestyles. They then turned to familial migration as a defense mechanism against debauchery. See Azuma, *In Search of our Frontier,* 130-132.
[56] Elise K. Tipton, "Moving Up and Out: The 'Shop Girl' in Interwar Japan." In *Modern Girls on the Go* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2020), 28.
[57] Hiromi Ehara, "Transformation of Japanese Schools before and after WWII: Impact of Brazilian Nationalism on Japanese Immigrants' Primary Education and Self-identity," *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* vol. 6, no. 2, (2019): 203.

women in the metropole related to fostering the intellectual and moral growth of Japan's youth. From this insight, we may conjecture that her experience of repetition rather than forward-moving progress stems from the persistence of a heteropatriarchal labor system from Japan to Brazil.

"Natsuyo" then renders visible the dominant ideologies that buttress a gendered division of labor across the Japanese empire and construct distinct "male" and "female" subject positions for Japanese persons. These ideologies grounded in colonial racial capitalist and heteropatriarchal thinking not only attempt to exclude Keiko from the productive sphere of labor by emphasizing that women's "proper" roles should be mothers and wives, but also devalue her productive labor as an elementary school teacher as "feminized," supportive work that does not amount to the pioneer's contributions to global progress. Not to mention, the division itself rests upon the presumption that women's reproductive labor is not productive, so even if Keiko could become a biological mother, her (re)production of labor-power would still be exploited as unwaged work.[58] Ultimately, it is through Keiko's narration of suffering within the heteropatriarchal, colonial racial capitalist system that the short story pushes us, as readers, to question the future of prosperity and progress promised by this system. Not only is this future not a possibility for everyone, but it also relies on the exploitation of women to sustain itself.

Intersections of Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy

However, the critique generated by "Natsuyo" has its limitations. Since the story focuses on the experience of gender and sexuality constructions from the perspective of a middle-class woman in Japan who later becomes a Japanese immigrant in Brazil, it depicts heteropatriarchal

[58] See Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the* Witch, 7-9.

subordination as obligatory domesticity and exclusion from productive labor. Yet it overlooks how male domination has been experienced differently by women who were further subjugated by settler colonialism. As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, working toward transpacific decoloniality requires vigilance around an ethic of incommensurability to pursue liberation from the modern/colonial gender system in a way that includes Indigenous futurities. When we juxtapose Keiko's account with a reading of the Japanese imperial archive against the grain, the non-alignment between Keiko and Native Brazilian women becomes clear and suggests forms of settler accountability that must unfold for decolonial feminist solidarity to be enacted.

Starting with "Natsuyo" from the line examined above, "This quiet, yet monotonous life makes me and at times, causes me intolerable homesickness,"[59] Keiko marks "life" (seikatsu 生活) with the Japanese subject particle "は" and places the pronoun "I" (watakushi 私) before the object particle "を," which grammatically identifies herself as the object of the sentence receiving the action of her way of life in Brazil. More simply stated, she perceives herself as a passive object rather than a subject with agency. This movement toward "subjectlessness" demonstrates how Keiko feels that she does not fit with the subject positions constructed by "normative" understandings of womanhood and is therefore, an abject being.

Yet Jodi Byrd argues that "indigeneity admittedly has had and has required a political referent that is tied to land, relation, and community,"[60] which makes Indigenous subjectlessness

[59] Hayashi, "Natsuyo," 34.
[60] Jodi Byrd, "Love Unbecoming: The Queer Politics of the Transitive Native," in *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies*, ed. Joanne Barker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 216.

inherently violent due to its ties to histories of Indigenous dispossession. Similarly, Native Brazilian scholars Linda Lili Sebastião and Wanderley Dias Cardoso, recognize land as "unquestionably…the principal indicator of the Terena peoples' identity and cohesion," which is why they insist on a place-based subjectivity to resist the practices and epistemologies of settler colonialism.[61] Returning to the Japanese imperial archive with this insight in mind, we then can better grasp the incommensurability between Keiko's experience of subjectlessness as abjection and Indigenous Brazilian women's subjectlessness as dispossession.

For example, Furuta Junzō's article "Elements of a Successful Development Enterprise," published in the July 1932 edition of *Rikkō Sekai*, describes the laborious and challenging, yet simultaneously adventurous and heroic "work of the pioneer" (kaitaku jigyō 開拓事業). Among the pioneer's tasks, Furuta includes the cultivation of "virgin soil," to which he further adds a quote from the epigraph of Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev's *Virgin Soil*, stating: "Virgin soil should be turned up not by a harrow skimming over the surfaces, but by a plough biting deep into the earth." [62] His allusion bestows a sense of exceptionalism to the immigrant laborer, as his work requires a certain strength to pursue this kind of deep ingression into the untouched lands of Brazil.

The metaphor of "virgin soil" he uses imagines the land of Brazil as a female body, open to conquest and penetration by the male explorer. Through her investigation of comparable European references made about the "virgin soil" of the New World during the Enlightenment,

---

[61] Wanderley Dias Cardoso, "A história da educação escolar para oTerena: origem e desenvolvimento do ensino médio na Aldeia Limão Verde" (PhD dissertation, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, 2011), 65-66. Sebastião, "O protagonismo das seno têrenoe," 190.

[62] 「処女地を開墾するものはその鋤を地深く入れぬばならぬ」Furuta, Junzō. "Kaitaku jigyō daisei no yōsō: shinkō, keikaku soshite seiryoku." *Rikkō Sekai* 331 (1932): 22.

Anne McClintock identifies how the feminization of land functioned to picture these territories as "possessable" through "the prior subordination of women as a category of nature."[63] Similarly, in the context of Japanese migration-colonization, the metaphor not only legitimizes violent conquest, but also casts male domination over female individuals as an unquestioned norm in the way it casts misogynist relationships as the point of comparison from which to comprehend subjugation. The figurative language, in this way, demonstrates the way the categories of "women" and "nature" mutually animate one another in the material organization of social relations.[64]

Although Keiko's devastating experience of female subjugation casts doubt on the logics of heteropatriarchy as a "natural good," her self-inflicted social ostracism and internationalized oppression do not match the kind of violence implied by the metaphor of "virgin soil." The figure of the virgin signifies "possessability" through referring to the female body, but it is employed with intentionality and specificity to depict "undeveloped" or "empty" land, implying that the metaphor applies only to certain female bodies connected to these spaces. It is the virgin's racialization as "other" that marks her as without history, without agency, and therefore, permissible for gendered and racialized dispossession,[65] which consequently serves as the condition of possibility through which the male pioneer may imagine limitless accumulation.

---

[63] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 23-24.

[64] Critical theorist Neferti Xina M. Tadiar's concept of "political-libidinal economies" is particularly salient for understanding the material significance of the gendered imagination of the Japanese-Brazilian network. She coins the term to describe how the political and economic relations between nations in the transpacific community are not only metaphorically configured through sexual fantasies, but also materially structured through the political and economic systems that regulate sexuality. She explains how the insatiable desire of capitalism for the accumulation of wealth and pleasure—which is inextricably linked to imperialism's desire for expansion—creates and is created by a fantasy of social relations that perpetuates the principles of these same entangled capitalist, imperialist, and heteropatriarchal systems. See Neferti Xina M. Tadiar, "Sexual Economies," *What is a Rim?: Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*, ed. Arif Dirlik, Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1993, 219-220.

[65] See McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 30-31; 354; 374-378.

Moreover, other migration promoters like Mori Kiyokazu encouraged expansion into Brazil's "virgin lands" using the argument that the Japanese people's "superior" qualities would help the Brazilian people advance their "undeveloped" civilization.[66] Such a claim hinges on a racialized understanding of modernity, which following a European tradition, maps time spatially according to colonial divisions of the globe that determine the positionings of "modern" Japan and "premodern" Brazil.[67] However, while Mori's racialized mapping designates Brazilians as "inferior," he actually elides the Indigenous peoples of Brazil from the premodern/modern hierarchy altogether.[68] The move then performs a double effacement by not only ignoring current Indigenous claims to these lands, but also assuming a Brazilian national community that occludes previous Portuguese attempts to extinguish Indigenous nations from its colonial territories.

Since the 16th century, Portuguese colonizers engaged in practices of dispossession, assimilation, and elimination of Indigenous peoples through so-called "just wars" waged against "unruly natives," the "civilizing mission" of the Catholic Church, and Portuguese labor regimes.[69] Even after Brazilian Independence in 1822, as historian Yuko Miki has delineated, the extension of citizenship to Indigenous peoples and the imagination of a racially harmonious postcolonial nation went hand-in-hand with settler colonialism and slavery. That is, alongside the dominant Brazilian national identity said to be a mixture of Europeans (Portuguese), Indigenous, and African peoples was a discourse of Indigenous extinction linked to practices of violent

[66] Mori Kiyokazu, "Kakaru ga yue ni matto gurosso shū shinshutsu wo shōreisu."*Rikkō Sekai* 325 (1932): 39.
[67] See Johannes Fabian, and Matti Bunzl, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
[68] See Jodi Byrd for a discussion of how processes of racialization are often theorized through "the historical aphasia of the conquest of the indigenous peoples." Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxvi.
[69] Desiree Poets, "Citizenship and Settler Colonialism in Brazil: The Toré Ritual as a Decolonial Indigenous Practice in the Northeast Region," *Citizenship Studies*, doi:10.1080/13621025.2021.1984504, 1-4.

assimilation and genocide. To put it simply, when Mori argues that Japanese immigrants can help Brazilians to develop their lands, he reinforces the erasure of Indigenous people from Brazilian national history.

From a decolonial feminist reading of these Japanese imperialist representations of "virgin soil," we gain an awareness of how the racialized, gendered logics of overseas development are contingent upon Indigenous dispossession and erasure. In other words, the discursive imaginations layer racism and misogyny over multiple tiers of settler colonialism. Though "Natsuyo" critiques the heteropatriarchal stratum of injustice on the grounds of a female settler's experience of victimization, the story's focus does not dig deep enough to attend to the darker levels of Japanese imperialism compounded with heteropatriarchy. If we hope to take steps toward decolonizing the transpacific, it becomes clear from this oversight that the intersections between multiple systems of power must be accounted for and transformed in order to empower the collective liberation of all peoples.

Rejecting Reproductive Futurism

In addition to questioning the repudiation of women from the arena of productive, nationalist labor, "Natsuyo" problematizes the instrumentalization of women's reproductive function for an imperial expansionist purpose in Brazil. Yet similar to the way Keiko's challenge to heteropatriarchal, capitalist futurity does not address this imaginary's inextricable ties to settler colonialism, her challenge to the heteronormative logics of reproductive futurism also fails to transform the intersecting forces of domination that deny Indigenous peoples an autonomous future. This tension between critique and complicity will be clarified in this section

through a continued juxtapositional reading of "Natsuyo" alongside the Japanese imperial archive situated within the context of Japanese settler colonialism in Brazil.

Beginning with the role of reproduction within the dominant imagination of Japanese overseas development, various migration agents and state officials call upon women to perform supportive duties as mothers and wives, closely following the responsibilities assigned to Japanese women in the metropole. One article "Overseas Development and Women," published in April 1933 *Rikkō Sekai*, argues for increasing the number of women sent abroad to Brazil through delineating the important ways that women will contribute to reproduction and moral stability within Japan's migration enterprise. Writing as the leader of the Japanese Women's Overseas Association (*Nihon fujin kaigai kyōkai* 日本婦人海外協会), Matsudaira Toshiko (松平俊子) claims within the text that balancing the gender ratio will help resolve problems related to public morals and the debauched behavior of single, male immigrants.[70]

Her argument recalls the concerns over the institution of the family and its moral upkeep that we discussed earlier, which led Japanese state officials to implement a policy of family-based migration and a program of pre-departure education.[71] Their efforts placed on safeguarding familial relations resulted largely from Japanese exclusion from the U.S. with the passing of the 1907 Gentleman's Agreement and the 1924 Immigration Act. These policies caused anxiety among migration promoters that a similar fate awaited Japanese immigrants in Brazil if the male workers did not reform their immoral, sojourner lifestyles. They then turned to familial migration as a defense mechanism against debauchery, a solution we see Matsudaira promote to increase female migration overseas.

[70] Matsudaira Toshiko, "*Kaigai hatten to fujin*," *Rikkō Sekai* 340 (1933): 7-8.
[71] Azuma, *In Search of our Frontier*, 133.

Moreover, Matsudaira echoes the state discourse in arguing that the long-term success of Japan's "peaceful and friendly" (平和親善 heiwa shinzen) form of colonization requires immigrants to settler permanently in Brazil in stable family units. Women, as she mentions, are needed to complete the family structure and foster "strong successors" abroad. Her look toward the future and the next generation of *Nikkeijin* (Japanese descendants) resonates with the timeframe of "reproductive futurism" and its orientation toward a constructed image of children to come. Matsudaira utilizes this projection of prosperity and strength to justify Japanese expansionism in Brazil through an argument that appears to be "common sense" in the way it will presumedly benefit the future of Japan's innocent youth. Furthermore, the "moral" purpose she bestows on settler colonialism aligns with the rhetoric she uses when she refers to Japanese colonization (植民 *shokumin*) as "peaceful and friendly." Her persuasive move, here, covers over the violence and aggression of this imperial expansionist system in an effort to present the motives of state actors and migration promoters as benevolent and altruistic. At the same time, in her arguments for women's participation, she folds Japanese motherhood into the paternalist presumptions of settler colonialism.

In another example from the Japanese imperial archive, the particularly racialized dimensions of reproductive futurism appear more pronounced in the author's argument for expanding Japanese migration-colonies into the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso. This article, Mori Kiyokazu's "Why I Recommend Moving into Mato Grosso," published in the March 1932 *Rikkō Sekai*, endeavors to assuage the anxieties of Japanese readers who fear that moving into this rural state will result in Japanese and *Nikkei* children becoming "nativized" (土人化

dojinka).[72] Rather than see this "racial deterioration" as a possibility, Mori argues that the Japanese people possess "innate" (先天的 *sententeki*) abilities that cannot be changed and that make them a "superior race" (優秀なる民族 *yūshūnaru minzoku*). Just as they have built advanced political, social, and economic systems in Japan, Mori exerts confidence that the Japanese pioneers will be able to do the same in the "undeveloped" (未開 *mikai*) lands of Mato Grosso and secure a bright future for their children.

His focus on the well-being of the next generation of *Nikkeijin*, like Matsudaira, makes an appeal to the logic of reproductive futurism and the "unquestionable" value it places on heteronormativity to ensure this well-being. Yet he articulates his arguments through blatantly racist language that sets up a precise demarcation between the "superior" qualities and knowledge of the Japanese and the "inferior," "undeveloped" practices of the Brazilians in Mato Grosso. His racial essentialist thinking may be unpacked through an ideological constellation that Alys Eve Weinbaum terms "the race/reproduction bind" that conceptualizes "reproduction as racializing force."[73] As she argues:

> The interconnected ideologies of racism, nationalism, and imperialism rest on the notion that race can be *reproduced*, and on attendant beliefs in the reproducibility of racial formations (including nations) and of social systems hierarchically organized according to notions of inherent racial superiority, inferiority, and degeneration.[74]

Her theorization clarifies that sexism and racism are inextricably linked within racial nationalism, as seen in how the state's interest in controlling women's reproduction and sexuality arises from a desire to reproduce the nation as a homogeneous race that will continue to act as

[72] Mori, "*kakaru ga yue ni*," 39.
[73]Alys Eve Weinbaum, *Wayward Reproductions : Genealogies of Race and Nation in Transatlantic Modern Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 37.
[74] Ibid., 4-5.

the dominant community within a given territory. It further elucidates how Mori's representation of reproductive futurism works through the racist, nationalist, and imperialist assumptions that the Japanese race can be reproduced in Brazil as the nation expands itself.

The race/reproduction bind grows even more evident at the end of the editorial, when Mori writes: "We [the Japanese people] will become the ancestors of this undeveloped land and as pioneers swinging the trail-blazing axe, we will find great satisfaction in developing its civilization."[75] The mention of ancestors, in this case, not only concerns the reproduction of the Japanese race as an extension of the national lineage, but also the reproduction of the Japanese race as part and parcel of settler colonialism. "Becoming the ancestors of the land" suggests the replacement of the Indigenous peoples of Brazil who hold claim to those spaces. Patrick Wolfe specifically names replacement as a core practice of settler colonialism, which violently operates through a logic of elimination as "Settler colonialism destroys to replace."[76] Grasping this racialized violence makes it clear that reproductive futurism has implications beyond the policing of heteronormativity.

However, reading Keiko's narrative alongside Mori's and Matsudaira's imaginations complicates the presumed universality of reproductive futurism that relays a narrative of forward-moving time toward a bright horizon. Despite the expectation for Keiko to support the Japanese nation's advancement through reproduction and raising the next generation of citizens, Keiko's movement to Brazil involves a break from any heteronormative relationships that would contribute to the national family's future. She describes this severance in a statement she makes

[75] 「私共は其の未開の土地に先祖となり、開拓の斧を揮ひ其処にパイオニアとして、また文化の開拓に当たる事は誠に面白き事である。」See Mori, "kakaru ga yue ni," 39.

[76]Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387, accessed March 18, 2021. doi:10.1080/14623520601056240, 388.

in the final passage: “my past defines me and has forced me to throw away everything in my life.”[77] At this moment, instead of moving forward to bring something new into being, Keiko indicates a wrestling with the past that pulls her backward. Her action, too, demonstrates a discarding of life practices—a drive toward destruction that diverges from reproductive futurism’s focus on the creation of life. While Keiko may have physical reasons for not engaging in reproduction, her remark illustrates how she also chooses to cut ties with her husband, stepchildren, and brothers, who would otherwise provide her ways to reproduce the heteronormative social order by supporting their families. Staying part of these relationships appears intolerable to Keiko, which casts doubt on the “unquestionable” value of heteronormativity.

Furthermore, recalling the tension between Keiko’s initial hope to find a “refreshing” (さわやか *sawayaka*) new start and her lived experience of monotony, there is another moment at the ending of the story when Keiko reiterates the adjective “refreshing” to redefine her relationship with the future. After expressing that she is trying to reconsider everything to find truth, she states, “I am thinking of maintaining this refreshing life in Brazil until that time comes, if it ever does.”[78] Her remark, here, illustrates doubt creeping into her earlier conviction that she might find a future in Brazil that would offer her a bigger and brighter purpose. Rather than easily find a sense of rejuvenation from making sense of herself, Keiko utilizes a volitional verb construction[79] in the original Japanese text that connotes the constant effort required to search for

[77] 「半世の過去は私をして、人生のあらゆるものを棄てさせてしまいました。」Hayashi, “*Natsuyō*,” 34.

[78] 「このさわやかな生活を守ろうと思っているので御座います。」Ibid, 34.

[79] This grammar construction is composed of the volitional verb form followed by “と致している *to itashiteiru*.”

happiness. Additionally, the word "maintain" (守ろう *mamorō*), which she uses to describe her attempt to hold on to the life she leads now implies a meaning of protection, thereby showing the fragility of her life and the challenge to sustain it. In other words, her suggestion of daily struggle just to care for herself roots her in the time of the present and makes her unable to look toward a future horizon that concerns others. Ultimately, she expresses an intention to live in the present, giving up on a normative futurity.

From these two textual moments, we witness how Keiko abandons the possibility of linking her past lineage to a future generation of *Nikkei* children. Time, to her, does not flow horizontally and smoothly from generation to generation; instead, it is marked by unevenness and repetition. The difficulty of her temporal experience sheds light on the abjection felt by persons who do not fit or comply with the gender and sexuality standards of a heteropatriarchal society. Keiko's story, therefore, problematizes the assumption that reproductive futurism is universally "good" and that heteronormativity should undoubtedly be upheld.

Relocating Indigenous Futures

However, though "Natsuyo" queers the heteropatriarchal ideologies that determine the roles Japanese women are expected to perform within a national and an imperialist context, its critique does not grapple with the distinct experience of heteropatriarchy when it compounds with settler colonialism. To put it differently, the story's focus on a female settler does not address the specifically racialized dimension of reproductive futurism that we examined in Mori's article, which called for the replacement of Indigenous peoples of Brazil with the "superior" Japanese race. As José Esteban Muñoz has astutely pointed out, the option to "opt-out" of reproducing the social order and giving up on a normative future—as we witness Keiko

choose at the end of the story—requires a certain level of privilege; it overlooks how certain racialized and classed individuals have historically confronted barriers to reproduction or have been denied a future altogether.[80] While Keiko may desire to have children and may not be able to physically reproduce, we must keep in mind that her experience of devastation and abjection is not commensurate to the violence of settler colonialism that attempts to destroy the chance of any future for Indigenous peoples.

Within Brazil, as previously outlined, layers of settler colonialism have enacted violent practices of assimilation, dispossession, exploitation, and extinction against Indigenous peoples. Despite these attacks on Indigenous futurity, Indigenous peoples have come together to demand full possession and sovereignty over their lands to regenerate their own autonomous futures based on reciprocity and ethical social relations. Central to this struggle, as Native Terena scholar Linda Lili Sebastião argues, is resistance to the linear timeline of modernity that "devalues our [the Terena peoples'] past, our history, our memory, and all respect for our ancestry, and constructs new configurations and ruptures from the past ways of life that the peoples of Latin America historically lived."[81] Building Indigenous futurity, to her, actually entails rebuilding Indigenous ways of life through Indigenous philosophies and communal practices connected to the land of Abya Yala[82] and their ancestors. Similarly, Indigenous activists who participated in the August 2019 Indigenous Women's March define their imagination of the future as "a return to mutual support between the feminine and the masculine, without, however, essentializing men and women."[83] That is, they seek to transform settler

[80] José Esteban Muñoz, "Cruising the Toilet: LeRoi Jones/ Amiri Baraka, Radical Black Traditions, and Queer Futurity, *GLQ* 13:2-3 (2007): 363-364.
[81] Sebastião, "O protagonismo das seno têrenoe," 102.
[82] Abya Yala is the Indigenous name for the Americas, which in the Kuna language means "land in its full maturity."
[83] "Final Statement of the First Indigenous Women's March: 'Territory: our body, our spirit,"

colonialism and the heteropatriarchal relations it imposed on Indigenous peoples by looking toward their ancestors who remain grounded in their lands. The link they draw between the earth and their ancestry accounts for the emphasis on land reclamation, and the assertion of Indigenous Feminists that "Our territory is our life, our body and our spirit."[84]

Looking at this understanding of circular time, we can grasp how Keiko's experience of time—though still cyclical—differs from Indigenous temporality, which is rooted in connections to land, ancestors, and the community. In detaching from her former heteronormative relationships in Brazil, Keiko also accepts a quiet life of solitude in Brazil that contrasts the focus Indigenous feminists place on relationality. Furthermore, her self-reflection only looks in toward herself and the events of her past without considering how her movement to Brazil affects those around her in the present. In other words, her retreat into herself neglects to perceive how her future might be bound up with others. While Keiko's feelings of loneliness and despair do contribute to bringing out a critique of heteronormative futurity, her story does not offer a vision of transformation or an alternative way of life. In this way, the text's critique not only neglects to address the setter colonial practices that attempt to foreclose an Indigenous futurity, but also ignores Indigenous knowledges about non-hierarchical ways of being-in-relation that might offer Indigenous peoples, and maybe even Keiko, a different future.

Conclusion

By remaining attuned to the intersections of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy while juxtaposing Hayashi's "Natsuyo" with the Japanese imperial archive, we encounter an

Articulação dos povos indígenas do Brasil. August 15, 2019. https://apiboficial.org/2019/08/15/final-statement-of-the-first-indigenous-womens-march-territory-our-body-our-spirit/?lang=en.

[84] "Final Statement of the First Indigenous Women's March."

instance of incommensurability between queer feminist critique and decolonization. On the one hand, Keiko's experience shows how the dominant narrative of Japanese migration as a heroic project of overseas development only fits a male Japanese pioneer who enjoys a privileged position atop the social hierarchy. Her perspective, therefore, illuminates the colonial racial capitalist and heteropatriarchal logics that construct a gendered division of labor within both systems of nationalism and imperialism. Moreover, her abjection as a non-heteronormative woman generates a critique of gender and sexuality standards that attempt to define the limits of meaningful personhood.

On the other hand, the disruption that "Natsuyo" causes heteropatriarchy does not attend to all ways that heteropatriarchy is experienced. As we read in the Japanese imperial archive, the discourse of pioneering and overseas advancement is developed through settler colonialist ideologies that exercise a particular form of anti-Indigenous, misogynist violence on Indigenous women of Brazil. Keiko's perspective as a settler, however, does not engage a critique that addresses these intersections between settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, and even risks complicity with settler colonialist logics of dispossession and extinction from the future. The insight from decolonial and Indigenous feminists helps to draw awareness toward the complex ways in which struggles for social justice along the lines of gender and sexuality do not necessarily work toward the liberation of all peoples, especially if they do not interrogate the structures of settler colonialism. They also push us to imagine more abundant futures centered on ethical relationality and reciprocity.

What then emerges from these tensions between queer feminist liberation and decolonization is perhaps, a call for an ethic of accountability. One possible way to imagine what such an ethic might entail comes from Jodi Byrd's suggestion that the point of calling attention

to incommensurabilities between some social justice projects and decolonization is not to place blame on queer persons, diasporic subjects, or other historically oppressed individuals "as if they could always consent to or refuse such positions or consequences of history;" rather, it is to work toward building decolonial alliances between Native and non-Native beings through engaging in a practice of "transformative accountability."[85] In this light, decolonization requires not just reflecting on, but transforming complicities with ongoing forms of settler colonialism, while acknowledging and utilizing Indigenous epistemologies to build alternative ways of relating to one another that honor connection, reciprocity, and the possibility of a future for everyone.

Bibliography

Arata Sumu. *Burajiru Nikkei koronia bungei, ge*. São Paulo: Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, 2008.

Arvin, Maile, Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill. "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy." *Feminist Formations* 25, no.1 (Spring 2013): 8-24.

Arvin, Maile. *Possessing Polynesians: the Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.

Azuma, Eichiro. *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2019.

Bahng, Aimee. *Migrant Futures : Decolonizing Speculation in Financial Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Byrd, Jodi. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Byrd, Jodi. "Love Unbecoming: The Queer Politics of the Transitive Native." In Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies. Edited by Joanne Barker, 207-227. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Cardoso, Wanderley Dias. "A história da educação escolar para oTerena: origem e

[85] Ibid., Xxxix.

desenvolvimento do ensino médio na Aldeia Limão Verde." PhD dissertation, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, 2011.

Copeland, Rebecca. "A Century of Reading Women's Writing in Japan: An Introduction." In *Woman Critiqued: Translated Essays on Women's Writing*. Edited by Rebecca Copeland, 1-20. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

Endoh, Toake. *Exporting Japan: Politics of Emigration toward Latin America*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Eng, David L., Judith Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz. "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?" *Social Text*, vol. 23, no. 3-4 (2005): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-23-3-4_84-85-1.

Fabian, Johannes, and Matti Bunzl. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch*. New York: Autonomedia, 2004.

"Final Statement of the First Indigenous Women's March: 'Territory: our body, our spirit." Articulação dos povos indígenas do Brasil. August 15, 2019. https://apiboficial.org/2019/08/15/final-statement-of-the-first-indigenous-womens-march-territory-our-body-our-spirit/?lang=en.

Finley, Chris. "Decolonizing the Queer Native Body (and Recovering the Native Bull-Dyke): Bringing 'Sexy Back' and Out of Native Studies' Closet." In *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, edited by Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauria Morgenson, 31-42. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011.

Fuess, Harold. *Divorce in Japan: Family, Gender, and the State, 1600-2000*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.

Furuta, Junzō. "Kaitaku jigyō daisei no yōsō: shinkō, keikaku soshite seiryoku." *Rikkō Sekai* 331 (1932): 20-23.

Furuta Junzō. "Kaitakusha tare*." Rikko Sekkai* 327 (1932): 20.

Germer, Andrea, Vera Mackie and Ulrike Wöhr. "Introduction." In *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*, 1-24. Milton Park: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014.

Halberstam, J. Jack. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.

Hayashi, Ise. “Natsuyō.” In *Koronia shōsetsu senshū 1*, edited by Koronia bungakukai, 27-34. Sao Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975.

Hiromi Ehara. “Transformation of Japanese Schools before and after WWII: Impact of Brazilian Nationalism on Japanese Immigrants’ Primary Education and Self-identity.” *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* 6, no. 2 (2019): 197-215.

Horigchi, Noriko J. *Women Adrift: The Literature of Japan’s Imperial Body*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 201.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1: nihongo no nagai tabi[rekishi]*. Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2012.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron].* Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013.

Jacobowitz, Seth. “A Bitter Brew: Coffee and Labor in Japanese Brazilian Immigrant Literature.” *Estudos Japoneses*, no. 41 (2019): 13-30.

Koyama, Shizuko. “Domestic Roles and the Incorporation of Women into the Nation State: The Emergence and Development of the ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ Ideology.” In *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*. Edited by Andrea Germer, Vera Mackie and Ulrike Wöhr, 85-100. Milton Park: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014.

Koyama, Shizuko. *Ryosai Kenbo: the Educational Ideal of “Good Wife, Wise Mother” in Modern Japan*. Translated by Stephen Filler. Boston: Brill, 2013.

Lim, Jie-Hyun. “Towards a Transnational History of Victimhood Nationalism: On the Trans-Pacific Space.” In *Trans-Pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*, edited by Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, 45-60. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2012.

Lu, Sidney Xu. *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Lugones, María. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial / Modern Gender System." *Hypatia* 22, no. 1 (2007): 186-209. Accessed March 14, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4640051.

Mack, Edward. *Acquired Alterity: Migration, Identity, and Literary Nationalism*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2022.

Mack, Edward. “Paracolonial Literature: Japanese-language Literature in Brazil.” In *Ilbon yŏn'gu 16* (2011): 57-128.

Matsudaira, Toshiko. “*Kaigai hatten to fujin.*” *Rikkō Sekai* 340 (1933): 7-8.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest.* New York: Routledge, 1995.

Miki, Yuko. *Frontiers of Citizenship: A Black and Indigenous History of Postcolonial Brazil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Mori, Kiyokazu. "*Kakaru ga yue ni matto gurosso shū shinshutsu wo shōreisu*." *Rikkō Sekai* 325 (1932): 36-39.

Muñoz, José Esteban. "Cruising the Toilet: LeRoi Jones/ Amiri Baraka, Radical Black Traditions, and Queer Futurity." *GLQ* 13, no. 2-3 (2007): 353-3367.

Nakamura, Miri. "The Cult of Happiness: Maid, Housewife, and Affective Labor in Higuchi Ichiyō's 'Warekara.'" *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 41, no. 1 (2015): 45-78. Accessed on March 17, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1353/jjs.2015.0024.

Nishida, Mieko. *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Poets, Desiree. "Citizenship and Settler Colonialism in Brazil: The Toré Ritual as a Decolonial Indigenous Practice in the Northeast Region." Citizenship Studies, 1-19. doi:10.1080/13621025.2021.1984504.

Quijano, Anibal. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: View from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533-580.

Sebastião, Lindomar Lili. "O protagonismo das *seno têrenoe*—Mulheres Terena." PhD dissertation, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 2018.

Segato, Rita Laura. "Gênero E Colonialidade: Em Busca De Chaves De Leitura E De Um Vocabulário Estratégico Descolonial*." *E-Cadernos Ces* (20140416) (2014). Accessed on April 30th, 2021. https://doi.org/10.4000/eces.1533.

Shigematsu, Setsu. *Scream from the Shadows: The Women's Liberation Movement in Japan.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Shimai, Toshio. "*Ono wo nigitte.*" *Burajiru Jihōsha* (São Paulo, Brazil), October 8, 1931.

Tadiar, Neferti Xina M. "Sexual Economies in the Asia-Pacific Community." In *What is a Rim?: Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*, edited by Arif Dirlik, 219-248. Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1993.

Tanaka, Yukiko. *Women Writers of Meiji and Taishō Japan: their Lives, Works and Critical Reception, 1868-1926*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2000.

Tipton, Elise K. "Moving Up and Out: The 'Shop Girl' in Interwar Japan." In *Modern Girls*

on the Go, 21–40. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2020.

Tsuzaki Naotake. “Kaigai hatten no kachi.” *Rikko Sekkai* 335 (1932): 9.

Ueno Chizuko and Richard F. Calichman, editors. “In the Feminine Guise: A Trap of Reverse Orientalism.” In *Contemporary Japanese Thought*, 225–62. Columbia University Press, 2005. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/cali13620.11.

Walsh, Catherine E. "On Decolonial Dangers, Decolonial Cracks, and Decolonial Pedagogies Rising." In *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, edited by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, 81-98. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2018. Accessed May 10, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv11g9616.8.

Weinbaum, Alys Eve. *Wayward Reproductions: Genealogies of Race and Nation in Transatlantic Modern Thought*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

Wolfe, Patrick. “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387–409. Accessed March 18, 2021. doi:10.1080/14623520601056240.

CHAPTER 2

Migrations of the "Modern Girl": Transpacific Montages of Feminist and Decolonial Resistance

In 1929, the Japanese critic and journalist Kiyosawa Kiyoshi wrote on an emergent female subjectivity: "like the waves of the Pacific Ocean that barrel forward with force, the *Modan Gāru* engulfs anyone standing in her way and continues onward."[1] The figure of the *Modan Gāru* モダンガール (Modern Girl) that he mentions appeared frequently in the 1920s and 30s Japanese media in an attempt to define the identity of modern Japanese women who had taken on new social roles outside the home following rapid economic growth and industrialization. Although Kiyosawa's image evinces her strength, persistence, and militancy, most representations of the *Modan Gāru* in periodicals and films, as well as those that have survived in history textbooks, strip her of her political agency and instead emphasize her rebelliousness in relation to culture. She exists in these accounts as a frivolous, undirected consumer, wearing the latest "Western" fashions, smoking, drinking, and flirting out in public.[2]

Across the globe, a similar trajectory of modern female representation was unfolding in Brazil. The figure of the *Mulher Paulista* or the Paulista Woman emerged during the 1932 uprising[3] in São Paulo against the Getúlio Vargas regime as a discursive tactic to preserve

[1] Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, "Modaan Gaaru no Kenkyū," in *Ningen Seken* vol. 1 of *Kindai Shomin Seikatsushi*, ed. Minami Hiroshi (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1985), 158. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.
[2] Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2006), 67.
[3] Sometimes called the Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932 or the Guerra Paulista (Paulista War), the uprising—initiated by residents of the São Paulo region—fought against Getúlio Vargas's seizure of power during the Revolution of 1930. After assuming the presidency, Vargas appointed politicians from outside São Paulo to take over the executive duties in the state, which outraged many of São Paulo's political elite who had previously benefited from the state's regional autonomy with little imposition from the federal government. The campaign that formed in opposition to Vargas claimed that they were fighting for a return to a constitutional government that would guarantee the state's autonomy. See Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in* Brazil (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 71-79.

hegemonic structures at a time of social transition. As modern Brazilian women participated in the revolutionary movement out in the public sphere, dominant discourses began to depict their involvement as morally—not politically—motivated, and the extraordinary circumstances giving them cause to leave the home that they were said to return to after the revolution's conclusion.[4] Additionally, while claiming the *Mulher Paulista* preserved her "traditional" feminine nature, dominant representations contradictorily utilized her engagements outside the domestic sphere as evidence of São Paulo's modernity to speak to the region's exceptionalism. The *Mulher Paulista*'s portrayal as white, educated, and elite especially provided a racialized and classed imagination of the modern metropolis that has continued to enjoy a privileged position in the Brazilian national imaginary.[5]

Both the *Modan Gāru* and the *Mulher Paulista* function as discursive constructs to reinforce a particular telling of a modern national history.[6] Though the Japanese media linked the *Modan Gāru* to consumerism and the Brazilian media tied the *Mulher Paulista* to morality, the two representational regimes construed the defiance of "traditional" gender roles by modern women as apolitical acts of rebellion. Yet in 1932, we find a third example of a modern woman who returns us to Kiyosawa's metaphor—like the waves of the Pacific Ocean, she overflows the conceptual confines of modern female subjectivity in her refusal to compromise her politicality. Her story—when brought to the surface from the depths of the transpacific archive—inspires us

[4] Ibid., 163, 190.
[5] Ibid., 172-176; 190-191.
[6] I am indebted to Andrea Mendoza's comparative work on the tropes of the "poison woman" in Japan and "the cannibal" in Brazil that has helped me to think about the representative function of discursive figures that may be used to shape national narratives and identities. Through embodying a gendered and/or racialized Otherness, Mendoza explicates, the figures allow the consumers of the discourse to work out their self-identification as national subjects through a process of co-figuration between self-sameness and difference. Andrea Mendoza, "Nonencounter as Relation: Cannibals and Poison Women in the Consumption of Difference," *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 122; 126-127.

to imagine otherwise about the longstanding feminist struggles across and within Asia and Latin America.

This woman, a Japanese Brazilian urbanite named Ruriko, existed on the pages of Japanese immigrant writer Sonobe Takeo's (園部武夫)1932 short story "the Age of Agricultural Gambling" (*Tobaku-nō Jidai* 賭博農時代), winner of the first *shokumin* 植民(colonial) literature short story award initiated by the Japanese-language newspaper in Brazil, *Burajiru Jihō* (伯剌西爾時報).[7] As the work's protagonist, Ruriko militantly challenges the expectations of her community to act as a self-sacrificing mother and wife. Instead, she explicitly demonstrates her sexual and material desires in the text, garnering herself the classification of a "*Modan Gāru* in São Paulo" by Japanese Brazilian literary scholar and musicologist Hosokawa Shūhei.[8] Yet differing from the figure of the *Modan Gāru* in Japan, as well as the *Mulher Paulista*, Ruriko exhibits political agency in her everyday negotiations of social and cultural relations in the Brazilian metropolis.

"The Age of Agricultural Gambling" begins with narrative shifts between Ruriko's escapades in the city and the business enterprise of Ōmura, a wealthy Japanese tomato plantation owner who exploits his Japanese immigrant employees. The two plotlines slowly merge as Ruriko cons Ōmura into a fake marriage for his money, while at the same time, a rival trader named Kurose plots to take down Ōmura's trade. With the help of Ōmura's exploited and now

[7] The competition holds a significant place in the history of Japanese Brazilian literature since it promoted the cultivation of a new body of literature that the newspaper editors envisioned would depict the lived experiences of Japanese immigrants in Brazil and pave the way for building a collective consciousness among the community's readers. However, the newspaper, its competition, and Sonobe's text circulated little outside of the Japanese Brazilian community and are not very well-known today. See Seth Jacobowitz, "A Bitter Brew: Coffee and Labor in Japanese Brazilian Immigrant Literature," *Estudos Japoneses* 41 (2019): 16.
[8] Hosokawa Shūhei, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron]* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013), 25.

revengeful farmworkers, Kurose manages to ruin his rival's business, just before Ruriko divorces Ōmura. It is Ruriko, however, who delivers the deeply political speech at the end of the story, criticizing not only her ex-husband, but also the entire migratory system in Brazil for the capitalist greed and harm it induces.

The plot takes place within the context of the Japanese government's sponsorship and management of *ishokumin* (移植民) or migration-colonization in Brazil starting in 1924. As elaborated in the introduction, this system combined mass migration and agricultural development to establish "new Japans" abroad and demonstrates a practice of migration-led settler colonialism inextricably linked to Japanese imperialism.[9] Despite the promises of wealth and honor touted by state officials and migration agents, many Japanese farmers confronted harsh living conditions in their assigned settlements in remote regions of Brazil, compounded with corruption and exploitation by plantation owners and migration agents within the migration-colonization apparatus. Sonobe zooms in on this dimension of adversity in his story, describing the large number of Japanese immigrants who decide to take the gamble to move to Brazil with the hope of striking it rich and the very few who actually achieve success.

Yet Sonobe, himself, was not one of these working-class immigrants. As a graduate of Hokkaido Imperial University, Sonobe migrated to Brazil in 1931 to work as a leader at the *Emeboi* agricultural training center established by the Japanese state's largest migration company, *Kaigai Kōgyō Kabushiki Kaisha*.[10] Sonobe confessed to never having worked on a coffee plantation when he wrote "the Age of Agricultural Gambling" in a short section titled

[9] Eichiro Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019); Sidney Xu Lu, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Toake Endoh, *Exporting Japan: Politics of Emigration toward Latin America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Seth Jacobowitz, "A Bitter Brew,"13-30.
[10] Hosokawa, *Nikkei Burajiru*, 100-102.

"Words from the Author" published alongside his prize-winning prose in the *Burajiru Jihō* newspaper.[11] In the segment, Sonobe also lamented the hardship and exploitation he witnessed other migrant laborers suffer and explained how his short story came about from a bad dream he had after spending many restless nights conflicted over the unjust situation.

Sonobe's class status and education level is additionally reflected in his writing style. Japanese Brazilian anthropologist Maeyama Takashi and Hosokawa Shūhei single out Sonobe as one of the few modernist writers within the Japanese immigrant community in Brazil during the 1920s and 30s.[12] More prominent leaders within the community's literary circles advocated for writing that would speak to the particularity of the Japanese worker experience in Brazil, which initiated trends in realist and proletarian literature among early Japanese Brazilian authors.[13] In contrast, Sonobe experiments with avant-garde-like representation reminiscent of the Japanese *shinkankaku* 新感覚 (new sensationalist) school within the Japanese *modan* モダン (modernist) movement; he presents cinematic scenes that create an impression of the everyday perceptions of modern life in the city of São Paulo. His portrayal of Ruriko further resembles the *modan* trend summarized by the popular expression: "*ero guro nansensu* エログロナンセンス" (erotic grotesque nonsense). Unlike most early Japanese Brazilian writers who painted female characters as submissive and supportive wives,[14] Sonobe writes Ruriko as a perverse and sexually explicit protagonist.

---

[11] Sonobe Takeo, "Sakusha no kotoba," *Burajiru Jihō* (São Paulo, Brazil), April 21, 1932, accessed November 10, 2021. https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/buj19320421-01.1.5.
[12] Hosokawa, *Nikkei Burajiru*, 60-61. Takashi Maeyama, in "Imin bungaku kara mainoritī bungaku he." *Koronia shōsetsu senshū (dai 1 kan) paurisuta bungakushō izen* (Sao Paulo: Koronia bungakukai, 1975), 306-320.
[13] Seth Jacobowitz discusses one of these leaders, Sugi Takeo, whose "workmanlike prose is…rooted in quotidian coffee plantation life, and therefore represents the immigrant experience as Sonobe…and others do not." Jacobowitz, "A Bitter Brew," 20-23.
[14] See Mieko Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 4-8.

Though the literary representations of working-class and female immigrants are structured in contradiction due to Sonobe's privileged, male positionality, our interactions with the text as contemporary readers may generate a reconsideration of the significance of his imagination of a *Modan Gāru* in 1930s São Paulo, especially from a transnational feminist perspective. How might Ruriko as an "anomaly" among Japanese, Brazilian, and Japanese Brazilian modern women in the dominant historical and cultural archive, solicit speculation about alternative genealogies of feminist politics?

In this chapter, I work through this question by reading Ruriko as a modern woman of the *transpacific*—a transnational vantage point oriented around and across Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas. For this characterization, however, I am not simply considering her movement across national borders, but rather her embodiment of how transpacific studies scholar Lisa Yoneyama theorizes transnationality as "insurgent memories, counterknowledges, and inauthentic identities that have been regimented by the discourse and institutions centering on nation-states."[15] As an independent woman living outside the Japanese enclave in Brazil, Ruriko speaks to a Japanese Brazilian female subjectivity that departs from the diasporic community's heteronormative family structure. Moreover, when juxtaposed with the discursive constructs of the *Modan Gāru* and the *Mulher Paulista*, Ruriko points us to the presence of excess beyond the Japanese and Brazilian national narratives, which obscure the political contributions of modern women. Ruriko's counternarrative, I argue, holds the potential to unsettle these dominant national and diasporic narratives, while at the same time, prompting us to look for collisions, asymmetries, and connections between modern female subjects within and between Japan and Brazil despite their seemingly disparate geopolitical contexts.

[15] Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 7.

Furthermore, Ruriko's divergent story helps to remind us that the histories of modern nations are inventions that function to "unify" diverse groups of people under a state authority and legitimize its sovereignty within the international order.[16] In a similar way, diasporic communities often compose narratives of unity and homogeneity to claim a space for their "ethnic state" within the dominant culture as part of a politics of nationalist liberation.[17] Both fabrications entail the erasure and disavowal of those who do not fit with the desired communal identity—frequently female, queer, racialized, and working-class subjects—in order to produce the appearance of cohesion. National and diasporic histories have further repercussions with regard to how they fit into the power-knowledge dynamics of the modern/colonial world built upon the discourse of "the West and the Rest." As Naoki Sakai posits, when "non-Western" nations like Japan and Brazil assert their "uniqueness" in the face of "Western" hegemony as a sign of their self-determination, they fall into the trap of reinforcing modernity's binary structure of "Western universalism/non-Western particularism."[18] Through this regime of representation, the U.S. and Europe have sustained their dominance within the modern world system on a range of levels, from larger institutions to knowledge production to everyday social interactions.

In her theorization of "Asia-Latin America as method," Junyoung Verónica Kim extends Sakai's argument to show how "the West" as an historical orientation recurrently functions as the unquestioned foundation within comparative studies, even when the terms of comparison seemingly exclude "the West." [19] Her analysis suggests that Japanese Brazilian narratives may

[16] See Etienne Balibar, "The Nation Form: History and Ideology," *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: Verso, 1991), 86-106.
[17] See Lisa Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Difference, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1 (1997): 28; 32-33, accessed June 24, 2020, doi:10.1353/dsp.1991.0014.
[18] Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism,"* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 52-61; 157-163; 172-174.
[19] Junyoung Verónica Kim, "Asia-Latin America as Method: The Global South Project and the Dislocation of the West," *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 106-107.

reaffirm the U.S. and Eurocentric regime of knowledge when they promote a nationalist history that reaffirms a "universal" ("Western") understanding of immigration, diaspora, multiculturalism, etc. without attention to the instabilities and incommensurabilities of these concepts across temporal/ spatial contexts.

To contribute to destabilizing the authority of "the West and the Rest" discourse, I engage in a decolonial project in this article that works to uncover how meaning is constructed within the narratives of modernity[20] and consider possibilities alternative to their narrow imaginary. Specifically, I zoom in on one of the modernist devices—the montage—that Sonobe frequently employs in "the Age of Agricultural Gambling," which I suggest also renders visible the methodology of articulation that I utilize to speculate about modern feminist resistance in the gaps of hegemonic historical accounts. This methodology follows the cultural studies work of Stuart Hall, who provides a way to analyze the discursive structure of a social formation through his theorization of articulation as:

> the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time…The so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness.'[21]

He further emphasizes how articulations are made under certain relations of domination and subordination, yet because the linkages can be restructured, there is a possibility for intervention into the hegemonic social forces that produce dominant discursive messages.

---

[20] I use the expression "narratives of modernity" borrowed from Walter Mignolo's decolonial theorization of modernity as "a set of diverse but coherent narratives" that try to convince you that the world is how these discourses represent it to be, so that you also buy into their global designs and structures (139). They detail a one-sided, "Western-centric" interpretation of the world largely concerned with claims of reaching a "post-traditional" stage in time, which is also defined by "the West." See Walter D. Mignolo, "The Conceptual Triad," in *On Decoloniality: Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality*, ed. Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 135-152.

[21] Stuart Hall, "On Postmodernism and Articulation: an Interview with Stuart Hall," ed. L. Grossberg in *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 53.

Resembling articulation, montage works by combining heterogeneous fragments or images that remain distinct from one another, while still generating meaning through their positioning in a single assemblage. Although the device was originally associated with a style of film demonstrated by Soviet directors such as Eisenstein and Pudovkin, which involved composing a cinematic narrative through the juxtaposition of individual shots to form a "whole," its premise has since been extended to other artistic mediums as well. Miriam Silverberg in her studies of Japanese modern culture, underscores the agency implied by montage and the choices the consumer-subject makes to pull together different social practices and material objects to constantly make and remake culture.[22] As a methodological device, montage similarly affords us the opportunity as readers to move around images of female resistance and produce new, counterhegemonic meanings through fashioning different linkages. In other words, by creating a montage of modern women in the 1930s by bringing together Ruriko, the *Modan Gāru,* and the *Mulher Paulista*, we may disarticulate practices of female defiance from a narrow national(ist) imaginary and re-articulate them in connection with a transnational feminist politics.

Finally, this methodological practice seeks to problematize the discursive construct of "the modern West and the premodern Rest" by looking for temporal and spatial practices that transcend its circumscribed categorizations. It is first informed by transpacific studies scholar Setsu Shigematsu and her theorization of a translocational politics. As Shigematsu explicates, the politics of translocality takes into account "the local conditions of emergence" of political movements of resistance, while also considering how they intersect, conflict, and coincide with both transnational forces of imperialism and counterhegemonic struggles against these

[22] Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque* Nonsense, 32.

formations of power.[23] She pinpoints translation and intercultural mediation as political practices within this comparative method, which help to look into genealogies of resistance through a non-linear temporality that considers their revolutionary movements to be ongoing and significant beyond a restricted historical time frame. Similarly, literary scholar Andrea Mendoza elaborates the potential of comparative work within transpacific studies that can cut across both traditional disciplinary boundaries and naturalized regional divisions such as Asia and Latin America (constructions of U.S. and Eurocentric knowledge-power) to draw connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena.[24] By bringing Shigematsu's non-linear time frame and Mendoza's transnational context together in this chapter, I will engage in speculation about alternative genealogies of feminist resistance that escape the discursive attempts of national and diasporic histories to regiment the social roles of modern women. Ultimately, I will utilize montage to think through the coalitional possibilities that may emerge through rearticulating modern female subjects as political actors within a movement toward transpacific decoloniality.

Ruriko's Modern Political Subjectivity

To understand the significance of Ruriko to genealogies of decolonial and feminist resistance, it is first important to begin with an analysis of the character on her own terms and note how she is an "anomaly" within dominant Japanese Brazilian historical and literary discourses. As outlined above, diasporic nationalisms are constructed through exclusion and erasure, which Mieko Nishida, in her studies of the Japanese diaspora in Brazil, identifies as a gendered process. Drawing from Lisa Lowe's examination of Asian American identity within a

[23] Setsu Shigematsu, *Scream from the Shadows: The Women's Liberation Movement in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), xxiv-xxv.
[24] Andrea Mendoza, "Nonencounter as Relation,"118-120.

politics of national liberation, Nishida argues that the Japanese Brazilian community has similarly prioritized "a fixed masculinist identity" and marginalized women's experiences in order to appear as homogeneous.[25] She shows how normative historical representations of the ideal Japanese immigrant have depicted "a strong patriarch who protects his wife and children and thrives as a member of the Japanese immigrant community."[26]

As explored in the previous chapter, agents of Japanese migration-colonization projected a particularly masculinist imagination of "pioneering" and "overseas development" by describing the brave pioneer's efforts to bring civilization to the frontier as a conquest of Brazil's "virgin forests."[27] Female immigrants, in comparison, were proscribed supporting roles as wives and mothers to bolster the work of the male pioneer and reproduce the national community and its traditional morals.[28] Starting from these early depictions of a gendered division of labor, dominant imaginations of the diasporic community have continued to uphold a heteropatriarchal identity.

Included in the prevailing historical narrative about the Japanese Brazilian community is also an emphasis on the isolation of the early immigrant settlements in rural Brazil,[29] which is said to account for not only the maintenance of a strong Japanese cultural identity uncorrupted by the spread of modern culture, but the sustainment of ethnic endogamy too. The male diasporic elite has often celebrated the intragroup marriage practice for its preservation of the community's "uniqueness," yet has mentioned little about the social pressures and sexual policing it has forced

[25] Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity,* 5.
[26] Ibid., 5.
[27] Commenting on this feminized imaginary of the Brazilian "frontier," Hosokawa Shūhei writes: "as the saying 'virgin' forest suggests, his [the pioneer's] ability to clear the undeveloped lands was emphasized as masculine and sometimes both realistically and figuratively violent." See Hosokawa, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2*, 17.
[28] Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier,* 132-134.
[29] Before World War II, about one to two percent of the Japanese immigrant population in Brazil lived in the city of São Paulo. Hosokawa, *Nikkei Burajiru*, 60.

on generations of Japanese Brazilian women.[30] Despite the mainstream representation of remoteness, the diaspora was not completely cut off from the non-Japanese Brazilian community and the influences of modernization. Japanese-language newspapers in Brazil and Japanese migration journals provide evidence of conversations happening in the community about jazz, cinema, modern etiquette, in addition to discussions of modern Japanese Brazilian women (see Figure 1 below). Literary scholar Zelideth María Rivas further argues that multiple identity formations surfaced within the diaspora, "allowing us to understand that the history of the Japanese Brazilian *colonia* [enclave] does not insist upon a community's isolation but upon a communal memory."[31] Her point speaks to the collective remembering of a secluded enclave and the collective forgetting of alternative subjectivities outside of it that work to construct a singular diasporic narrative of cultural cohesion.

[30] Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity*, 224.
[31] Zelideth María Rivas, "Songs from the Land of Eternal Summer: Beyond Duality in Japanese Brazilian Publication and *Colonia Man'yôshû*," *Comparative Literature Studies* 52, no. 4 (2015): 789, accessed November 12, 2021. https://doi.org/10.5325/complitstudies.52.4.0787.

Figure 1: Image of the newspaper article, "The Modern Girl is Cheerful, but not Sensible: Critique of the Modern Girl," originally published March 3, 1934 in *Nippaku Shinbun*.[32] Image from the Hoji Shinbun Digital Collection is in the public domain.

Sonobe Takeo's protagonist, Ruriko appears to be one of the "forgotten" subjects who diverges from the diaspora's normative history in the way she actively moves about the city of São Paulo, taking part in defining new social roles and cultural practices there. In his survey of early Nikkei-Brazilian literature, Hosokawa suggests that Ruriko may be the only militant and decadent female immigrant character who has survived in the community's literary archive.[33] What distinguishes her most from dominant imaginations of Japanese immigrant women is her political agency, which stands out most discernably at the end of the story when she delivers her final tirade to Ōmura.

[32] "Hogaraka de yoi ga ki ga kikanu kindai musume: modan musume no hihan," *Nippaku Shinbun* (São Paulo, Brazil), May 30, 1934, accessed November 10, 2021. https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/nis19340530-01.1.5.
[33] Hosokawa Shūhei, "Nikkei burajiru bungaku no modanizumu," CIAS discussion paper 61, *Urban Modernization and Contemporary Culture: Dialogues Brazil-Japan* 61 (2016): 25.

Immediately after his business collapses and right before she divorces him, Ruriko criticizes Ōmura for his cruelty toward his workers and his foolishness for playing the game of "agricultural gambling." Also the title of the story, "the age of agricultural gambling" refers to the early period of Japanese immigration to Brazil when immigrants believed that they could become rich quickly in Brazil and return to Japan wearing a "brocade" (*nishiki* 錦).[34] Yet at the time, the agricultural market was highly volatile and gaining economic wealth proved to be a "high risk, high reward" game. Very few immigrants advanced and many more faced harsh, exploitative working conditions to support those who did become capitalists.

Ruriko's speech addresses this social dynamic, as she recognizes the injustices that underpin the foundational premise of the gambling system. She asks Ōmura for what purpose he manages the *japonês* (Japoneizu ジャポネーズ) workers when he does not have any idea why they are suffering and why they are willing to betray him.[35] She informs him that the root of their misery comes from their goal—to improve their economic circumstances in Brazil—and he has contributed nothing to help them achieve it. Her words attack the capitalist power structure within the diasporic community, in which a few privileged capitalists control the means of production and extract surplus value from the labor power of the many immigrant farmworkers. Through her criticism, she aligns herself with the Japanese workers in their struggle against exploitation. However, Ruriko's reference to the workers using the transliterated Portuguese "*japonês*" instead of the Japanese "*Nihonjin* 日本人" (Japanese people) suggests that their alliance does not stem from their racial identity. Instead, as her diatribe corroborates, she takes up a position of solidarity with the Japanese farmworkers because of their experiences of

[34] Hosokawa, *Nikkei burajiru*, 107-108.
[35] Sonobe Takeo, "Tobaku-nō jidai," in *Koronia shōsetsu senshū 1*, ed. Koronia bungakukai (Sao Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975), 13.

oppression within the capitalist system, which we learn from the story that she, too, has confronted as a woman from the working-class community in São Paulo nicknamed "*konde gumi* コンデ組."[36]

The distance Ruriko draws between herself and the Japanese community can further be viewed as a political act. In addition to the pressures to maintain ethnic insularity as mentioned above, the dominant discourse of "pioneering" and "overseas development" further emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong Japanese national identity while in Brazil. To guarantee that the contributions to global development and prosperity would be credited to the nation of Japan, state officials implored emigrants to preserve their loyalty to Japan—urging men to act as pioneers on behalf of the nation and women to take on roles as educators within the family to pass on the national culture.[37] Their patriotic rhetoric, however, also conveniently supported the Japanese empire in its mobilization of the diaspora for imperial expansionist purposes. Ruriko then can be said to defy these imperialist, patriarchal expectations through her deliberate separation from the *japonês* community and the assertion of her autonomy to determine her own social roles as a modern woman in Brazil.

Moreover, the critique of capitalism that Ruriko forwards pushes against the normative picture of an ideal Japanese Brazilian. While mainstream representations focus on the economic success of the model diasporic subject, Ruriko condemns Ōmura's business achievements as a sign of avarice and egotism, thereby humiliating the exemplary patriarchal figure. Yet she does

[36] "*Konde gumi* コンデ組" is a nickname for the Conde district in São Paulo located around the street, Rua Conde de Sarzedas. Around 1910, Japanese immigrants had begun to form an enclave in this part of the city and it gained a reputation as a poor, working-class community at first. See Hosokawa, *Nikkei Burajiru*, 103.
[37] Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*, 133-134. Sidney Xu Lu, "Japanese American Migration and the Making of Model Women for Japanese Expansion in Brazil and Manchuria, 1871-1945," *Journal of World History* 28, no. 3/4 (December 2017): 458-462.

not end her critique with the prosperous capitalist; she, too, finds fault with the Japanese farmworkers and their refusal to give up their capitalist fantasies despite the harm the system has inflicted upon them. She reproaches their solution to their exploitative situation by overthrowing Ōmura because she believes that this will only lead to another lucky immigrant taking his place and the cycle of oppression restarting.

In contrast, she identifies the basis of corruption not in a single individual, but in the community's capitalist system as a whole. Her alternative proposal to address the injustice is to "grab the axe and cultivate a new world."[38] Drawing from the rhetoric of pioneering, Ruriko repurposes the axe as a tool of cultivation for imperial and capitalist expansion into an instrument of societal transformation. The proposition elucidates Ruriko's desire to build a world radically different from the current capitalist one, which to her, requires a movement away from the system altogether rather than trying to fix its internal problems.

This call to action, alongside the speech's overall sharp critique, elucidates Ruriko's independence, militancy, and politicality—all of which distinguish her from the majority of female characters in early Japanese Brazilian literature and the representations of Japanese women in the ethnic group's nationalist narrative. The overt distinction helps us to understand how "the Age of Agricultural Gambling" functions as a counter-story that imagines the possibility of subjectivities and social practices outside the boundaries of the hegemonic Japanese Brazilian identity. Hence, the text grants us a vantage point from which to question singular, masculinist representations of the diaspora, while also critiquing the imperialist and capitalist formations these depictions rationalize.

[38] Sonobe, "Tobaku-nō jidai," 14.

Upon this reflection on Ruriko's resistance to the Japanese Brazilian nationalist narrative, we then may continue to contemplate how she barrels forward like the waves of the Pacific Ocean, overflowing the discursive shorelines of Japanese and Brazilian histories. It allows us to trace her translocational journey across genealogies of feminist and decolonial movements, which forges new pathways along the way that diverge from the singular course of modernity. In the next section, I follow Ruriko's route as she interrupts the "fixed" imagination of the Japanese *Modan Gāru*.

Montage and the *Modan Gāru*: the Cultural is Political

When we juxtapose the Japanese *Modan Gāru* and Ruriko, we find that the two hold in common characteristics related to sexual promiscuity, consumerism, and cosmopolitanism. While the Japanese national narrative—also reflected in Japanese-language newspapers in Brazil[39]—would try to convince us that these traits are apolitical and tied only to culture, Ruriko demonstrates the potential to possess these attributes and be a political agent. As an insurgent identity that escapes these dominant representations, how does the character of Ruriko complicate their telling of modern female subjectivity? How might her story trouble the notion of culture and politics as mutually exclusive spheres? In this section, I will seek to answer these questions by comparing the incommensurate imaginations of the *Modan Gāru* and Ruriko. In

[39] For example, the anonymous article included above "The Modern Girl is Cheerful, but not Sensible: Critique of the Modern Girl" ("Hogaraka de yoi ga ki ga kikanu kindai musumei: modan musume no hihan") published in the 3 March 1934 Japanese-language newspaper in Brazil, *Nippaku Shinbun*, discusses how the Japanese *Modan Gāru* in Brazil typically holds a dignified appearance, is skilled with make-up and fashion, and can hold lively conversations, even with strangers. However, it criticizes her for being thoughtless, irresponsible, and inconsiderate of others. It ultimately concludes that her rebellion against traditional Japanese culture may just be a typical stage of her youth, which therefore, removes the possibility that her behavior may have larger political implications. See "Hagaraka de yoi."

particular, I will probe into how the different discursive practices utilized to represent each lend themselves to restricting female identities—and/or—leaving open the possibility for multiplicity.

In beginning with the Japanese *Modan Gāru*, we come into contact with a figure that took the stage in 1920s and 30s Japan in the form of magazine articles, cartoon series like "Mogako and Moborō," photo spreads, prose fiction, and film. Tanizaki Junichiro's 1924 to 1925 serialized novel *A Fool's Love* (*Chijin no ai*)[40] notably contributed to defining her character through its depiction of a *Modan Gāru* who becomes "Westernized" to the extreme that she takes on a sexually aggressive, manipulative, and even masculine persona.[41] Numerous films also featured the Modern Girl trope, such as Shumizu Hiroshi's *Undying Pearl* (1929), Naruse Mikio's *The Stepchild* (1932), Ozu Yasujiro's *Women of Tokyo* (1933), and Gosho Heinosuke's *A Burden of Life* (*Jinsei no onimotsu*) (1935). Many of these media representations turned the *Modan Gāru* into a spectacle and exaggerated her consumer decadence, promiscuity, and imitation of "Western" culture. Despite her rebellious behavior, the trope did not receive political characterization, but rather remained an unruly consumer without a cause.[42]

Though as Miriam Silverberg, Barbara Hamill Sato, and Harry Harootunian note, the appearance and representation of the *Modan Gāru* cannot be understood without reference to the sociohistorical context of the figure. With rapid economic growth and the expansion of modern industrial manufacturing following World War I, thousands of women began to enter the workforce and subsequently, bringing about new female identities and social roles. Wife-

[40] Sometimes translated as *Naomi*.
[41] Miriam Silverberg reads this novel as a projection of Tanizaki's fears about the influence of 'Western culture' onto the female character. See Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 55-56.
[42] Barbara Hamill Sato writes that the *Modan Gāru* as an object rather than a self-determining subject that had no "clear social referent" and demonstrated a "voiceless existence surrounded by ambivalence—the ambivalence of class and occupation, ambivalence presented and represented through the media." See Barbara Hamill Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 48.

initiated divorces began to rise with greater female economic influence, which led the Japanese government to reconsider the Meiji Civil Code (1898) that had given the husband complete control of the household.[43] Young women also explored their sexuality to a greater degree and began to think about "how or with whom they were going to spend their lives."[44] Not to mention, more women's political movements emerged in the 1920s such as *Shin Fujin Kyōkai* (New Woman's Association) and *Fusen Kakutoku Dōmei* (League for Women's Suffrage), in addition to more female participation in strikes and labor movements, including the founding of the socialist woman's organization *Sekirankai* (the Red Wave Society).[45]

These displays of autonomy, militancy, and political organization, however, threatened the patriarchal foundations of the Japanese nation. This caused, as Harootunian explains, the media to overdetermine the trope of the *Modan Gāru* in discourse as a strategy to "reassert the integrity and stability of the household unit by enforcing the traditional role ascribed to wife and mother (however modernized they were materially)."[46] The consolidation of her identity into an exaggerated display of materialism and licentiousness functioned to promote her moralized exclusion, marginalization, or limited assimilation into more traditional Japanese patriarchal culture and therefore, discursively control the danger of politically-active Japanese modern women.[47]

---

[43] Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 67.
[44] Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, 66.
[45] Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 68.
[46] Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 13.
[47]Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, "Imaging Modern Girls in the Japanese Woman's Film," in *Nippon Modern: Japanese Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 84.

Moreover, the *Modan Gāru* was used to work out anxieties during the interwar years over the loss of Japan's "unique" culture during the process of modernization.[48] The media embellished her imitation of "Western" women and construed it as mindless mimicry, so that the figure would ultimately encourage more subtle adoptions of modern culture into Japanese society without disturbing its "essence." Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano writes that the *Modan Gāru* supported a national narrative about Japanese modernity that delineated "the assimilation of Westernness and the Japanese mastery over the encounter."[49] In other words, she became part of a linear storyline that ended with the mitigation of her threat to Japanese traditions. This telling of Japanese modernity has had lasting repercussions and continues to figure in the contemporary master narrative of "Japan as the great assimilator" that is able to maintain its particularity and homogeneity in terms of culture, while adopting economic and technological advancements.[50] The depiction maintains the aforementioned binary structure of Japanese particularism and "Western"—primarily the U.S.—universalism and, therefore, contributes to sustaining U.S. and European hegemony.

In contrast to the figure of the *Modan Gāru* that accords with a horizontal telling of national history, Ruriko emerges in "the Age of Agricultural Gambling" in a scene filled with non-linear montages. The first montage brings the reader into the heart of São Paulo, onto its city streets, beside Ruriko. It provides a way to perceive the ordinary experience there as a collage of sights, sounds, and other sensory images. Within the metropolis's central district, the *Triângulo* (Triangle), or what the narrator labels: "the symbol of modern life,"[51] we find shops, cafes, tall

[48] Sato, *The New Japanese Modern Woman*, 56; Harootunian. *Overcome by Modernity*, xix. For examples from Japanese periodicals, see Ueda Yasuo, "Jossei zasshi ga mita modanizumu," in *Nihon modanizumu no kenkyū: shisō—seikatsu—bunka*, ed. Minami Hiroshi (Tokyo: Burein Shuppan, 1982), 135-140.
[49] Wada-Marciano, "Imaging Modern Girls," 87.
[50] Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 1-2.
[51] Sonobe, "Tobaku-nō jidai," 6.

buildings, and lottery stands, as well as musicians, prostitutes, vagabonds—people from all walks of life—moving about the space. One of these individuals is Ruriko, who stands on the pavement with the disagreeably warm breeze of the rainy season hitting her shoulders. The narrator acquaints us with Ruriko through a second use of montage, sketching her hobbies as a series of juxtaposed images placed between two extended ellipses. The list includes: "Men.—Sorbet—.Cinema—. The smell of the farmer's skin graft—. Sexual perversion—. A collection of cheap jewels."[52]

Similar to modernist trends in Japanese *modanizumu* and Brazilian *modernismo,* this textual moment in Sonobe's story demonstrates experimentation with representing day-to-day life drawing from the innovations in artistic technologies of the time. Harry Harootunian posits that montage is a fitting representational form for expressing the category of "the everyday," because its unresolved tensions speak to the uneven temporalities of past and present that coexist in the time of now, which correspond to spatial practices that refashion life "at the level of everyday consumption patterns, gestures, ways of dress, etc."[53] The use of montage to picture Ruriko, therefore, provides us with a sense of how she acts as a cultural agent who participates in transforming the modern world around her. By aggregating a range of embodied practices, Ruriko engages in a negotiation of multiple cultural investments existing in tension with one another that generates new social meanings in the process.

With the exception of "the farmer's skin graft," almost all of the items enumerated in the list overlap with the traditional characteristics of the *Modan Gāru*: adoption of foreign trends, sexual licentiousness, materialism. However, unlike the smooth, linear narrative of the *Modan Gāru* that limits her cultural engagements to frivolity, the montage allows for the Ruriko's traits

[52] Ibid, 6.
[53] Harootunian, *Uneven* Moments, 179; 192.

to remain open to resignification. For example, we might first utilize montage as a methodology for (re)articulation by examining the references to "the farmer's skin graft" and "sexual perversion." Both images receive elaboration in the third section of the story when the reader is brought into Ruriko's "playground of sexual perversion." [54] The scene depicts Ruriko's sadomasochistic routine and her fetish for a scar on a young Japanese farmer who recently immigrated to Brazil.

The section's playfulness with eroticism and distortion demonstrates Sonobe's interaction with the Japanese modernist trend of "erotic grotesque nonsense." This segment of *modan* culture brought into view the modern, everyday culture of the masses through themes of sensual pleasure and desire, as well as lifestyles of the impoverished and destitute. Miriam Silverberg, in her studies of the trend, argues that the erotic and grotesque were not emblematic of nonsensical, slapstick humor, but rather an ironic form of comedy that often served as an occasion to make political commentaries and think critically about social difference.[55] If we consider Sonobe's engagement with eroticism amongst "grotesque" (working-class) characters in a similar light, we gain an opportunity to reflect on how Ruriko does not simply embody difference, but also asserts it militantly against the forces that try to regiment her behavior.

By enjoying her "playground of sexual perversion," Ruriko engages in non-heteronormative sexual practices that subvert the "traditional" gender expectations within the migration-colonization system in Brazil. Unlike the "ideal" submissive, female immigrant, she asserts herself as a desiring subject—not a reproducing body—and makes her nonconformity known. She refuses to be subjected to the nuclear family structure, and even goes so far as to betray the institution of marriage by not only having an extramarital affair, but also conning

[54] Sonobe, "Tobaku-nō jidai," 9.
[55] Silververg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 29.

Ōmura into a fake marriage in the first place. In this way, her everyday expressions of her sexuality can be regarded as political resistance, which contrasts with the story of aimless promiscuity displayed by the *Modan Gāru*.

A second gesture of subversion brought to our attention within the montage is Ruriko's collection of jewels. Similar to "sexual perversion," this hobby, too, could be perceived in relation to the stereotypical characteristics of the Japanese *Modan Gāru* as an expression of materialism and consumerism. Towards the end of the story, we witness Ruriko stroking a Burmese ruby that Ōmura bought for her,[56] which seems to epitomize commodity fetishism. However, soon an ironic smile appears upon her face and she then begins her politically-charged speech denouncing Ōmura and capitalist exploitation. The sharp transition leaves us wondering whether her obsession with the ruby demonstrates mindless materialism or a calculated performance that is part of her con.

But as supported by the representational technique of montage and its mutability, the collection of jewels remains open to both meanings, or perhaps, neither. Another possibility might be to read the hobby of collection as a politicized practice. According to literary scholar Yunte Huang, collection can be "a subversive economic practice, one in which a collector arranges the collectibles into a magic circle and keeps them out of the system of exchangeability."[57] Since the capitalist relies on the circulation of money and commodities to accumulate surplus-value for himself, [58] Ruriko's hoarding of jewels exemplifies her obstruction to the capitalist mode of exchange and antagonism with its profit-minded logic that dominates

[56]Sonobe, "Tobaku-nō jidai," 13.
[57]Yunte Huang, "Introduction: the Transpacific as Critical Space," in *Transpacific Imaginations: History, Literature, Counterpoetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 8.
[58] See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume* 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 250-257.

the "age of agricultural gambling." Her resistance to capitalism starkly contrasts the materialism of the *Modan Gāru*,who often received criticism from Japanese Marxist intellectuals for her mindless support of the economic system and its ideology.[59] In this light, the collecting of jewels functions as a counterhegemonic act, which may prompt us to reconsider alternative economic practices outside of capitalism within the history of transpacific modernity.

Finally, included in the juxtaposition of cultural practices, we see the adjacent positioning of *katakana*, the Japanese alphabet used for the transliteration of foreign words like "cinema" (*shinema* シネマ) and "sorbet" (*sorubette* ソルベッテ, in this case, the Portuguese "sorbete"), and *hiragana* and *kanji*, alphabets for Japanese words like "farmer" (*hyakushō* 百姓) and "collection" (*shūshū* 蒐集). Ruriko's name reflects this conglomeration as well, as the *katakana* "*ruri* ルリ" (ruby) is attached to the *kanji* "*ko* 子," a common character ending for Japanese female first names. The intermingling of the "foreign" and the "native" connotes a sense of cosmopolitanism and a receptiveness to modern trends from around the globe, which calls to mind the traditional characterization of the *Modan Gāru*.

Yet by diverging from the representation of the *Modan Gāru* as a foolish Western mannequin, the counternarrative delineated within "the Age of Agricultural Gambling" unsettles the idea that engagement in foreign cultural practices like the *Modan Gāru* has to necessarily constitute cultural imitation. The montage of Ruriko that brings together various "foreign" and "native" fragments suggests a sense of agency with which Ruriko selects the hobbies that satisfy her desires. Her daily cultural choices resonate with Silverberg's identification of montage as a form of "code-switching," since it enables "the consumer to maintain a sense of indigenous

[59] Ueda, "Josei zasshi ga mita modanizumu," 136-137.

identity while moving within and creating a montage of foreign gestures, objects, and words."[60] Rather than merely mimic trends that "originated" outside of São Paulo, Ruriko shows how she actively takes part in a process of translating and transcoding, which contributes to remaking the modern culture around her. In other words, we can say that she both shapes and is shaped by global coeval modernisms.

By recognizing the deliberate decisions that Ruriko makes as a consumer, we may further note the political significance of her movement through different cultural formations. If we recall the beforementioned practice of resistance that Ruriko exhibits when she distances herself from the Japanese diasporic community by referring to its members as "*japonês*," we can see how her openness to other cultural currents illustrates a similar form of rebellion. She goes against the imperialist expectation to preserve a "pure" Japanese essence in Brazil and an unbroken loyalty to the metropole.

The cross-cultural interactions demonstrated by the montage help us to question the categories of "foreign" and "native" as stable referents, and trouble notions of cultural origin, imitation, and particularism as well. They alert us to the processes of translation, transcoding, and circulation that define culture and thus, make cultural identities dynamic and unstable entities. In this regard, Ruriko's story casts doubt on the assumptions of a "timeless" Japanese identity that the Japanese national narrative purports. She helps us to comprehend that accusations calling the *Modan Gāru* a "Western mannequin" who was contributing to the loss of Japan's unique culture are actually beside the point. Modern Japanese women were indeed transforming the nation's culture, but this was nothing new since it was always in flux.

[60] Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 32-33.

Overall, the specific experience of Ruriko in the literary text draws us to consider the potential for her cultural engagements to constitute political acts in the way they refashion social roles, identities, and structural formations. The distinction between Sonobe's telling of a modern woman in São Paulo and the narrative of the *Modan Gāru* cues us toward political female subjectivities in the interstices of Japanese national history, thereby demystifying history's claim to be able to represent the entirety of the past as it happened. "The Age of Agricultural Gambling" reopens the possibility for a plurality of experiences to compose the story of modern life and include the contributions of female agents to it.

In the next section, the montage, alongside other cinematic techniques of representation will continue to figure centrally into the discussion of Ruriko's challenge to another national narrative: Brazil's *Mulher Paulista* (Paulista Woman).

The *Mulher Paulista* from Another Angle

The discernable distinctions between the fragments in a montage evoke a perception of sharpness in the work's imagery, which is a quality that can be similarly achieved through the framing of camera shots and film angles. Sonobe recreates these film techniques in "the Age of Agricultural Gambling" to present a cinematic image of Ruriko's movement in the city. In this section, I zoom in on the dissimilarity between the representational techniques of Sonobe's prose and the Brazilian national narrative to reflect on how each imagines the role of modern women in São Paulo's history. While the discursive construction of the *Mulher Paulista* attempts a smooth blending of various racialized, gendered, and classed women, the angular framing used to depict Ruriko's relationship to the metropolitan community preserves a sense of tension between different social positionings. How might Ruriko's divergence from the *Mulher Paulista* invite us

to reconsider the adequacy of the dominant representation of modern women in Brazil and the version of national history it reinforces?

First, through an investigation into the emergence of the *Mulher Paulista,* we become aware of whose story the trope passes on and whose story it occludes. In spite of claims that the Brazilian national identity is a "racial democracy" composed of a balance of European, African, and Indigenous roots, the region of São Paulo holds a privileged position within this imaginary. São Paulo, as historian Barbara Weinstein expounds, has frequently been deemed by national discourses as a symbol of Brazilian modernity or the future of Brazil that other regions should try to catch up to.[61] In the late nineteenth century, the growth of Brazil's coffee industry concentrated in the state of São Paulo, in addition to the expansion of the railway system to support this trade, which contributed to the transformation of the state's capital into a modern metropolis. Similar to the modernizing process in Japan, industrialization had a major impact on traditional social roles and hierarchies. This was especially salient with regard to gender, as educational and employment opportunities increased for women and began to redefine the family, the workforce, and political participation. Feminist movements gained strength at the time, leading to the achievement of women's suffrage in 1932. In the same year, women participated in the Constitutionalist Revolution in São Paulo in a variety of ways—demonstrating, petition-writing, nursing on the frontlines, engaging in combat, fundraising, sewing uniforms—all of which brought them into the public sphere.[62]

The print media tried to define Brazil's version of the "modern girl" through spreads that described modern Brazilian women as "independent working girls and sexy flappers"—daring,

[61] Weinstein, *The Color of* Modernity, 6-9;46-48; 58.
[62] Jeziel De Paula, *1932: imagens construindo a história* (Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP/ Editora UNIMEP, 1999), 150-160. Weinstein, *the Color of Modernity*, 163.

assertive, promiscuous, and provocative.[63] Yet resembling anxieties that emerged in Japan about the *Modan Gāru,* many male professionals, intellectuals, and other conservatives in Brazil feared that the transformations within "traditional" female identities signified a slip into anarchy and degeneracy. [64] Women's participation in the Constitutionalist Revolution especially provoked concerns that female politicality would disrupt the stability of the nation's patriarchal structure.

One discursive response to the female threat was the invention of the figure of *Mulher Paulista* to delineate "acceptable" roles for modern Brazilian women. Unlike the Japanese media that strove to mitigate the subversive potential of modern women by identifying their rebelliousness with "Westernization" and materialism, Brazilian discourses attempted a different strategy. Whereas the Japanese approach involved distinguishing "Eastern" and "Western" forms of modernity, the Brazilian tactic aimed to reframe the narrative of Brazilian modernization (a presumed process of "catching up" with "the West") to fit with its established gendered ideologies. Various newspaper articles, political speeches, and other sociopolitical discourses utilized the image of the *Mulher Paulista* to emphasize the extraordinary circumstances that called for revolution and therefore, construe her participation as moral and *not* political. [65] The mainstream Brazilian media further stressed the identity of the *Mulher Paulista* as a respectable mother and wife who would go back to her domestic roles following the revolution.[66] The arrival

[63] Ibid, 36.
[64]Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: the Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 1-3.
[65] João Paulo Rodrigues cites how the *Mulher Paulista* tends to be described as a singular term that stands in for São Paulo women as a whole. To overcome the race and class oversight that arises from this characterization, he suggests approaching the participation of women in the movement through looking at Paulista women as diverse individuals and not a generalized group. See João Paulo Rodrigues, "As mulheres de 1932: a participação no levante 'constitucionalista' em São Paulo em debate," *XXIX História Nacional Simpósio* (July 2017): 7-8, accessed June 24, 2020, https://www.snh2017.anpuh.org/resources/anais/54/1502582282_ARQUIVO_Textocompleto-JoaoPauloRodrigues.pdf.
[66] This expectation compares to a later example in the U.S. of the figure of "Rosie the Riveter" who similarly was forced out of the factory and back into the home after World War II.

of the trope during the uprising speaks to the figure's strategic function as a social compressor at a moment when women in São Paulo stepped outside of the home and demonstrated their desires for change.

Japanese-language newspapers in Brazil perpetuated the heteropatriarchal imagination of modern Brazilian women as well. Amongst news updates about the status of the revolution,[67] the *Burajiru Jihō* newspaper ran articles describing the contributions of women in São Paulo to the movement, which included their collection of food and material goods for the war effort, management of first-aid stations, and additional volunteer work.[68] The *Nippon Shinbun* newspaper printed a photograph on September 28, 1932 with the caption: "The Homefront Movement!! Women leave their homes and are busy sewing military clothing!!"[69] Its exclamatory remarks suggest that women's work in the public sphere is extraordinary and something unexpected not only within the São Paulo community, but also to Japanese readers in rural areas of Brazil.

---

[67] Many of these articles were translations of Portuguese-language articles printed in São Paulo newspapers (not associated with the Nikkei community). The texts portrayed the Constitutionalist Revolution as a patriotic movement, but many of the first-generation Japanese immigrants did not see it as "their movement" since they still held nationalist ties to Japan. However, historian Jeffrey Lesser describes how younger generations of *Nissei* and *Sansei* immigrants who associated themselves with the Brazilian nation participated in the revolution, despite their parents' disapproval. See Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 123-125.
Among the Nikkei participants were Cassio Kenro Shimomoto and José Yamashiro, both editors of the *Liga Estudantina Nippo-Brasiliera* (Nipo-Brazilian Student League) newspaper, *Gakusei* (Student), who published controversial articles urging the Nikkei community to join them as a patriotic duty to their new country. See *Uma Epopéia Moderna: 80 Anos da Imagração Japonesa no Brasil*, ed. Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa (São Paulo: Câmara Brasiliera do Livro, 1992), 173-174.
Regardless of the mixed support for the Paulista cause, the ultimate victory of the Vargas regime had major repercussions for the Japanese immigrant community with the rise of the *Estado Novo* (New State) and the *Brasilidade* (Brazilianization) campaign that banned Japanese schools, newspapers, and even the congregation of more two people speaking Japanese in public.

[68] "Samazama na hōhō de kizōhin shūshū,"*Burajiru Jihō* (São Paulo, Brazil), July 28, 1932, accessed November 10, 2021, https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/buj19320728-01.1.1.

[69]"Jūgo no Ugoki!!," *Nippon Shinbun* (São Paulo, Brazil), Sept. 28, 1932, accessed November 10, 2021, https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/nih19320928-01.1.2.

Figure 2: Image printed in the September 28, 1932 *Nippon Shinbun* showing Paulista women sewing army uniforms.[70] Image from the Hoji Shinbun Digital Collection is in the public domain.

In addition, the Brazilian male elite utilized the *Mulher Paulista* as an example of São Paulo's exceptionalism by contradictorily identifying the trope as "modern," while underscoring her adherence to traditional patriarchal values. Her willingness to "endure the glare of public life when civic duty requires it"[71] was touted as a quality that all Brazilian women should aspire to. João Batista Cascudo Rodrigues reported in the 1933 *Revista dos Tribunais* (The Tribunal Journal) about the efforts of the *Mulher Paulista* in the 1932 movement, stating: "The written epic of the *mulher paulista* does not only make São Paulo proud, but also Brazil, because she reaffirms the hard temperament of its strong race."[72] His characterization coincides with the

[70] Ibid.
[71] Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity*, 163.
[72] "A epopéa escripta pela mulher paulista não orgulha apenas São Paulo, mas tambem o Brasil, porque ella reaffirmoi a tempera rija de uma raça forte." See João Batista Cascudo Rodrigues, *A Mulher Paulista no Movimento Pró-Constituinte* (São Paulo: Revista dos Tribunais, 1933), 9.

prevalent gendered-racialized identity of Brazil that places the dominant white São Paulo region at the center of the national imaginary.

However, in order for the *Mulher Paulista*'s appearance outside the household to seem remarkable, the national narrative had to erase the actual presence of women of color and working-class women in the everyday city streets. For this reason, Weinstein makes the case that the invention of the *Mulher Paulista* worked to define what kinds of modern women deserved full participation in the public sphere—privileged, white, educated—if there were circumstances that called for it.[73] The trope therefore, reinforced the association of São Paulo with whiteness, progress, and modernity, and other regions—particularly the Northeast—with Blackness, poverty, and backwardness. [74] To put it differently, the discursive construct of the *Mulher Paulista* perpetuated a modern Brazilian national identity predicated on the occlusion of certain racialized, classed, and gendered subjects.[75]

When juxtaposed with the *Mulher Paulista*, it becomes apparent that Ruriko breaks through the confines of the Brazilian national narrative: first, by maintaining her politicalness and second, by asserting her place as a Paulista woman who contributes to remaking the modern life of the metropolis. Rather than assimilate into the dominant white culture, Ruriko occupies a space in the public sphere in which she preserves her racial difference, while still being a part of

---

[73] Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity*, 172; 191. Jeziel De Paula makes a similar argument that the historical production of the *Mulher Paulista* has been like a "theatrical staging" that serves the political and propagandist purposes of the upper class in São Paulo. See De Paula, *1932*, 150.

[74] João Paulo Rodrigues shows how this singular representation of a white, elite *Mulher Paulista* has continued in Brazilian academia with historical studies from scholars such as Maria Helena Capelato and Holien Gonçalves Bezerra who similarly portray her participation in the Constitutionalist Revolution as a reinforcer of the dominant class's ideology and a preserver of the social order. He argues that their emphasis on the conservative women participants overlooks the myriad of women who took active roles in the movement from different races and classes and with different levels of political radicalness. See Rodrigues, "As mulheres de 1932,"1-9.

[75] Adalzira Bittencourt additionally mentions how historical accounts of the Constitutionalist Revolution have kept the group of female participants anonymous, which speaks to the lasting impact of the Mulher Paulista. The figure was said to stand for the female revolutionaries at the time with whom all Paulista women could identify, yet in actuality, the trope functioned to erase intragroup differences to picture modern Brazilian women as white and middle-upper class. Adalzira Bittencourt, *A Mulher Paulista na História* (Rio: Livros de Portugal, S.A., 1954), 309.

the city's whole. When the narrator describes Ruriko on the streets of the *Triângulo* district, she creates a cinematic scene marked with a sense of angularity and sharpness. Through montage, she first enumerates the "Italian and French and Spanish and German and Russian and *preto* (Black) and Portuguese"[76] peoples who gather in the city space. Within "the entanglement of all races," the passage then makes a "single cut," reframing its focus on Ruriko's snakeskin shoes that reappear as "one point on the upper edge of the triangle."[77] When the *Triângulo* is first introduced in the story, it is written in *katakana* ("*torianguro* トリアングロ"), indicating the transliteration of the Portuguese name; yet at this moment in the text the district is referred to by its *kanji* correspondent: "*sankakukei* 三角形" (triangle) to register the visibility of the district's clear-cut shape.

The series of film shots in this segment provide a way to conceptualize the city space with its sharp intersections and crossings of multiple races and cultures. Within Brazilian literature, modernist, feminist writers like Clarice Lispector and Patrícia Galvão (Pagu) have utilized city space in their texts, especially the streets, to show how it brings together peoples with vast social differences between them.[78] In a similar way, Sonobe emphasizes the coexistence of racial differences by providing us with a street view: a spatial level that resonates with the temporal realm of the everyday. The montage, too, adds to the compartmentalization of the multiple racial groups with its repetition of the particle "*to* (と)," meaning "and." It creates space between each group, thereby highlighting their irresolvability and resistance to being blended into a smooth whole.

---

[76] Sonobe, "Tobaku-nō jidai," 6-7.
[77] Ibid, 7.
[78] Lidia Santos, "What Happened to the Cool City: Seventy Years of Women's Narrative in Brazil," in *Unfolding the City: Women Write the City in Latin* America, ed. Anne Lambright and Elisabeth Guerrero (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 33; 36.

Ruriko, as a single spot on the edge of the triangle, makes us aware of her individual positionality that concurrently exists in relation to the São Paulo community. As we discussed in the previous section, in her daily interactions with various peoples and cultures in the metropolis, she takes part in transcoding, while holding onto a sense of her own identity (though it is dynamic as well). The use of cinematic cuts and framing singles Ruriko out within the collision of races, so that we, as readers, come to understand her autonomous position in São Paulo's culture that withstands absorption or erasure within the urban community's dominant identity of whiteness that extends to the nation at large.

Ruriko's way of relating to the Brazilian national community is contrasted in the short story with the experiences of the Japanese farmworkers, which makes her stand out as anomalous Japanese immigrant. The laborers employed and exploited by Ōmura are lumped together into an anonymous group referred to as "workers" (*rōdōsha* 労働者). Even when they speak, they are identified as "A" and "B" rather than receiving names like Ruriko, a connotation of their fungibility. Part of their work involves concocting a peculiar fertilizing liquid called "*borudō* ボルドー" (Bordeaux), which is made in a large cask by melting limestone and mixing it with copper sulfate. The process blends together different chemical hues until the liquid turns into the color of "the native autumn sky."[79] As the farmworkers stir the ingredients, they imagine their own history and their experiences of exploitation mixing into the cask and dissolving into erasure.[80]

Hosokawa Shūhei interprets the Bordeaux cask as a metaphor for the Brazilian "melting pot" and the color of the final product as a symbol of Japanese assimilation into Brazilian

[79] Sonobe, "Tobaku-nō jidai,"7-8.
[80] Ibid, 8.

national society.[81] I find his reading generative to thinking about how "the Age of Agricultural Gambling" imagines the place of Japanese immigrants within Brazil. The aforementioned notions of racial harmony and mixing between Portuguese, African, and Indigenous racial groups[82] have been claimed as the cornerstones of Brazil's unique identity, especially when contrasted to the long history of racial prejudice and exclusion in the U.S. The assertion of a "racism-free" society, however, has received strong criticism from scholars and activists, since racial discrimination and inequality continue to pervade Brazil and the myth impedes both the ability to attribute the injustices to race and the formation of racial consciousness needed to unite particular anti-racist movements.[83]

Many historians have pointed to evidence that racial democracy was not originally conceptualized as a balanced process of mixing, but rather as a phenomenon of whitening in which non-white races would be gradually absorbed into the dominant group. Around the turn of the century, during Brazil's First Republic, many members of the white, Brazilian elite endorsed globalized ideas of eugenics, while still trying to tout Brazil's racial paradise with claims that continued miscegenation would eventually whiten the population and remove the nation's international reputation of inferiority associated with the Black proportion of its roots.[84] In the introduction to this dissertation, we saw how this ideology could be notably detected in the Brazilian government's immigration policies following the abolition of slavery in 1888. That is,

[81] Hosokawa, *Nikkei Burajiru,* 111.
[82] While Gilberto Freyre's *The Masters and the Slaves* published in 1933 (one year after the serialization of "the Age of Agricultural Gambling") is often credited for bringing to the surface Brazil's unique racial inclusivity, the idea had been given attention at earlier historical moments as well, such as the Constitution of 1824 that bestowed citizenship to people of all races and the 1845 Brazilian Historical and Geographic Institute report approved by Emperor Pedro II that discussed the racial heritage of Brazil as Portuguese, African, and Indian. See Miki Yuko, *Frontiers of Citizenship: A Black and Indigenous History of Postcolonial Brazil* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 4-5.
[83] Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 15-17.
[84] Ibid, 10.

to fill its labor shortages, Brazilian state officials prioritized recruiting immigrants of European origin (white men), yet when labor from these groups proved untenable, they were forced to search for other non-European replacements. Brazilian policymakers continued to evoke the desirability of "whiteness," which played into some officials construing the Japanese race as "honorary whites" through arguments that Japanese modern advancements evidenced the nation's racial superiority over other Asian nations and even many European ones.[85] They insisted that allowing Japanese immigrants into Brazil would not hinder efforts to "whiten" the nation and in fact, would help improve Brazil economically with their hardworking traits. Despite this "welcome" into a racially inclusive nation in rhetoric, many Japanese immigrants confronted discrimination in their everyday lives and exploitation as cheap contracted laborers. The acts of individual injustice were soon followed by institutionalized racism in government policies discussed in the introduction, such as immigration quotas (1935) and forms of internal colonialism under Vargas's *Estado Novo* (New State, 1937-1945).[86]

The historical context surrounding the notion of racial mixing in Brazil sheds light on how the metaphor of the Bordeaux fertilizer in "the Age of Agricultural Gambling" suggests that the Japanese farmworkers experience the Brazilian "melting pot" as a process of "whitening" and gradual dissolvement into erasure. They do not enjoy the ideal of racial harmony since their labor power is appropriated to grow São Paulo's economy and support the white bourgeoisie. While their efforts sustain both the material processes of modernization and the metropolis's image of modernity, they receive no significant economic or cultural benefits from their work and the Brazilian state further remains indifferent to their exploitation. Though the farmworkers

[85] Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity*, 87-88.
[86] Ignacio López-Calvo, *Japanese Brazilian Saudades: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Production* (Louisville: University of Colorado Press, 2019), 23-27.

dream of returning to Japan with a heroic tale of pioneering, the group is reduced to anonymity within a historical narrative of Brazilian modernity that is not their own.

Through the inclusion of two different imaginations of how Japanese immigrants relate to the Brazilian community, the text draws out an awareness of individuals who do not coincide with the dominant version of history and who do not necessarily share the same experiences with each other as marginalized subjects. In other words, it alerts us to the plurality of stories that exist as surplus to the national narrative. The experience of the farmworkers provides a critical perspective that brings to the surface the contradictions within the notion of racial harmony as it promotes an assimilation into "whiteness." Ruriko's viewpoint indicates another possibility beyond erasure within the Brazilian national narrative. Since the concept of Brazil as a mix of Europeans, Africans, and Indigenous peoples has sometimes been called "the triangle theory of Brazilian society," we can argue that the image of Ruriko's as a single point on the edge of the "triangle" demonstrates how she claims a position as a distinguishable agent in shaping the sociocultural politics of the nation.

By grasping her dissemblance from the anonymous Japanese farmworkers and refusal to be dissolved into the mainstream of "whiteness," we can additionally approach Ruriko's relationship to São Paulo as a challenge to the city's identity imagined through the *Mulher Paulista*. Her navigation of the public sphere suggests that it is not "extraordinary" for modern women to be active participants in the space; in the everyday, women may and indeed have fashioned its cultural politics. Ruriko especially attests to the presence of immigrant and working-class women among these modern female subjects. Her alternative positionality to the elite, white *Mulher Paulista* allows us to recognize the possibility for the agents of modern

culture to come from all walks of life and to challenge the authority of accounts that claim otherwise.

Concluding Comparisons and Coalitions

Through the comparison of Ruriko to the discursive figures of the Japanese *Modan Gāru* and the Brazilian *Mulher Paulista* through a translocational methodology, we become the makers of a montage that brings together various transpacific genealogies of feminist and decolonial praxis in a way that looks for connections, while attending to localized specificities and asymmetries. The montage, therefore, provides a model for thinking about coalitional work as well—honoring differences that define the terms of liberation in various contexts and building and rebuilding configurations of solidarity across these points of tension. By creating these transpacific alliances, we can learn from the strides and setbacks of different struggles for resistance to better equip ourselves for ongoing efforts aimed at decoloniality.

"The Age of Agricultural Gambling" offers us one tactic to trouble the discursive regime of modernity centered on "the West and the Rest" binary and the gendered colonial power structure it maintains. By alerting us to the "constructedness" of the narratives of modernity—particularly national and diasporic histories—the literary work inspires speculation about the possibility of alternative everyday experiences that have existed or still do exist beyond these hegemonic accounts. The specific story of Ruriko's movement through São Paulo imagines a modern female subject active in the sociocultural politics of the city, which introduces an "inauthentic" identity into Japanese Brazilian history that subverts its presumption of heteronormative social relations. It then brings us to ask about the presence of similar modern, political women in other times and spaces, in the gaps of national narratives, and question why

they have been marginalized. In this way, Ruriko acts as a mediator who helps to bring together a plurality of feminist political agents into the transpacific wave of decolonial resistance. The connections forged between these diverse movements across disparate temporalities and geopolitical spaces exemplify that their related fights for liberation from imperialism, heteropatriarchy, colonial racial capitalism, and other intersecting, systems of domination have been ongoing and will continue to barrel forward with force to overflow the regimes of narrative closure that try to disavow their sustained political significance.

Bibliography

Alberto, Paulina L. *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil*.Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Azuma, Eichiro. *In Search of our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2019.

Balibar, Etienne. "The Nation Form: History and Ideology." In *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, edited by Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, 86-106. New York: Verso, 1991.

Besse, Susan K. *Restructuring Patriarchy: the Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Bittencourt, Adalzira. *A Mulher Paulista na História*. Rio: Livros de Portugal, S.A., 1954.

De Paula, Jeziel. *1932: imagens construindo a história*. Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP/ Editora UNIMEP, 1999.

Endoh, Toake. *Exporting Japan: Politics of Emigration toward Latin America*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Harootunian, Harry. *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Harootunian, Harry. *Uneven Moments: Reflections on Japan's Modern History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.

"Hogaraka de yoi ga ki ga kikanu kindai musume: modan musume no hihan." *Nippaku Shinbun* (São Paulo, Brazil), May 30, 1934. Accessed November 10, 2021. https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/nis19340530-01.1.5.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. "Nikkei burajiru bungaku no modanizumu." *CIAS discussion paper 61: Urban Modernization and Contemporary Culture: Dialogues Brazil-Japan* (2016): 22-28.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron].* Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013.

Huang, Yunte. "Introduction: the Transpacific as Critical Space." In *Transpacific Imaginations: History, Literature, Counterpoetics*, 1-10. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Ivy, Marilyn. *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Jacobowitz, Seth. "A Bitter Brew: Coffee and Labor in Japanese Brazilian Immigrant Literature." *Estudos Japoneses*, no. 41 (2019): 13-30.

"Jūgo no Ugoki!!." *Nippon Shinbun* (São Paulo, Brazil), Sept. 28, 1932. Accessed November 10, 2021. https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/nih19320928-01.1.2.

Kim, Junyoung Verónica. "Asia–Latin America as Method: The Global South Project and the Dislocation of the West." *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 97–117. https://doi.org/10.5749/vergstudglobasia.3.2.0097.1940.

Kiyosawa, Kiyoshi. "Modaan Gaaru no Kenkyū." In *Ningen Seken* vol. 1 of *Kindai Shomin Seikatsushi*, edited by Minami Hiroshi, 143-158. Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1985.

Lesser, Jeffrey. *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

López-Calvo, Ignacio. *Japanese Brazilian Saudades: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Production.* Louisville: University of Colorado Press, 2019.

Lowe, Lisa. "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Difference. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1 (1997): 24-44. Accessed June 24, 2020. doi:10.1353/dsp.1991.0014.

Lu, Sidney Xu. "Japanese American Migration and the Making of Model Women for Japanese Expansion in Brazil and Manchuria, 1871-1945." *Journal of World History* 28, no. 3/4 (December 2017): 437-467.

Lu, Sidney Xu. *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Maeyama, Takashi. “Imin bungaku kara mainoritī bungaku he.” In *Koronia shōsetsu senshū (dai 1 kan) paurisuta bungakushō izen*, 306-320. Sao Paulo: Koronia bungakukai, 1975.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume* 1. Translated by Ben Fowkes. New York: Penguin Books, 1976.

Mendoza, Andrea. “Nonencounter as Relation: Cannibals and Poison Women in the Consumption of Difference.” *Verge: Studies in Global Asia* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 118-143.

Mignolo, Walter D. “The Conceptual Triad.” In *On Decoloniality: Modernity/ Coloniality/ Decoloniality*. Edited by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, 135-152. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Nishida, Mieko. *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Rivas, Zelideth María. “Songs from the Land of Eternal Summer: Beyond Duality in Japanese Brazilian Publication and *Colonia Man’yôshû*.” *Comparative Literature Studies* 52, no. 4 (2015): 787–817. Accessed November 12, 2021. https://doi.org/10.5325/complitstudies.52.4.0787.

Rodrigues, João Batista Cascudo. *A Mulher Paulista no Movimento Pró-Constituinte*. São Paulo: Revista dos Tribunais, 1933.

Rodrigues, João Paulo. “As mulheres de 1932: a participação no levante ‘constitucionalista’ em São Paulo em debate.” *XXIX História Nacional Simpósio* (July 2017): 1-9. Accessed June 24, 2020. https://www.snh2017.anpuh.org/resources/anais/54/1502582282_ARQUIVO_Textocompleto-JoaoPauloRodrigues.pdf.

Sakai, Naoki and Hyon Joo Yoo. Introduction to *Trans-Pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*. Edited by Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, 1-44. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2012.

Sakai, Naoki. *Translation and Subjectivity: On “Japan” and Cultural Nationalism.”* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

“Samazama na hōhō de kizōhin shūshū.” *Burajiru Jihō* (São Paulo, Brazil), July 28, 1932. Accessed November 10, 2021. https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/buj19320728-01.1.1.

Santos, Lidia. “What Happened to the Cool City: Seventy Years of Women’s Narrative in Brazil.” In *Unfolding the City: Women Write the City in Latin* America. Edited by Anne Lambright and Elisabeth Guerrero, 27-48. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Sato, Barbara Hamill. *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar*

Japan. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Shigematsu, Setsu. *Scream from the Shadows: The Women's Liberation Movement in Japan.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Silverberg, Miriam. *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2006.

Sonobe, Takeo. "Sakusha no kotoba." *Burajiru Jihō* (São Paulo, Brazil), April 21, 1932. Accessed November 10, 2021. https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/buj19320421-01.1.5.

Sonobe, Takeo. "Tobaku-nō jidai." In *Koronia shōsetsu senshū 1*. Edited by Koronia bungakukai, 6-14. São Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975.

Ueda, Yasuo. "Jossei zasshi ga mita modanizumu." In *Nihon modanizumu no kenkyū: shisō—seikatsu—bunka*. Edited by Minami Hiroshi, 115-140. Tokyo: Burein Shuppan, 1982.

Uma Epopéia Moderna: 80 Anos da Imagração Japonesa no Brasil. Edited by Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa. São Paulo: Câmara Brasiliera do Livro, 1992.

Wada-Marciano, Mitsuyo. "Imaging Modern Girls in the Japanese Woman's Film." In *Nippon Modern: Japanese Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s*, 76-110. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Weinstein, Barbara. *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in* Brazil. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Yoneyama, Lisa. *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Yuko, Miki. *Frontiers of Citizenship: A Black and Indigenous History of Postcolonial Brazil.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

CHAPTER 3

Belonging Beyond Borders:
Japanese Brazilian Stories of Diasporic Return without a "Homecoming"

Since diasporic community is often characterized by a desire to return to a shared homeland, one could argue that the over 300,000 Japanese Brazilian "return migrants" now residing in Japan have lived out this dream of "homecoming." Their "return" was facilitated by the Japanese state's revision to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990,[1] which permitted *Nikkeijin* or persons with Japanese ancestry (to the third generation) to obtain renewable visas for temporary residence and work abroad. The state justified its restriction to *Nikkeijin* with the argument that their shared ethnicity with Japanese citizens would allow for easy assimilation into Japanese society, yet historians and social scientists, including Daniel Linger (2001), Joshua Hotaka Roth (2002), Jeffrey Lesser (2003), and Takeyuki Tsuda (2003), have challenged the essentialist presumption that ethnicity guarantees belonging by providing various examples of Japanese Brazilians struggling to feel at "home" in their ancestral homeland due to Japanese and Brazilian cultural disparities. However, the continued evocation of "home" as a model of belonging neglects to account for the *multiple* hegemonic ideologies animating this paradigm and who might confront exclusion due to other identity formations that *intersect* with cultural difference.

In this chapter, I explore two Japanese Brazilian literary texts preceding this generation of "return migrants," which grapple with the question of diasporic return in a way that draws attention to the intertwined dynamics of race, class, gender, and sexuality that shape this fantasy

[1] This law went into effect in 1990, but Japanese Brazilians had started migrating to Japan since the mid-1980s through dual citizenship, spouses with citizenship, or overstaying their visas. See Daniel Touro Linger, *No One Home: Brazilian Selves Remade in Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

of "homecoming" and foreclose its actualization to certain subjects. Both works are narrated by first-generation Japanese immigrant women who migrated to Brazil after World War II and return to their hometowns for a temporary visit with their families in the 1970s. The first text, Japanese Brazilian writer Arai Chisato's 1974 short story "Homecoming" imagines a Japanese immigrant woman named Tomoko who returns to Japan to introduce her parents to their grandchildren. Despite her excited expectations, she discovers that her hometown has transformed under capitalist development and her parents, too, appear unfamiliarly cold. Ultimately, she regrets making the trip. The second work, "I Cannot Sing the National Anthem" (2007), is a chapter within a collection of memoirs by six Japanese immigrant women titled *Women's History of Immigration to Brazil (Onna tachi no burajiru ijūshi),* edited by Kusakano Yoshitake. Authored by Tsuchida Machie, the chapter is comprised of nineteen autobiographical vignettes that describe significant moments in Machie's life, from her migration to Brazil in 1957 to her eightieth birthday in 2005. In the middle of her memoir, Machie gives an account of her return "home" to visit her mother, a stay characterized by disorienting changes, state bureaucracy, and instances of social connection.

By juxtaposing "Homecoming" and "I Cannot Sing the National Anthem," I argue that the dialogue between the two texts renders visible the gendered, sexualized, racialized, and classed logics that underpin dominant imaginations of the Japanese national community and the Japanese diaspora in Brazil as putatively unified, stable entities. I utilize a mode of comparison that brings the two stories of "homecoming" into relation, while remaining attuned to the different insight that each offers from the narrators' individual perspectives. Specifically, each text sheds light on the hegemonic dimensions of the paradigm of "home" and the related institution of the "family," which can (re)produce restrictive and hierarchal community

formations when they become privileged models of collectivity. While Tomoko's account particularly questions the notion of diasporic return as a "homecoming," Machie's narrative explores the exclusion fomented by idealizations of "home" and "family" in both national and diasporic contexts and illuminates alternative possibilities for fostering belonging beyond their boundaried logics.

To carry out this comparative work, I utilize the feminist practice of border thinking. As decolonial and women of color feminists have elaborated, border thinking involves critical, collaborative reflection from the in-between, liminal spaces constructed by the intertwined forces of racialization, colonization, heterosexualism, and capitalist exploitation. It employs a multiplicity of ways of thinking, knowing, and doing, especially by listening to and learning from those most impacted by the modern/colonial gender system. In this way, it takes incommensurability as a crucial condition of possibility for dialogue and coalitional work that can challenge hegemonic regimes of knowledge-production.

Since the dominant historical narrative surrounding the Japanese diaspora in Brazil has largely been composed by male voices, I utilize border thinking to pay close attention to Tomoko's and Machie's peripheral perspectives as immigrant women who bring to the surface the gendered dimensions of migration, diasporic formation, and nation-building. Furthermore, I bring the literary analysis into conversation with scholars like Tina Campt and Deborah A. Thomas who have employed transnational feminist frameworks to scrutinize the intersecting hegemonic formations *within* diasporic communities.[2] Marianne Hirsch and Nancy K. Miller have also taken a transnational feminist approach to studies of diasporic return to begin thinking through "a multifaceted paradigm of community that acknowledges longings to belong and to

[2] Tina Campt and Deborah A. Thomas,"Gendering Diaspora: Transnational Feminism, Diaspora, and its Hegemonies," *Feminist Review* 90, no. 1 (October 2008): 1-8.

return while remaining critical of a politics of identity and nation."[3] As Tomoko and Machie dwell within the borderlands of not only the Japanese diaspora in Brazil, but also the Japanese and Brazilian nations, I engage these transnational feminist frameworks to look at how both narrators illuminate the exclusionary processes that demarcate the limits of these imagined communities and point us toward other ways that we might rethink relationality, community, and social connection.

To make my argument, I start with a description of Arai's and Tsuchida's oeuvres and their relationship to the development of Japanese Brazilian literature. Following this contextualization, I read Tomoko's and Machie's accounts of traveling back to Japan and examine how they question the notion of a diasporic return "home" and expose the gendered, sexualized, racialized, and classed ideologies that condition their exclusion from the Japanese national community. Finally, I interrogate the extent to which these intersecting hegemonic ideologies continue to animate their attempt to imagine the Japanese diasporic community as a "home" in Brazil. The comparative dialogue between the two texts ultimately allows for a reflection on diaspora and community-building that verges on critique, caution, and creativity. It inspires a critique of essentialized understandings of national culture believed to tie a diasporic community to its "homeland," caution against repeating nationalist practices of exclusion and dominance within diasporic formations, and creative imaginations of belonging based on embodied relationships of interdependence and care.

Arai's and Tsuchida's Relationship to Japanese Brazilian Literary Production

[3] Marianne Hirsch and Nancy K. Miller, introduction to *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 4.

Arai Chisato and Tsuchida Machie both belong to the postwar generation of Japanese immigrants and their stories provide representations of the Japanese diaspora in Brazil primarily during the 1960s and 70s. Tsuchida migrated from Kumamoto prefecture to Brazil in 1957 at age 33, and Arai arrived later in 1961 at age 23 from Nagano prefecture. Neither were writers by profession, although Arai did write *tanka* and *haiku* poetry throughout her life and co-authored a book of memoirs with her husband titled *Kuni futatsu seoite* (Carrying Two Countries, 2011). Tsuchida, too, took lessons in writing poetry while in Brazil and composed *haiku* under the name Machijō.

Arai's "Homecoming" emerged during the outlined in the introduction to this dissertation called "the Golden Age of *Koronia Bungaku*"[4] (1966-1977), when the *Koronia Bungakukai (Koronia* Literary Association) was highly active in its pursuit of earning Japanese Brazilian literature recognition abroad. The short story was republished in the third edition of the association's literary anthology series after first being printed in the 1974 *Paurisuta Nenkan* (Paulista Annual Publication). Tsuchida's chapter in *Women's History of Immigration to Brazil,* on the other hand, did not have an affiliation with the *Koronia bungakukai*, which had renamed itself *Burajiru Nikkei bungakukai* (Brazilian Nikkei Literary Association)[5] in 1999. Rather, the book was published in Japan in 2007 by *Mainichi Shinbun-sha* with the help of Japanese journalist, Kusakano Yoshitake, who wanted to share the contributions of women to the history of Japanese immigration to Brazil. Though Tsuchida's writing has circulated in Japan, it does not quite reflect the *Koronia Bungakukai*'s dream of international literary prestige, as the piece of creative nonfiction is categorized as historical journalism rather than a literary "masterpiece."

[4] See Hosokawa Shūhei, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron]* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013). and Arata Sumu, *Burajiru Nikkei koronia bungei, ge* (São Paulo: Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, 2008).
[5] The *Burajiru Nikkei Bungakukai* or also known in Portuguese as, *A Associação Cultural e Literária Nikkei Bungaku do Brasil*, remains active today and still prints a bi-lingual journal titled: *Burajiru Nikkei Bungaku*..

To date, only two Japanese Brazilian prose writers have earned such recognition in Japan as "professional" authors: Daigo Masao[6] and Matsui Tarō.[7] In Brazil, Oscar Nakasato has received commendations after his win of the coveted Jabuti literary prize in 2012 for his novel *Nihonjin*, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The acknowledgement of these men as exemplary writers coincides with the long-standing male dominance in the Japanese Brazilian literary community, in addition to male-centered frameworks within Japanese diasporic studies and Japanese-language literary studies. Hence, Arai's and Tsuchida's writing brings to the surface traditionally marginalized voices that complicate how the history of the Japanese diaspora in Brazil is remembered.

While both male and female Japanese Brazilian authors have engaged with a myriad of themes such as worker exploitation, discrimination, dreams of returning to Japan, generational differences, troubled romances, and *mestiçagem* (miscegenation), female writers have often dealt with these questions with a sharper focus on the gender and sexuality dynamics entangled with them.[8] Unlike modern Japanese women writers like Tamura Toshiko and Hayashi Fumiko, who depicted immigration to Canada and French Indochina respectively as an opportunity for working-class women to find some liberation from patriarchal structures in Japan,[9] Japanese Brazilian women have generally represented the perpetuation of male dominance in Brazil. For example, prewar female writers like Hayashi Ise and Yanagisen Shinako wrote stories about the patriarchal structure of the Japanese family and the pressures it exerted on women in Japan and

[6] Masao's accolades include the "Ginza and Southern Cross" Newcomer award (1974), candidate for the Naoki Prize (1976), and honorable mention for the Suntory Mystery award (1991).
[7] Edward Mack, *Acquired Alterity: Migration, Identity, and Literary Nationalism* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022), 232.
[8] See Ignacio López-Calvo, *Japanese Brazilian Saudades: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Production* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2019).
[9] For an in depth examination of these authors, see Noriko Horiguchi, *Women Adrift: the Literature of Japan's Imperial Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

the Japanese diaspora in Brazil. In the postwar period, female immigrants have written in both Japanese and Portuguese with a continued accentuation on the everyday challenges of women within the diasporic community. Among these writers are Kitajima Fumiko, who wrote extensively for the journal *Yomimono* (Reading Material), and Mitsuko Kawai and Laura Honda-Hasegawa, who wrote longer novels in Portuguese drawing from their own experiences as Japanese Brazilian women.

Arai's and Tsuchida's texts also add their perspectives on the gendered dimensions of diasporic return for postwar Japanese immigrants prior to the "return migration" boom. As we will see, the narrators of their stories, Tomoko and Machie (Tsuchida's first name), travel back to Japan in the 1970s and experience disorienting changes to the culture of their hometowns that shed light on the instability of Japanese national identity and how shifting gendered, classed, and racialized ideologies work to construct and reconstruct it. Narrated from different decades, the two stories diverge in the ways they show Tomoko and Machie navigating these transformations. Since Tomoko gives her account shortly after her trip, she focuses on its immediate negative affect in comparison to Machie, whose reflective distance allows her to weigh moments of connection in tension with feelings of "foreignness." Bringing the two texts into conversation thus permits both a critical reflection on nationalist exclusivity and a possibility for imagining communal connectivity beyond paradigms of a national "home."

Reevaluating Diasporic Return as a "Homecoming"

The fantasy of a diasporic "homecoming" draws upon an imagination of the community's coherence based upon its members' relationship to a shared "origin," with which they long to reunite. In the case of Japan, as previously discussed, Japanese imperialist discourses largely

shaped the construction of this essentialized connection between the diaspora and the nation to maintain the immigrants' loyalty to the metropole. At the same time, Japanese state officials contradictorily regarded these same imperial subjects to be "superfluous" populations as most came from marginalized racial and class groups. Yet as we will see, Tomoko and Machie unravel the legacies of these imperialist representations by illuminating their differences from the "homogeneous" national community.

When Tomoko and Machie return to their hometowns in Japan, they describe similar scenes of transformation. As Tomoko walks up to her parents' house in Shinshū, she finds that there are no longer the beautiful ponds, abundant mulberry fields, and copious peach trees from her memories. In their place now stand large, upscale houses—identical and orderly, aligned in a row.[10] Capitalist development has homogenized the space, destroying the once brightly-colored variance of nature and replacing it with the strictly structured array of human-made houses. Machie, too, notices the drastic changes to her rural hometown in Kumamoto that have ushered in new infrastructure with wide roads and brick roofs.[11] She comments particularly on the house of her former employers who during the war had experienced similar socioeconomic precarities to Machie's, but now live in an elegant, mixed Japanese and European-style home in an affluent neighborhood. For both narrators, these palpable conversions from postwar economic recovery stimulate a sense of disorientation as the two women feel out of place in locations they believed to be "home."

[10] All translations of "Homecoming" and "I Cannot Sing the National Anthem" are mine. Arai Chisato."Kikyō."*Koronia shōsetsu senshū* (1974; repr., Sao Paulo: Koronia bungakukai, 1978), 315.
[11] Tsuchida Machie, "Kokka tonaheru," *Onna no burajiru ijū-shi*, ed. Kusakano Yoshitake (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbun-sha, 2008), 225.

The depictions of Tomoko's and Machie's hometowns break from dominant representations of the *furusato,*[12] meaning "native place" or "hometown," which is a discursive construct that has functioned to define a "timeless" Japanese national identity and designate who belongs to its imagined space. Usually in the countryside, the *furusato* is characterized by warmth and familiarity—the comforts of "home"—which includes the mother as its central figure.[13] The construct emerged during modernization in the Meiji era that destroyed the environment in rural Japan, transformed ways of life, and sparked massive migration to the cities.[14] These changes fueled anxiety over the loss of Japan's unique identity and produced a nostalgic desire for the *furusato* and its "traditional" customs. However, in both prewar and postwar discourses, dominant representations of the *furusato* recuperated and spectacularized only partial aspects of the spaces to which they claimed to refer, while negating the more disruptive elements that might tarnish the image of a "pure" and "eternal" Japanese culture. Put simply, the discursive construct supported an exclusive imagining of a Japanese identity.

The *furusato* in these discourses functions as a point of "origin" that helps the nation to construct a smooth, linear narrative of the Japanese people's development since this moment in time. It also attempts to work out the contradictions within national time—between the forward-moving time of progress and the consistencies of a Japanese cultural "essence"—by serving as a symbol of tradition that attests to the present existence of a Japanese culture inherited from the past. Marilyn Ivy, however, sheds light on how this homogenizing process of narrating the nation

---

[12] For examples see Irwin Scheiner, "The Japanese Village Imagined, Real, Contested," *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Oakland: University of California Press, 1998), 68-79. and Stephen Dodd, *Writing Home: Representations of the Native Place in Modern Japanese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
[13]Jason G. Karlin, *Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan: Modernity, Loss, and the Doing of History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 16. and Toshiko Yoda, "The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labor, and Capital in Contemporary Japan," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 99, no. 4 (2000): 865–902.
[14] Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm*, Japan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 103-105.

and its cultural identity operates through a politics of repression by reading of the *furusato* as "uncanny."[15] The "uncanny" or "unhomelike" is a Freudian term (*das Unheimlich*) defined as something that is both terrifying and familiar—unsettling because what has been concealed returns to sight. The "uncanny," as Ivy posits, destabilizes the assumption of a singular national culture by pointing to what becomes repressed in order to construct an image of homogeneity.

Tomoko experiences the "uncanny" in her hometown, describing her familiar home feeling strangely "unfamilial." Beyond the eeriness surrounding the uniformity of her neighborhood, she notes her mother's incessant coldness that brings her to lament: "This is not my home, not my mother, I didn't return to uh…Japan."[16] Her exclamation illustrates a perception of change that troubles the assumption of an "eternal" culture and its unbroken tradition. In particular, she pictures her mother as a mediating figure whose connection to the comforts of "home" determines if the space will offer her belonging. Yet as she shows, the signs of "home" and "mother" that point to an "origin," do not, in fact, add up to a return to Japan. Her remark, therefore, exhibits a logic of supplements that questions the *furusato's* "originary" status altogether. For Tomoko, the understanding of the *furusato* as an origin came into being as an aftereffect of her migration to Brazil, which brought the *notion* of the origin into consciousness.[17] Her listing of "home" and "mother" within a chain of supplements, therefore, exposes the "originary" *furusato* as always deferred and displaced.

Tomoko further discloses the national narrative's dependency on exclusion through her own embodiment of the "uncanny." As a working-class, immigrant woman, Tomoko becomes marginalized within the Japanese national community as both "surplus" to the nation and

[15] Ibid., 23; 105-107.
[16] Arai, "Kikyō," 318.
[17] This follows Ivy's argument about the *furusato.* See Ivy, *Discourses*, 22.

subordinate within a heteropatriarchal society. Yet Tomoko does not perceive her repudiation from the national imaginary until she returns to Japan and comes to realize her difference. As her narrative underscores her alternative temporality from the nation's linearity, it brings to light the temporal dissonance within Japan that its national history attempts to smooth over.

For example, Tomoko initially indicates her perception of unity with Japan while she is working in Brazil through the numerous references she makes to counted units of time. Tomoko calls attention to the fact that ten years have passed since she left her home by mentioning this number twelve times in the narrative. Moreover, she repeats phrases such as "every day, every day" and "days and days of working overtime, working overtime"[18] to relay her experience of a measured temporality in which units carry the same, meaningless value and pass by linearly. This comprehension of time resembles the idea of "homogeneous, empty time"[19]—the time of the nation—as theorized by Benedict Anderson and is what permits Tomoko to picture her connection to the Japanese national community while in Brazil.

But Tomoko's move from the diasporic periphery to the center of the nation sparks a clash between various temporalities within the national community that exposes who and what have been occluded within the nation's telling of history. We see this when Tomoko's mother scorns her daughter for wearing a sweater that looks like it was sewn during the war, to which her father adds the label *"kōshinkoku"* (undeveloped country).[20] Their remarks relegate her to a time of the past, alienating her from the "homogenous" time of the nation. They engage in a gesture aligned with the modern/colonial logic of the Japanese empire, which often employed time as a tactic to distinguish Japan's exceptionalism through transposing difference "from the

[18] Arai, "Kikyō," 309-310.
[19] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; repr. London: Verso, 2006), 24.
[20] Arai, "Kikyō,"318.

realm of space to the realm of time, so that 'foreignness' increasingly came to be reinterpreted as 'underdevelopment.'"[21] Similarly, Tomoko's parents deny their daughter's coevalness by assigning her to a past temporality associated with the "underdeveloped" modes of production characterizing her lifestyle in Brazil.

The mix of temporalities within the nation that we witness here resonates with Harry Harootunian's discussion of "the everyday" as a temporal category introduced by the masses and the subaltern that disrupts the nation's attempt to portray its history as a linear process experienced uniformly by its "people."[22] According to Harootunian, through the contingent and frictional interactions that these marginalized individuals have with the totalizing forces of capitalism, "the past will be seen to break into and be gathered up in the seemingly eternal present…often acting as a revenant or ghostly specter of the past bent on haunting and destabilizing the present."[23] In "Homecoming," we witness Tomoko's return to her hometown as a return of the repressed. She inserts into the present the time of working-class, immigrant women, which brings to the surface the uneven temporalities within Japan that the national narrative tries to smooth over to appear homogeneous. Tomoko, therefore, challenges the stability of the Japanese national culture and its authority as a unifying force that binds the diaspora to the nation.

In comparison to Tomoko, Machie's re-encounter with her hometown proves to be similarly disorienting and causes her, at times, to feel "foreign." Specifically, when she goes to visit her mother in the hospital, she does not have the proper documentation from the municipal

[21]Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-inventing Japan: Time Space Nation* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1998), 28.
[22] Harry Harootunian, *Uneven Moments: Reflections on Japan's Modern History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 178-181.
[23] Ibid., 190.

government to enter her mother's ward.[24] The application process, she learns, takes half a year, which makes her acutely aware of her "temporary visitor" status. In other words, the bureaucracy of the state institution reminds her that she does not belong to the nation-state as it bars her from seeing her mother.

Despite this sense of unbelonging, Machie does find some moments of genuine connection during her trip as well. When she visits her former employers, for instance, the three friends spend the evening reminiscing about when Machie was working at their post office during World War II. Machie recalls a woman in their community who asked her to help her write a letter to her son in the war and then later repaid her with a small gift of food. The couple responds with an acknowledgment of the extra burdens they all took on at that time to help their community. Machie, the narrator writing in 2007, then concludes with the reflection: "We overcame nearly thirty years since the war and the distance between Brazil and Japan, speaking continuously to one another as if it were yesterday."[25]

Her comment serves as an illustration of an alternative imagination of time and space that differs from the nation's linear timeline and closed borders. Machie pictures the possibility of transcending temporal and spatial distances through everyday embodied relations that carry the past into the present. In this encounter, time is multi-directional and works genealogically to facilitate connections between peoples through their shared lived experiences. Moreover, these past moments importantly speak to moments of intimate, intersubjective relations based upon reciprocity and care. Machie and the couple's memories demonstrate how the precarious circumstances of the war necessitated that they rely on one another to sustain themselves. Unlike the capitalist structure that divides Tomoko from her family and the state institutions that

[24] Tsuchida, "Kokka," 228.
[25] Ibid., 227.

separate Machie from her mother, this form of relationality brings people together. Machie's narrative, therefore, introduces the possibility of building community through embodied connections and thinking relationality beyond borders.

Belonging Beyond Models of "Home" and "Family"

The dislocation that Tomoko and Machie experience from their return trips to Japan prompts reflection about where and how they might better locate a sense of "belonging." Tomoko's story, as I will show, illustrates an idealization of "home" tied to the "family," which implies to its 1970s Japanese diasporic readership that they might build community with one another by upholding the values of these institutions. However, through juxtaposing her account with Machie's narrative, I demonstrate how "home" and "family" function as more than metaphors; they carry with them particular gendered, sexualized, and racialized logics that may and, in Machie's case, have created hegemonic formations within the Japanese diaspora in Brazil. Imagining the Japanese Brazilian community around a model of "home," therefore, risks repeating nationalist practices of exclusion to construct a collective identity.

At the beginning of "Homecoming," Tomoko describes the motivation for her trip to Japan based on a conversation she had with an elderly passenger on the boat she took to Brazil ten years earlier. The woman urged her to return home while her relatives are still alive even if she is not "wearing a brocade,"[26] a symbol of riches and success. By changing the purpose of return to focus on family instead of wealth, Tomoko hints at a change within the postwar diasporic community and its values. This recollection sets the tone for the rest of the story, which

[26] Arai, "Kikyō," 309.

continually emphasizes Tomoko's cherishing of family and a "home-like" environment that appear antithetical to capitalist greed.

Yet as she elaborates her romanticization of family values, she illustrates a complicity with Japanese heteropatriarchal ideologies. For example, as Tomoko notices her parents' egotism, it stirs up memories from her childhood when they taught her that "'money is secondary'" next to the well-being of others.[27] She remembers her father's diligent work ethic undertaken to support their family so that her mother would not need to work outside the home and contrasts him with her lazy father-in-law, who expected his wife to labor on the family farm.[28] Although Tomoko's father appears as the more admirable individual among the two men, both families operate with the father as the head of household. In other words, the contrast she makes does not necessarily serve as a critique of heteropatriarchy, but of certain ways that heteropatriarchy can be practiced.

Looking at the modern genealogies of "home" and "family" in Japan, we become further aware of what is risked by imagining a diasporic community around these ideas that hold ties to Japanese imperialist legacies and their residual gendered, sexualized, and racialized ideologies. The Meiji state created the family-registry system in 1871 and then under the 1898 Civil Code, redefined the traditional Japanese family or *ie* in a hierarchical way with men as the heads of household.[29] As elaborated in chapter 1, women were expected to act as a "good wife, wise mother" to support their husbands' work and raise Japan's next generation to be strong and loyal citizens.[30]

---

[27] Ibid., 311-312.
[28] Ibid., 311.
[29] Fumie Kumagai, *Family Issues on Marriage, Divorce, and Older Adults in Japan: With Special Attention to Regional Variations* (Singapore: Springer.Kumagai, 2014), 47.
[30] Koyama Shizuko, *Ryōsai Kenbo: the Educational Ideal of "Good Wife, Wise Mother*," trans. Stephen Filler (Boston: Brill.Koyama, 2013), 48.

Around the same time, the word *hōmu* (home) was introduced to Japan by Protestant reformers but did not gain influence in Japanese domestic life until it was adapted into the localized concept of *katei* (home) in the 1880s.[31] *Katei,* alongside the Civil Code, began to transform family relations into tighter units of solidarity and privacy, leading to increased consideration over the moral practices within the household. Women's magazines and political discourses designated women responsible for its upkeep, while the Meiji government further invested in *katei kyōiku* (home education) to ensure mothers would properly educate future national subjects.

These gendered expectations carried over into the realm of migration as well. Prewar Japanese migration planners sought to balance the male-female ratio within the family-based system and called for the recruitment of more women who would contribute to "building a new home for the Japanese in South America."[32] They believed that a stable home would not only strengthen the moral integrity of the immigrant communities in Brazil, but also contribute to reproducing the community and its racial "purity." Pre-departure education devoted specific attention to women so that they could properly fulfill the role of "good wife, wise mother."[33] The metaphor of the "extended family," at this time, also functioned to justify settler colonialism in Brazil, as demonstrated by the beforementioned claims that the Amazonian indigenous people were Asiatic descendants.[34]

Idealizations of "home" and "family" continued to shape the male-dominant relations within the postwar diaspora as well. Nishida explains how many first-generation parents

[31]Jordan Sand, "At Home in the Meiji Period Inventing Japanese Domesticity," Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Oakland: University of California Press. Sand 1998), 193-196.
[32] Sidney Xu Lu 2019, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 461
[33] Eichiro Azuma, 2019, *In Search of our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 130-132.
[34] Ibid., 146.

prioritized education for their children, yet they emphasized higher education for their sons and skill-based schooling for their daughters to prepare them for managing the "home."[35] Moreover, postwar marriage norms among educated and elite Japanese immigrants set expectations for daughters to practice endogamy to preserve their family's Japanese identity, while accepting marriages between sons and white Brazilians.[36] The responsibility placed on women to reproduce the racial community highlights the intersection of racialized and heteropatriarchal logics underlying the imagination of a Japanese diasporic family.

Although Tomoko's story suggests to its audience that the Japanese Brazilian community might work together to preserve the value of family and construct a space of belonging that feels like "home," the narration ends before showing the actual effects that these values have on the community's social structure. Therefore, from "Homecoming," we can only speculate what is risked from utilizing "family" and "home" as paradigms for community-building. However, "I Cannot Sing the National Anthem" does offer a deeper look into how the hegemonic ideologies animating the two terms migrate with Machie and lead to hierarchical racial and gender formations within the Japanese diaspora in Brazil.

Across several vignettes in her memoirs, Machie engages with the "good wife, wise mother" ideology and draws attention to the pressure she feels to conform to these family-based norms in both Japan and Brazil. The first sub-section in her chapter, "'Good Wife' and 'Wise Mother'" starts in 1957 Japan when food scarcity and poverty make it difficult for Machie to sustain herself and her five children, especially since her unfaithful and irresponsible husband does not adequately provide for their family. As she looks to her mother for sympathy, her

[35] Mieko Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 223-226.
[36] Ibid., 227.

mother merely quotes "Be a good wife, wise mother.[37]" Hearing these words, Machie thinks to herself that she understands the sacrifices she must make for her children to be a "wise mother" but struggles to conform to the role of "good wife." The Meiji ideology surfaces again in another segment titled "Mother," which recounts a moment eleven years after Machie immigrated to Brazil. In this short section, she shares a letter she wrote to her mother that communicates how she has finally moved up into the middle-class in Brazil and can better live according to the ideals of the *katei* (home).[38] She also mentions how her husband has grown into a diligent worker to whom she can be a "good wife;" at the same time, her children have become her teachers—mostly helping her with the Portuguese language—so she feels less adequate as a "wise mother."[39]

The repetition of the "good wife, wise mother" ideology and its connection to the *katei* speaks to the persistence of "traditional" female roles from Japan to the Japanese diaspora in Brazil. In these two segments, Machie often places her mother's words in quotations when she repeats phrases outlining gendered expectations. In this regard, lines like "Be a good wife, wise mother" and "Being a housewife is how women live well" almost seem to call attention to themselves as reiterations of Japanese heteropatriarchal discourses that construct female subject positions.[40] Machie does attempt to perform these gendered subjectivities even after migrating to Brazil, yet her struggle to do so further points to acting as a "wife" and "mother" as constructed roles rather than "innate" female characteristics. In this process, she leaves her mark of mediation by separating "good wife" and "wise mother" both in the way she describes them and with the insertion of "and" between the two identities in the first section's title (normally, the

[37] Tsuchida, "Kokka," 201.
[38] Ibid., 224.
[39] Ibid., 225.
[40] Ibid., 201; 204.

expression is written as a four *kanji* character compound: 良妻賢母 and not「良妻」と「賢母」). The division shows that the two roles are not naturally and seamlessly intertwined, but rather, are performed with varying degrees of "success."

In addition to disclosing the heteropatriarchal structure internal to the diaspora, Machie provides a look at the racialized implications of the notions of "home" and "family" in her penultimate vignette, "The Birth of my Mixed-race Grandchild." In this section, Machie's second eldest son, Kenji, reveals his marriage to a mixed-race Brazilian woman named Valquiria that he had kept secret from his parents for fear of their disapproval, especially since Valquiria's mother is Black. Although Machie does not disapprove of their marriage, she does understand Kenji's impulse to hide his relationship. She regrettably recalls having repeated to him growing up: "If possible, you should marry a *Nikkei* woman."[41] Similar to her mother's earlier platitudes, she writes this line as a quotation that creates a separation between the self present with Kenji and the self from the past seeming to speak in a voice that is not her own. While her past remark demonstrates a complicity with a racialized imagination of the Japanese diaspora, the heteroglossia in these lines produces a tension that brings into focus the hegemonic discourses that construct such a representation of an exclusionary Japanese Brazilian community.

At the same time, this vignette offers a glimpse into another way of enacting ties of belonging that does not depend on a "pure" racial community. Machie concludes the segment with a description of the birth of her two grandchildren and the frequent visits she makes to Valquiria and Kenji's house to help raise them. She outlines an image of Valquiria, Valquiria's mother, and the two children—all of whose first language is Portuguese—trying to speak and

[41] Ibid., 247.

learn Japanese with Machie.[42] The scene highlights the friendship that has developed between the three adult women as they reciprocate an openness toward one another and encourage their grandchildren to celebrate their different backgrounds.

This model of "family" departs from the racialized, heteropatriarchal institution in Japan through the way social connections are built not through blood ties, but through embodied relations reminiscent of the ones Machie experienced in Japan. It can also be said to diverge from dominant imaginations of the Brazilian national family. This national imaginary introduced in the previous chapter, unlike the Japanese presumption of a homogeneous ethnos, evokes the concept of *"mestiçagem"* or "racial mixture" to point to Brazil as a "racial democracy." Yet despite claims to its inclusivity, *mestiçagem* depicts the Brazilian people as a harmonious blend of Portuguese, African, and Indigenous racial groups, while historically excluding immigrant groups like Japanese Brazilians from this national community.

Moreover, as we encountered in Sonobe's "The Age of Agricultural Gambling" and as historians have evidenced, *mestiçagem* was not originally conceptualized as a balanced process of mixing, but rather a phenomenon of "whitening" in which non-white races would be gradually absorbed into the dominant group.[43] We may also recall how this idea of "whitening" played out in Brazilian immigration policy when state officials prioritized white Europeans and then "honorary white" Japanese immigrants to fulfill its plantation labor shortages.

Rather than demonstrate an example of racial mixture in which Kenji and Valquiria's children become "whitened" by Valquiria's partially white European heritage, Machie shows

[42] Ibid., 250.
[43] See Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (1974; repr. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992).; Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).; and Paulina L. Alberto, Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

how they learn linguistic and cultural practices from their Black and Japanese Brazilian grandmothers and build their own mixed identities. This practice resembles Machie's own relationship with language and the linguistic identity she develops within the text. Throughout the chapter, Machie inserts transliterated Portuguese words such as "パトロン" *(patoron;* employer) and "パラベンス" *(parabensu;* happy birthday) into her Japanese-language narrative, a practice known as *"koronia-go."*[44] As Zelideth María Rivas has delineated, *koronia-go* illustrates Japanese Brazilians' "everyday interactions with Portuguese language speakers" and the process of negotiating their own language community.[45] Machie's repeated use of *kolonia-go,* thus, hints at her daily encounters with Portuguese speakers who then have reciprocal influences on one another's linguistic identities. It accentuates the embodied relations involved in the process of transliteration and translation, which we see also characterize the way Machie's grandchildren form their identities. While such cross-cultural and cross-linguistic encounters are not always free of conflict, Machie sketches the possibility for them to yield open collaboration and the building of communal relations across difference.

Finally, Machie clarifies in the conclusion to her memoirs how this intersubjective process of linguistic and cultural negotiation works across the constructed boundaries of national and diasporic communities. In the last sub-section, she reflects on her life as she celebrates her eightieth birthday and expresses her sense of "rootedness" in Brazil, as she watches her daughter repeat the same journey back to Japan that she made thirty years earlier. She then closes the chapter with two *haikus* that read:

[44] Tsuchida, "Kokka," 204; 244.
[45] Zelideth María Rivas, "Songs from the Land of Eternal Summer: Beyond Duality in Japanese Brazilian Publication and Colonia Man'yōshū," *Comparative Literature Studies* 53, no. 4(2015): 800.

節約は　移民の性や　木の葉髪

ブラジルの　国歌唱へず　秋昏るる

Saving money is
The nature of immigrants
Hairs falling like leaves

While I cannot sing
Brazil's national anthem,
Fall comes to a close[46]

The poems clarify that the space of belonging that Machie has constructed in Brazil does not have a national affiliation, as singing the national anthem would imply. In other words, even though Machie does not feel a desire to return to Japan, neither does she wish to claim a Brazilian national identity. Rather, as time passes with the seasons and she enters the final stage of her life, she demonstrates a contentment with her humble way of life that she will continue to pursue in her final years on earth.

Additionally, in the second poem, the modern Japanese spelling of "Brazil" (she uses "ブラジル" instead of the older "伯剌西爾") in katakana—the Japanese alphabet used mostly for transliterated foreign words—stands out within a poem that utilizes more antiquated Japanese grammar and kanji characters like "唱へず" (cannot sing) and "昏るる" (comes to a close). This mix of old and new, "foreign" and "native," once again reminds us of Machie's own process navigating linguistic and cultural changes over time through her lived encounters with the

[46] Tsuchida, "Kokka," 225.

persons she meets moving between Japan and Brazil. In this way, she concludes her narrative with a look into the everyday moments that have helped her to find belonging in Brazil by keeping herself open to the experiences that will come next.

Conclusion

By putting into conversation Tomoko's and Machie's stories of diasporic return, I have reflected on what their experiences suggest about feelings of belonging within and across the boundaries of national and diasporic communities. In particular, I have focused on how they show the concepts of "home" and "family" to function as models of community that can create structures of exclusion and domination as much as offer spaces of safety and inclusion. Tomoko's "uncanny" visit to Japan especially works to question the conceptualization of diasporic return as a "homecoming" by exposing how the construction of a national "home" depends on an essentialized Japanese cultural identity constructed through the repression of racialized, classed, gendered "others" like Tomoko. Machie's account adds to the critique of national identity construction, yet also provides a deeper interrogation of the paradigms of "home" and "family" within the context of the Japanese diaspora in Brazil and how they have shaped heteropatriarchal and racialized formations in the community.

In conclusion, "Homecoming" and "I Cannot Sing the National Anthem" bring into focus multiple, intersecting forces of power that circulate across the transpacific, which Tomoko and Machie negotiate in ways specific to their positionalities as working-class Japanese Brazilian women. Looking at how idealizations of national or diasporic "homes" do not fit with their experiences, their stories inspire reflection on where else to locate belonging. Machie's memoir offers us moments that picture relationality beyond constructed borders. She portrays

community-building through an ongoing collaborative and embodied process in which bonds are formed coalitionally between differently-situated beings. Reflecting on her example as one instance of connection, what other ways of being together in the world might be possible if we start rethinking ways of belonging by first leaving "home" behind?

Bibliography

Alberto, Paulina L. *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso, 2006. Originally printed 1983.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: The New Mestiza,* 5th edition. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2022. Originally printed 1987.

Arai, Chisato. "Kikyō." In Vol. 3 of *Koronia shōsetsu senshū,* 308-318. Sao Paulo: Koronia bungakukai, 1978. Originally printed 1974.

Arata, Sumu. *Burajiru Nikkei koronia bungei: gekan.* São Paulo: Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, 2008.

Azuma, Eichiro. *In Search of our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2019.

Campt, Tina and Deborah Thomas. "Gendering Diaspora: Transnational Feminism, Diaspora, and its Hegemonies." *Feminist Review* 90, no. 1 (October 2008): 1-8.

Dodd, Stephen. *Writing Home: Representations of the Native Place in Modern Japanese Literature.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Endoh, Toake. *Exporting Japan: Politics of Emigration to Latin America.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Endoh, Toake. *Nanbei "kimin" seisaku no jisō.* Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2016.

Erber, Pedro. *Breaching the Frame: The Rise of Contemporary Art in Brazil and Japan.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2015.

Fujinami Kai. *Okinawa diasupora nettowāku : gurōbaru-ka no naka de kaikō o hatasu*

Uchinānchu. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2020.

Harootunian, Harry. *Uneven Moments: Reflections on Japan's Modern History.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.

Hirsch, Marianne and Nancy K. Miller, editors. *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Horiguchi, Noriko J. *Women Adrift: The Literature of Japan's Imperial Body.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1: nihongo no nagai tabi[rekishi].* Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2012.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron].* Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013.

Ivy, Marilyn. *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Karlin, Jason G. *Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan: Modernity, Loss, and the Doing of History.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.

Koyama Shizuko. *Ryōsai Kenbo: The Educational Ideal of "Good Wife, Wise Mother."* translated by Stephen Filler Boston: Brill, 2013.

Kumagai, Fumie. *Family Issues on Marriage, Divorce, and Older Adults in Japan: With Special Attention to Regional Variations.* Singapore: Springer, 2014.

Lesser, Jeffrey. *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Lesser, Jeffrey. *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Linger, Daniel Touro. *No One Home: Brazilian Selves Remade in Japan.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

López-Calvo, Ignacio. *Japanese Brazilian Saudades: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Production.* Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2019.

Lu, Sidney Xu. *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Lugones, María."Toward a Decolonial Feminism." *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 742-759.

Mack, Edward. *Acquired Alterity: Migration, Identity, and Literary Nationalism.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2022.

Maeyama, Takashi. "Imin bungaku kara mainoritī bungaku he." In Vol. 1 *of Koronia shōsetsu senshū: paurisuta bungakushō izen*, 306-320. Sao Paulo: Koronia bungakukai, 1975.

Mignolo, Walter D. and Catherine E. Walsh. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. *Re-inventing Japan: Time Space Nation.* New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998.

Nishida, Mieko. *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Rivas, Zelideth María. "Songs from the Land of Eternal Summer: Beyond Duality in Japanese Brazilian Publication and Colonia Man'yōshū." *Comparative Literature Studies* 53, no. 4 (2015): 787-817.

Roth, Joshua Hotaka. *Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.

Sand, Jordan. "At Home in the Meiji Period Inventing Japanese Domesticity." In *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan,* edited by Stephen Vlastos, 192-208. Oakland: University of California Press, 1998.

Scheiner, Irwin. "The Japanese Village Imagined, Real, Contested." In *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan,* edited by Stephen Vlastos, 68-79. Oakland: University of California Press, 1998.

Schpun, Mônica Raisa. "The Japanese Community of São Paulo, Liberdade, and Brazilian State Persecution (1937-45). *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 5, no. 1 (2019): 209 - 236.

Skidmore, Thomas E. *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1992. Originally published 1974.

Tsuchida Machie. "Kokka tonaheru." In *Onna no burajiru ijū-shi,* edited by Kusakano Yoshitake. Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbun-sha, 2007.

Tsuda, Takeyuki. *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Return Migration in Transnational Perspective.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Yoda, Toshiko. "The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labor, and Capital in Contemporary Japan." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 99, no. 4 (2000): 865–902.

Chapter 3, in part, will also be a reprint of material from the same forthcoming publication in Verge: Studies in Global Asias 9.1, 2023. Welch, Shannon. University of Minnesota Press, 2023, but from a different section of the paper. As stated above, the dissertation author was the primary author of this paper.

CHAPTER 4

Afro-Asian Coalitions Beyond Class Consciousness and Multicultural Myths

> "'What, you want work?' Daisuke roared in a loud voice to sound intimidating. Before him stood a man, seemingly a Bahiano given the black luster of his face, and a woman with a large pregnant belly, likely his wife, who shrugged their shoulders in response."[1]

As elaborated in Chapter 2, dominant historical accounts surrounding early twentieth-century Japanese immigrant settlements in Brazil foreground an image of rural remoteness. In addition to isolating the agrarian communities from the processes of urban modernization, the narrative construes Japanese insularity as also a separation from other non-Japanese races. While this depiction of detachment first supported Brazilian nativist claims in the 1920s and 30s that the Japanese were "unassimilable" and would "create fatal ethnic cysts"[2] in Brazilian society, it has been more recently reframed to attribute Japanese Brazilian social mobility to "Asian values" that were preserved through the early settlement's "high degree of linguistic and cultural autonomy."[3] Prewar Japanese Brazilian literature (known then as *shokumin* literature) often contributed to this representation of isolation as well. As Hosokawa Shūhei has surveyed in his two-volume series, *Nikkei Brazilian Immigrant Literature* (2012; 2013), most early works

[1] Shigeyuki Tanabe."Aru kaitakusha no shi," in Vol. 1 of *Koronia shōsetsu senshū*, ed. Koronia bungakukai (São Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975), 16.
[2] This quotation is from Dr. Arthur Neiva, a microbiologist at Sao Paulo's Health services, reprinted in Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity*, 93.
[3] Seth Jacobowitz, "A Bitter Brew: Coffee and Labor in Japanese Brazilin Immigrant Literature," *Estudos Japoneses* 41 (2019): 15.

featured only Nikkei characters, making it seem "as if a Japanese village was merely transplanted to another country."[4]

Yet as illustrated in the epigraph above, Japanese immigrant author Tanabe Shigeyuki[5] broke from this norm in his 1932 short story "A Certain Pioneer's Death" (*aru kaitakusha no shi* ある開拓者の死) with the immediate introduction of a Black Brazilian family onto the site of a Japanese landowner's plantation in Brazil. The story revolves around the antagonistic relationship that develops between this wealthy plantation owner, Kaneko Daisuke (金子大助), and the father of this family, referred to only as "the Baiano"—a name referring to his regional identity, yet implies his Black racial identity.[6] Daisuke's self-righteousness blinds him to showing compassion and mercy to the Black worker and his family, which ultimately becomes his downfall when the Baiano returns at the end of the story to seek his revenge and murder Daisuke.

Though Tanabe's narrative appears as an "anomaly" within early twentieth-century Japanese Brazilian literature, later generations of Japanese Brazilian writers—particularly in the era of neoliberalism and multiculturalism—have more frequently incorporated Black characters into their works. Notable among these texts is the Jabuti prize-winning novel, *Nihonjin* (2011) authored by *sansei* (third-generation Japanese) writer Oscar Nakasato. In contrast to the conflict depicted in "A Certain Pioneer's Death," Nakasato presents a picture of interracial friendship between a Japanese immigrant woman, Kimie, and an Afro-Brazilian woman, Maria, despite the

[4]Hosokawa Shūhei, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron]* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013), 36.

[5] Tanabe Shigeyuki used the penname: Nishioka Masao (西岡正雄). Ibid., 15.

[6] Baiano describes a person from the Northeast state of Bahia, which was a central location of the African slave trade until 1888. The region is associated with its high concentration of Afro-Brazilians and its African cultural influences.

disapproval of this relationship by Kimie's overbearing husband, Hideo. This segment appears in the first section of the novel, which overall traces Hideo's life from his arrival to Brazil until his death. With the attention given to Japanese Brazilian and Afro-Brazilian social relations in "A Certain Pioneer's Death" and *Nihonjin*, how might these Japanese Brazilian literary imaginations point us toward forgotten moments of Afro-Asian connections within the historical archive?

In this chapter, I bring together Tanabe's short story and Nakasato's novel to reflect critically on Afro-Asian relationality across generations of the Japanese diaspora in Brazil. I examine how the two texts bring into focus histories of slavery, settler colonialism, imperialism, immigration, and colonial racial capitalism that have brought Japanese and Afro-Brazilians into contact and the everyday ways in which these groups have negotiated their relationships to these systems and to one another. I compare moments of hostility and competition, friendship and care, indifference and uncertainty, and surface-level rapport within the stories to contemplate pitfalls and possibilities for building cross-racial alliances between the two groups as a way to work together towards decoloniality.

I situate this project within ongoing studies across disciplines and geopolitical settings that have explored links between African and Asian communities. Similar to questions I have been exploring throughout this dissertation through the transpacific framework of "Asia-Latin America," this scholarship critiques the discursive separations between "Asia" and "Africa" that reinforce modern/colonial divisions of the world. It recognizes the colonialist and orientalist logics behind these dominant discourses that have obscured how "Asia and Africa might have their own historical interrelationships, or that cultural and creative connections could exist

between peoples of Asian and African descent, or that knowledge could be produced from the supposed periphery."[7]

For example, this body of scholarship includes Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen's influential anthology *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans* (2008), which analyzes shared ties across histories, cultures, and political movements between Black and Asian American peoples in the United States. Luisa Marcela Ossa and Debbie Lee-DiStefano have edited a similar interdisciplinary collection, *Afro-Asian Connections in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2018), which extends the investigation of African and Asian diasporas beyond the U.S. Furthermore, transpacific studies scholars such as Nahum Dimitri Chandler,[8] Yuichiro Onishi,[9] and William Bridges[10] have written on historical, academic, and literary interconnections and cross-cultural mediations between Black, Japanese, and Okinawan peoples.

Specifically concerning the Japanese diasporic community in Brazil, literary scholars Zelideth María Rivas and Ignacio López-Calvo explore encounters, conflicts, and bonds between Japanese immigrants and Afro-Brazilians in Japanese Brazilian literature. In "Merging the Transpacific with the Transatlantic: Afro-Asia in Japanese Brazilian Narratives," Rivas presents a genealogy of Afro-Asian encounters that utilizes Japanese Brazilian literary texts to point to the gaps in the dominant historical archive that have obscured contacts between Japanese and Afro-Brazilians such as "intimate relations of laboring alongside each other, having sexual relations…,

[7] Lisa Yun, "Introduction: Dethroning the Epics of Empire," in *Afro-Asian Connections in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Luisa Marcela Ossa and Debbie Lee-DiStefano (Lexington Books, 2018), *xi*.
[8] See Nahum Dimitri Chandler, "Introduction: On the Virtues of Seeing—At Least, But Never Only—Double," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 12, no. 1 (2012): 1–39. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41949766.
[9] See Onishi Yuichiro, *Transpacific Antiracism : Afro-Asian Solidarity in Twentieth-Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).
[10] See William H. Bridges, *Playing in the Shadows : Fictions of Race and Blackness in Postwar Japanese Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020).

intermixing of languages, and, finally, addressing mixed-race children."[11] López-Calvo more critically approaches these links, warning of the instrumentalization of Black characters to tell a particular story of Japanese Brazilians. Specifically, he examines the problematics of the "Magical Negro" stock character across several Portuguese-language texts, which engage a "folkloric" stereotype of Black Brazilians that limits the role of these Black characters to that of a supportive and self-sacrificing ally of the Japanese protagonists.[12]

I build off the work of both Rivas and López-Calvo in this chapter by adding to the literary genealogy of Japanese Brazilian and Afro-Brazilian connections in a way that not only seeks to disrupt dominant historical narratives of Japanese insularity, but also considers the implications of Japanese Brazilian literary representations to current and future Afro-Asian relations. My methodology further draws from transpacific literary scholar William Bridges's theorization of a "reconstructive reading," which rather than only consider if Blackness is being represented "accurately" or "problematically" in the text, further engages in a reconstruction of Blackness that includes "the (stylistic, subjective, intellectual, historical, cultural, intertextual) roots and outgrowths of the writing."[13] This chapter engages in a reconstructive approach as it explores the multidirectional travels of "A Certain Pioneer's Death" and *Nihonjin* across space and time; it traces the historical roots of the texts' representations of Afro-Asian interactions to the long-standing forces and logics of colonial racial capitalism and then uses this critique to reflect on outgrowths of the stories that suggest possibilities for Afro-Asian solidarity and decolonial alliances.

---

[11]Zelideth María Rivas, "Merging the Transpacific with the Transatlantic: Afro-Asia in Japanese Brazilian Narratives,"in *Afro-Asian Connections in Latin America and the Caribbean,* ed. Luisa Marcela Ossa and Debbie Lee-DiStefano (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 97.
[12] Ignacio López-Calvo, "From Interethnic Alliances to the "Magical Negro": Afro-Asian Interactions in Asian Latin American Literature," *Humanities* 7, no. 4 (2018): 2.
[13] Bridges, *Playing in the Shadows*, 3.

The term "racial capitalism" was first used in 1976 by the South African Marxists Martin Legassick and David Hemson to criticize the liberal idea that the increased circulation of international capital would resolve South Africa's racial stratification under Apartheid and lead to a multiracial democracy under capitalism.[14] Legassick and Hemson, however, argued that without dismantling the capitalist system, the same social structures that construct racial disparity would remain in place and the racial status quo would go unchanged. Cedric Robinson, in his influential work, *Black Marxism: The Making of Black Radical Tradition*, outlines a more thorough theory of racial capitalism through tracing the history of capitalism in conjunction with European racial domination. In describing the concept, he writes:

> The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term 'racial capitalism' to refer to this development and to the subsequent structure as a historical agency."[15]

What becomes apparent from his critical insight is the co-constitution of capitalism and racialism, in which capitalist accumulation becomes possible through assigning different values to human lives based upon racial categories that, at the same time, are reinforced by capitalist relations. Furthermore, drawing from Ruth Wilson Gilmore's clarification of the "racial" in Robinson's racial capitalism to mean "cultural," "biological," "environmental," etc. differences that justify "unequal social relations, which can—but do not always or necessarily—correspond to skin color," scholars Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan

[14]Robin D. G. Kelley, "Foreword: Why *Black Marxism*? Why Now?," in *Black Marxism, Revised and Updated Third Edition: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Revised and Updated Third Edition, ed. Damien Sojoyner, Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Cedric J. Robinson (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021), xiv.

[15] Cedric J. Robinson, "Introduction," in *Black Marxism, Revised and Updated Third Edition: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition. Revised and Updated Third Edition*, ed. Damien Sojoyner, Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Cedric J. Robinson (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 2.

Jefferson have asserted that "Racial capitalism *is* colonial capitalism."[16] Their framework of "colonial racial capitalism" then allows for an analysis of capitalist injustices within particular contexts of racialization, which do not necessarily correspond to Black/White racial relations.

In Brazil, colonial racial capitalism cannot be divorced from the histories of settler colonialism and slavery that brought African persons in chains to the shores of South America. Even with the abolition of slavery in 1888, the capitalist system continued to rely on racial classifications that greatly shaped the socioeconomic opportunities of Africans and Afro-Brazilians.[17] Many freed slaves struggled to make ends meet as subsistence farmers and soon looked to return to their former masters for work, while others who migrated to Brazil's urban centers found few job prospects, hiring exclusion, or heavy competition with immigrant workers.[18]

Anti-Black racist ideologies persisted as well, which surfaced particularly in white elite discourses that called for Brazil to "whiten" its population through gradual miscegenation in order to emerge as a strong, modern nation.[19] As outlined in the introduction to this dissertation, the claim that the Japanese were an "honorary white" race helped convince Brazilian policymakers to allow thousands of Japanese people to immigrate to Brazil beginning in 1908. Though many Japanese laborers did confront exploitation while working on Brazilian plantations, in general, their relative favorability over Black Brazilians granted them a greater

[16] Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson, "Introduction," in *Colonial Racial Capitalism*, ed. Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022), 2; 7.
[17] Racial discrimination particularly manifested in wages, in which Afro-Brazilians, on average, made about 82 percent of a white worker's income. See Justin R. Bucciferro, "Racial Inequality in Brazil from Independence to the Present," in *Has Latin American Inequality Changed Direction?: Looking Over the Long Run* (Springer International Publishing, 2017), 181.
[18] Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992): 46-47.
[19] See Skidmore, *Black into White*, 64-69.

chance at achieving upward social mobility. Numerous Japanese immigrants, unlike many Afro-Brazilians, were able to become independent farm owners[20] or migrated to the city to start their own small business.[21]

This relative success paved the way for a large percentage of Japanese Brazilians moving up into the middle class.[22] Especially in the era of neoliberal capitalism, the socioeconomic divide between Japanese and Black Brazilians continued to grow, as many *Niseis* (second-generation Japanese immigrants) in the 1980s who spoke Portuguese were able to attend the University of São Paulo, which had free tuition and become lawyers, engineers, doctors, architects, and other skilled professionals.[23] In contrast, Black Brazilians have not enjoyed the same progression over time. Edward E. Telles's (2004) groundbreaking study of social mobility in Brazil differentiated by race found that the biggest factor conditioning upward mobility was urban migration that led to greater access to quality education.[24] Black and Brown Brazilians have continually been denied these opportunities and therefore, disproportionately compose Brazil's lowest socioeconomic class and its unskilled workforce.[25]

---

[20] Immigrants had the opportunity to become *colonos* (tenant farmers) who earned a fixed income for maintaining a certain level of crop cultivation. Afro-Brazilians, however, did not have access to the same subsidized immigration program, and received much lower pay. See Bucciferro, "Racial Inequality," 180.

[21] Japanese Brazilian families migrated primarily to São Paulo and open small businesses such as laundries, vegetable stands, mechanic shops, beauty salons, and photo studios. See Mieko Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018),29-30.

[22] By 1958, about 63 percent of Japanese Brazilians comprised the "old middle class" as self-employed business owners and about 20 percent comprised the "new middle class" in professional and technical fields as salaried employees. See Maeyama Takashi. *Ibunka sesshoku to aidentiti : Burajiru shakai to Nikkeijin*. Dai 1-han. (Tōkyō: Ochanomizu Shobō, 2001), 24-28.

[23] Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity*, 33.

[24] Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America : the Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2004), 156.

[25] For Black and Brown sons whose fathers worked in unskilled urban occupations, 43 percent stayed in this occupational tier compared to 23 percent of white sons. The number was even greater for women of color, 86 percent compared to 72 percent of White daughters. For non-white men whose fathers worked in agriculture, only 4 percent were able to move to the highest tier of skilled professions and an additional 4 percent to the second highest skilled group. With regard to wages, Telles reported the average monthly income of Brown and Black men in Brazil to be 40 to 50 percent of the income of White males. See Ibid., 142.

I analyze Tanabe's short story and Nakasato's novel within this sociohistorical context of colonial racial capitalism in Brazil to reflect on Afro-Asian relationality—the potential pitfalls of silencing or other intra-group harm, as well as possibilities for interracial solidarity and decolonial coalitions. Looking at the picture of hostility depicted between Daisuke and the Baiano worker in "A Certain Pioneer's Death" and the friendship delineated between Kimie and Maria in *Nihonjin*, the dissemblance between the two imaginations of Afro-Asian relations can be readily discerned. Yet I argue that both texts ultimately fall back on stereotypes of Black Brazilians that enable the Japanese diasporic community to work out its own collective identity and negotiate a space for itself within the Brazilian nation. "A Certain Pioneer's Death" promotes communal solidarity around a working-class consciousness, yet does so through depicting a capitalist's downfall at the hands of an Afro-Brazilian who exemplifies the trope of Black aggression. *Nihonjin*, on the other hand, pushes for a recognition of Japanese Brazilians as part of Brazil's multicultural national community by illustrating Kimie's friendship with a woman who can clearly be understood as "Black" because of her fulfillment of racial stereotypes tied to folk wisdom and abnegation. Both works, in other words, strategically position the Black character vis-à-vis the Japanese protagonist to relay a desired imagination of the Japanese diasporic community important to its particular generational moment—a community that frees itself of exploitation and class inequalities in the case of "A Certain Pioneer's Death" and a community that belongs to the fabric of the multicultural nation of Brazil in the case of *Nihonjin*.

While there is a shift from a prewar emphasis on class to a postwar focus on race, I claim that both identities comply with the inequitable social structure produced by colonial racial capitalism by only considering justice as a matter of overcoming either racial discrimination or capitalist exploitation. With this critique in mind, I then open up an examination of cross-racial

alliances in a way that is historical, critical, generative, imaginative, and cautious. I utilize the lessons learned from the literary texts to reflect on ways in which Japanese Brazilians and Afro-Brazilians have engaged and might engage in more ethical relations with one another. Transforming the roots of Afro-Asian relationality from colonial racial capitalism to solidarity, I argue, initiates potential coalitional outgrowths toward futures of decolonial liberation.

The Racialized Particularities of Class in "A Certain Pioneer's Death"

Tanabe Shigeyuki composed "A Certain Pioneer's Death" under the pen name, Nishioka Masao, four years after he immigrated to Brazil in 1928. Though it was his first attempt at writing fiction, the story received second place in the *Burajiru Jihōsha* newspaper's first *shokumin* (colonial) literature short story award, after Sonobe Takeo's "The Age of Agricultural Gambling" discussed in chapter two. When the story was published, Tanabe claimed that he only had an elementary school education and had hardly ever picked up a pen prior to writing the prize-winning story.[26] However, in reality, Tanabe graduated from Hokkaido Technical College (北海道高等専門学校 *Hokkaido koutou senmon gakko*) with a degree in agriculture before immigrating to Brazil. As Hosokawa Shūhei explains, Tanabe's disguise of his elite identity demonstrates a trend within *shokumin* literature; writers often made a "downward revision" (下方修正 *kahōshūsei*) to their academic background to align their work better with the masses.[27] As we will see in the analysis of the story itself, Tanabe continues to appeal to his readership through the themes of the narrative that spotlight the working-class experience of Japanese

[26] *Koronia shōsetsu senshū*, ed. Koronia bungakukai (Sao Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975), 15.
[27] Hosokawa Shūhei, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1: nihongo no nagai tabi[rekishi]* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2012), 34.

farmworkers in Brazil. While many works of *shokumin* literature in the early twentieth century similarly dealt with class dynamics, Tanabe's story stands out—as mentioned above—because of its introduction of a non-Nikkei character: the Black Baiano. The inclusion of this character pinpoints the story's setting in Brazil, so as to open up the question of racial difference and its significance to the formation of a Japanese diasporic identity.

When the Baiano man appears in the third line of the story along with his pregnant wife and their child, the divergence between Daisuke and the Black family already is apparent. The narrator's description not only highlights the big physical builds of the family members in contradistinction to Daisuke's small frame, but also makes use of a racist trope that correlates the son's facial features to a monkey.[28] With this dehumanizing detail, the narrator creates separation between the boy and the Japanese plantation owner with the suggestion of the Afro-Brazilian's animalistic qualities that make him appear "savage." His underlying violent nature is further hinted at in the representation of the boy's eyes as "nearly all white" in stark opposition to the black luster of his skin. The Japanese word for "the white of the eye," "白眼 *shirome*"[29] may also translate to "cold, unwelcoming eyes," so that its use here to sketch the boy's expression as he looks Daisuke up and down adds an additional sense of his hostility toward the Japanese man. Yet Daisuke, at this moment, contrasts the child's animosity by offering his father work on the plantation.

Within this initial sequence, the reader is introduced to a contrast between two racial groups. The identities of each are worked out through the binary opposition, in which the conceptualization of "Japaneseness" becomes possible when it is defined against "Blackness."

[28] Tanabe, "Arai kaitakusha no shi," 16.
[29] Ibid., 16.

Daisuke shines as the civilized and successful pioneer, while the Baiano family crouches in a shadow of "otherness" and "backwardness." The racial encounter, accordingly, serves as an important opportunity for the audience to explore the ethics of Daisuke's actions as a pioneer. To put it another way, because this interaction is specific to the situation in Brazil, it opens up a consideration of the roles that Japanese immigrants should take on and how they should behave in their new country.

What the reader then encounters is a critique of the capitalist system and the way a pioneer overlooks the unequal opportunities it produces due to his strong conviction in the idea that anyone can climb the social ladder. The narrative portrays Daisuke as so engulfed in his own self-righteousness that he neglects to show mercy toward those at a greater social disadvantage than him. Despite having initially met the Black family with openness, Daisuke quickly reverses his attitude toward them when he finds the Baiano father giving the workers' alimentary provisions to his wife and son. When the Black man tries to explain his desperate situation to Daisuke and asks him to spare some food, Daisuke responds, "The rule is set in stone that folks who don't work are not permitted to eat the provided meal."[30] In this moment, Daisuke adheres to his strict moral code, which upholds the principles of diligence and self-sufficiency and refuses to accommodate for the Baiano family's urgent needs.

The values Daisuke stands by are reflected in his telling of his own life journey as well. He shares this story one night with his employees over a few rounds of drinks at the end of the workday. In this tale, he paints himself as a pioneer, who, as the third son of a poor farming family in Hokkaido, came from nothing; yet through his own hard work and determination, he achieved success and became one of the wealthiest plantation owners in the Japanese "K" colony

[30] Ibid., 17.

in the northwest region of the state of São Paulo. He tells his workers, "Human beings are made for hard work. If you just stand firmly and don't give up, even worthless people like me can succeed."[31] His message emphasizes that anyone, regardless of their station in life, has the capability of succeeding if they put in the effort.

Daisuke's code of ethics resonates with an ideology that emerged during the Meiji era in Japan, which can best be summarized by the slogan "立身出世 *risshin shusse*" or "rising in the world." As Carol Gluck[32] explicates, the ideology departed from an earlier emphasis on communal and familial cooperation and instead spoke to individual striving reflective of social Darwinism.[33] Education, in particular, took on a greater significance as an institution that could engender upward social mobility and reform the feudalistic hierarchies of the recently abolished Tokugawa class system.

However, underlying "*risshin shusse*" was a reality of contradictions in which social hierarchies continued to define one's prospects in life. In Meiji Japan, these contradictions appeared in the disparities between the urban elite and the rural poor, which widened as wealthier rural landowners started to send their second and third sons (non-inheritors) to the city to be educated in a better school system among the middle and upper classes.[34] Hence, the dream

---

[31] Ibid., 23.
[32] Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period. Vol. 1* (Princeton University Press, 2021), 206.
[33] Darwin's theory of natural selection was first introduced to Japan in the late 1870s through an American zoologist working for the Japanese government, Edward Sylvester, yet its application to human society and Herbert Spencer's "survival of the fittest" gained more traction amongst the Japanese public. Known in Japanese as "生存競争 seizon kyōsō" (struggle for existence), the idea of competition within a civilization rather than between nations began to embed itself in Meiji policies and individuals' mindsets. See Urs Matthias Zachmann, "Race without Supremacy: On Racism in the Political Discourse of Late Meiji Japan, 1890-1912," in *Racism in the Modern World: Historical Perspectives on Cultural Transfer and Adaptation*, ed. Manfred Berg and Simon Wendt, Brooklyn: Berghahn Books Inc., 2014, 257.
[34] Louise Young, *Beyond the Metropolis: Second Cities and Modern Life in Interwar Japan*, University of California Press, 2013.

of "rising in the world" did become a possibility for some, but more for those with the economic means to pursue urban migration. Along a similar vein, second and third sons were often sent to Japan's outer territories (外地 *gaichi*) to gain wealth through their own efforts outside the primogeniture system of inheritance.

The narrative of "A Certain Pioneer's Death" touches on these contradictions tied to class privilege and consequently, casts doubt on the meritocratic belief in "striving and success." As the third son of a former samurai family, Daisuke exemplifies the societal trend as a non-inheritor who seeks his fortune abroad in the external reaches of the Japanese empire. When he narrates his path from Hokkaido to Tokyo to Manchuria to South America, he especially demonstrates a level of privilege and mobility that the majority of Japanese immigrants did not enjoy. Moreover, Daisuke's social advantages surface when he describes the process through which he became a plantation owner in Brazil. Although he knew nothing about the region or its prospects for farming, Daisuke purchased a plot of land anyway from a friend he knew from his time in Hokkaido.[35] The presence of both men in Brazil is not actually a coincidence if we consider the history of Japanese expansionists. Eiichiro Azuma describes an elite faction of transmigrants who moved across the transpacific—between the Americas, Taiwan, Manchuria, etc.—in search of "frontiers" for Japanese imperial expansion.[36] As private or state-sponsored migration agents, they developed imperial networks that allowed them to navigate these spaces with relative ease and enjoy recognition as self-styled trailblazers of Japan's overseas communities. Daisuke fits with the account of this elite group since his social connections with other migration leaders facilitates his success as a plantation owner.

[35] Tanabe, "Aru kaitakusha no shi," 20.
[36] Eichiro Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 2-3.

Daisuke's conviction in the idea of "rising in the world" as a possibility for all is also what allows him to claim that he did not show racism toward he Baiano worker and frame his personal narrative as "a story without discrimination toward anyone."[37] According to Daisuke's logic, race does not play a role in how he judges other people; all that matters to him is the work they put in to help themselves. Again, such a notion crosses over with the ideology of "*risshin shusse,*" as it emphasized overcoming class-based inequalities through education. Japanese state officials denied race as "a deterministic biological barrier against certain achievements" and argued that any discrepancies between Japan and the West could be overcome through a dedication to one's studies.[38] Education, too, held significance when Japanese immigrants began to confront discrimination abroad. Describing how anti-Japanese sentiments in the U.S. were interpreted by Japanese state officials, Andrea Geiger writes:

> Embedded in the remarks of Meiji diplomats and other Japanese leaders was the persistent notion that those who were the object of prejudice were themselves primarily responsible for it. Partly an extension of traditional class attitudes towards what were historically Japan's lower classes, and partly a consequence of accepting culture as the model of 'civilization,' Meiji officials criticized not white racism but rather, the appearance and behavior of Japanese emigrants, which they claimed gave rise to that prejudice.[39]

Similar arguments were championed by migration policymakers when concerns arose over Japanese exclusion in the U.S. and the potential for the same course to follow in Brazil. They, therefore, implemented pre-departure education and moral reform to help the "lower class"

[37] Tanabe, "Aru kaitakusha no shi,"19.
[38] The report written after the Iwakura mission to the U.S. from 1871 to 1873 claimed that although the peoples of East Asia and the West had different temperaments, this did not mean that one race was superior to the other since both demonstrated the capability to construct an advanced civilization. One 1874 textbook utilized within the Japanese nationalist education system exhibited this idea as it spoke of learning as what separated intelligent and simpleminded human beings. Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 10.
[39] Andrea Geiger, *Subverting Exclusion: Transpacific Encounters with Race, Case, and Border, 1885-1928* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 39.

Japanese immigrants to acquire the "civilized" practices they would need to make a good impression on Brazilian society.[40]

Though Daisuke claims to align himself with this malleable understanding of race and to exercise "colorblindness" in his judgement of others, he contradicts himself in another passage when he demonstrates racial essentialist thinking. In this part of the story, Daisuke shares a memory of an altercation he had with an Italian worker who tried to stab him with a knife. He then generalizes all European immigrants as aggressive and confrontational in nature, and adds that Baiano men make the best farmworkers. Although they may be dangerous as well, Daisuke says that Baianos "are perfect for cheating and taking advantage of."[41] Italian and Japanese laborers, on the other hand, are too logical and, therefore, not easily deceived.

While a contemporary audience may find his comments to be animated by racist logic, Hosokawa Shūhei sheds light on how *shokumin* readers in 1932 would likely have interpreted this passage differently. As Hosokawa explains, the Japanese diasporic community concerned themselves more with issues of class than of race, particularly demonstrated by the prominence of proletarian literature amongst the prewar generation of Japanese immigrants in Brazil. Additionally, due to the prevalence and general acceptance of theories of scientific racism at the time in both Japan and Brazil, most readers would not have questioned the stereotypical distinctions Daisuke makes between racialized groups. Instead, what appears problematic to them is Daisuke's willingness to exploit people in order to gain economic benefits for himself. Because many Japanese immigrants moved to Brazil with the same dream as Daisuke—to make money abroad and return to Japan wearing a brocade— "A Certain Pioneer's Death" encourages its *shokumin* audience to reconsider their values and the communal relations they will form with

[40] See Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*, 130-135.
[41] Tanabe, "Aru kaitakusha no shi," 25.

one another now that they are living in another country. As an immigrant who rises to become a capitalist, Daisuke provides a cautionary tale about the dangers of greed and self-righteousness that ultimately lead to his murder.[42]

In this way, the critique encourages the diasporic community to rally around a shared class consciousness rooted in their experiences as working-class, agricultural laborers. The story even hints at the possibility for this proletariat identity to extend across racial lines. We see this, for example, when the Japanese immigrant farmworkers react with sympathy to the way Daisuke scolds the Baiano man and calls his wife a beggar. In describing this scene, the narrator comments:

> But the ones at a disadvantage were the farmworkers. Even having reached a state of fury at that moment, the Black man, too, could only hang his head or clench his fists in front of their boss.[43]

Despite the fact that the Japanese laborers take the side of the Baiano family, they find themselves powerless within the capitalist hierarchy. The word "too" marks the Black man as an added member of the group of farmworkers, including him within their disadvantaged situation. The moment seemingly confirms the earlier assumption by Japanese diasporic readers that there is not a problem of racial difference in the text.

Yet rearticulating an interpretation of the text from a contemporary vantage point, the Afro-Asian relationships represented in the story may be reread in connection to racialization to critique the erasure of racial identities in the formation of a class-based coalition. Turning to Black Radical tradition and Cedric Robinson's theory of racial capitalism in *Black Marxism*, we may gain an awareness of the particularly racialized directions that the development of capitalist

[42] Hosokawa, *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1*, 35.
[43] Tanabe, "Arukaitakusha no shi," 17.

societies took, along which Marx and Engels also constructed their theories of class relations.[44] As Robinson traces the sociohistorical conditions that gave rise to class consciousness in England, he argues that the working-class experience cannot be conceptualized as "universal." To this point, he writes:

> The dialectic of proletarianization disciplined the working classes to the importance of distinctions: between ethnics and nationalities; between skilled and unskilled workers; and as we shall see later in even more dramatic terms, between races.[45]

His discussion discloses the racialized divisions within the proletariat that condition racial capitalism's continued process of accumulation, which analyses of colonial racial capitalism remind us has been as *ongoing* process since the emergence of colonialism. Not only does this theorization bring us to reflect on asymmetries between the so-called "universal" Eurocentric proletariat and the Brazilian working-class, but also reminds us of the racial differentiations within the working-class specific to Brazil.

Considering the historical inequalities between Japanese Brazilians and Afro-Brazilians, we then may revisit the "inclusion" of the Baiano worker within the group of Japanese farmworkers. As he, "too," feels powerless to the capitalist Daisuke, the Black employee becomes an additive, a supplement that enriches the Japanese working-class's understanding of itself. The move merely lumps the Baiano worker's individual circumstances into the group's identity, glossing over his disparate experience as a Black man in Brazil. The occlusion of racial difference in the proletariat identity erases with it the history and legacy of slavery in Brazil that the nation's capitalist system was built upon. It dangerously conflates the positionalities of Japanese immigrant and Black workers without attending to the intersections of class and race that continue to disadvantage Afro-Brazilians to a greater degree than Asian-Brazilians.

---

[44] Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 2.
[45] Ibid., 42.

Moreover, the criticism of "striving and success" that the story insinuates overlooks the particularly racialized dimensions of this ideology. When Daisuke mentions his migration to Hokkaido, Manchuria, and South America, he spells out links within Japan's imperial network that was built upon racist logic. All three places were regarded as "frontiers" of the Japanese empire, open to fortune-seekers who simultaneously acted as agents of Japanese expansionism. The imagination of these lands as open to colonization worked through a depiction of the native peoples of these regions as "backward"[46] and in need of development assistance from the "superior" Japan—a nation Japanese imperialist discourses claimed was the only Asian race to reach a level of civilization competitive with "the West." The proclaimed status of being an "honorary" white race on the international stage then served as a rationale for Japanese colonization and migration-led settler colonialism in Asia, the Pacific, and Latin America.[47]

As contemporary readers equipped with the analytical insights of Black Radicalism, we may critique the story's overfocus on class equality that misses the reciprocal relationship between race and class that (re)produces social injustices under colonial racial capitalism. Even as the Japanese workers show sympathy toward the Baiano family, we can point to a significant distinction between sympathy and solidarity. Practicing interracial solidarity requires empathy

[46] First in Hokkaido, the Ainu people were depicted in Japanese social scientific discourse as an "uncivilized" population that was slowly declining. With the prominence of social Darwinist thought, Japanese officials and ideologues utilized the waning population as evidence of the Ainu's inferiority that then gave the increasing Japanese population rationale for bringing its superior civilization to the region. See Sidney Xu Lu, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 49-50. Japanese migration officials further disguised imperial expansionism in Brazil and Manchuria as a benevolent practice of overseas development assistance that evidenced the Japanese commitment to "coexistence and coprosperity." However, in Manchuria, the presumption of racial harmony conflicted with Japanese imperialist discourses purporting the Japanese race as most fit to be the leader of Asia's peoples, especially compared to the "old" and "inferior" Chinese race. Similarly in Brazil, as Azuma cites, migration officials such as Fukuhara Hachirō embraced social Darwinism and viewed "Latinos as irrational, nepotistic, and 'ineffectual' and Black people in both North and South America as innately inferior." See Endoh, *Exporting Japan*, 191-192. Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*, 18-19; 146. Eiichiro Azuma, "'Pioneers of Overseas Japanese Development': Japanese American History and the Making of Expansionist Orthodoxy in Imperial Japan," *The Journal of Asian studies* 67, no. 4 (2008): 1192.

[47] Koshiro, "Trans-Pacific Racisms," 10-12.

rather than sympathy and a willingness to put another's needs before one's own. It requires listening to the different needs of others, especially to those most vulnerable to intersecting systems of oppression. The story shows the Japanese working-class attempting to connect with the Black laborer only by erasing his racial difference, which ultimately silences his voice.

Not to mention, "A Certain Pioneer's Death" concludes with a suggestion of persisting racial divisions within the working class that stand in tension with the earlier vision of unity. Daisuke's murder at the hands of the Baiano man reaffirms stereotyped representations of Blackness as inherently aggressive and dangerous. The text makes use of these tropes to bring about Daisuke's downfall in a way that keeps the act of violence outside the Japanese diasporic community. It, therefore, permits the Japanese immigrant audience to learn from Daisuke's wrongdoings to reflect on their own behavior without encouraging them to solve class inequalities through more violent means. They undergo a kind of moral progression that demonstrates a "rational" way of reforming their community in comparison to the Baiano man's "emotionally" revengeful solution. The reinscription of Black aggression, in this way, reinforces a divide between the two racialized groups as the Japanese diasporic readership moves forward through their enlightenment and Afro-Brazilians remain stagnant as silenced stereotypes within narrative closure.

An Outgrowth as an Interlude

While we can identify the ways in which "A Certain Pioneer's Death" falls short in communicating a genuine picture of solidarity between Japanese and Black Brazilians, the work's influence on cross-racial alliances does not necessarily end with the text itself. Turning to Bridges's conceptualization of a "reconstructive" reading, we may approach Blackness, as he

encourages, in all of its fullness— "Afro-Japanese intertextuality, Japanese experimentation with Black literary techniques and tropes, Japanese translations and receptions of Black stories, Japanese literati's encounters with Black thought, culture, history, people, and politics."[48] These kinds of outgrowths from reading literature allow us to recognize and imagine how critical interactions with the texts can inspire more ethical forms of relationality rooted in practices of solidarity across difference.

One such moment unfolded when Japanese Brazilian anthropologist and leader of the *Koronia Bungakkai* (Association of *koronia* Literature) in the 1970s, Maeyama Takashi, read "A Certain Pioneer's Death" years after its publication. In his 2001 book *Cross-Cultural Contact and Identity: Brazilian Society and Nikkei Persons* (異文化接触とアイデンティティ：ブラジル社会と日系人 *Ibunka sesshoku to aidentiti: Burajiru shakai*), he critiques the story's lack of political depth and failure to enact a mode for building Japanese racial consciousness. He locates the text within a tradition of early Japanese Brazilian literature, which tended to follow one of two paths: 1) a representation of universal humanity that vacuates the text of its political specificity; or 2) an overfocus on the individual's actions and motivations that disconnects him or her from larger social issues.[49] He refers to these works as "decolored" (脱色 *dasshoku*) literature to connote a kind of "white washing" in which the specificity of one's racialized experiences is sacrificed in the attempt to speak to a "universal humanism."[50] He then compares the Japanese Brazilian literary texts to early African American literature in the U.S., which he

[48] Bridges, *Playing in the Shadows*, 14.
[49] Maeyama Takashi, *Bungaku no kokoro de jinruigaku wo ikiru: nanboku amerika seikatsu kara kikoku made jūkyū nen* (Tokyo: Ocha no Mizushobō, 2010), 244.
[50] Ibid., 244.

believed shifted away from an appeal to "universalism" to a strong racial consciousness during the Harlem Renaissance. He argues for Japanese Brazilian authors to develop similar political themes in their writing by touching on their particular racialized experiences as a minority group in Brazil.

This moment in his book brings to light Maeyama's own investment in learning from the African diasporic community about the development of racial consciousness. In the mid-1960s as a graduate student, he spent a lot of time in different Afro-Brazilian communities and studied African culture and religion.[51] He then left Brazil for a year in 1968 to conduct research at the University of Texas, where he began to engage more with the works of Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and other African American writers, in addition to observing daily life in the U.S. South to try to make sense of how Black Americans developed their collective identity.[52] He believed that their solidarity arose from their common lived experiences as a minority group within mainstream white society. Since Japanese Brazilians experienced a similar form of racialized marginalization in Brazil, Maeyama argued that there was potential for them to develop a similar localized identity rooted in their post-migratory experiences.

His work illuminates moments of cultural and intellectual exchange between the Japanese and Black diasporas that generate new understandings of race, especially the racial identity of the Japanese Brazilian community. However, unlike the way the Japanese immigrant community works out its identity in opposition to Black stereotypes in Tanabe's text, Maeyama demonstrates a practice of listening to and learning from Black examples. In other words, he does not speak

[51] Ibid., 124-182.

[52] Compared to the intermixing of races in public spaces in Brazil, Maeyama found segregation in these parts of the U.S. to be "Kafkaesque" to the extent that he witnessed white and Black folks separated from one another. However, at the same time, he thought that the idea of "racial mixing" in Brazil hindered the development of racial consciousness and the kind of solidarity he admired amongst African Americans that served as a basis for their collective movements against racism. See Ibid., 36-37.

for the Black community, but rather allows Black voices to maintain their autonomy and shape his ways of seeing the world. The process of cross-racial sharing opens up new avenues of thinking—particularly about racial consciousness— and displays just one of the many possibilities of social change enabled by an Afro-Asian alliance.

Multiculturalism and *Mestiçagem* in *Nihonjin*

In post-war Japanese Brazilian literature—mainly from the *koronia* literature period to the present—interracial friendships between Japanese and Afro-Brazilian characters are not uncommon. These relationships appear in both Japanese and Portuguese-language texts, which oftentimes help to challenge dominant representations of the Japanese diaspora as an isolated "colony" disconnected from other racialized groups in Brazil.[53] Other works attempt to evoke sympathy in the Japanese Brazilian readership by calling attention to the common struggles of Japanese and Black Brazilians with economic and racial oppression.[54] Yet despite the message of interracial harmony, many of these literary texts depict Afro-Asian alliances in problematic ways—conflating slavery with contracted plantation labor, employing harmful stereotypes of Black Brazilians, and reinforcing the myth of "racial democracy" that upholds white racial hegemony in Brazil. The novel *Nihonjin*, which I will examine in this section exemplifies these tensions between possibilities for cross-racial coalitions and the problematic representations of "Blackness" that undermine the collaborative potential of these alliances.

[53] On the Japanese-language side, some examples are Onodera Ikuko's "Uruwashiki gogtsu ni" (1997) and Endō Isamu's "Kuroi mago" (1980). On the Portuguese-language side, these texts include Júlio Miyazawa's *Yawara! A Travessia Nihondin-Brasil* (Yawara! Crossing Nihondin-Brazil, 2006), Ryoki Inoue's *Saga: A História de Quatro Gerações de uma Família Japonesa no Brasil* (Saga: The History of Four Generations of a Japanese Family in Brazil, 2006) and Ricardo Giassetti and Bruno D'Angelo's graphic novel, *Um Neto de Escravos, um Imigrante Japonês; Duas Histórias com um Mesmo Final: O Futuro de Brasil* (A Son of Slaves and a Japanese Immigrant; Two Stories with the Same Ending: The Future of Brazil, 2008).

[54] Some examples include Júlio Miyazawa's *Uma Rosa para Yumi* (A Rose for Yumi, 2013) and Onodera Ikuko's "*Uruwashiki gogatsu ni*" (A Splendid Day in May, 2004).

The relationship fraught with contradictions that I will unpack is between the narrator's Issei grandmother, Kimie, and her Afro-Brazilian neighbor, Maria. The two women meet soon after Kimie moves into her new home in Ouro Verde and Maria comes over to welcome her to the neighborhood. Kimie, who does not yet understand Maria's Portuguese, is frightened and slams the door in her face. Yet after seeing Maria acting affectionately with her husband and kindly with her children, Kimie regrets her initial reaction. She then brings a large cabbage to Maria and tries to apologize in her best Portuguese. The narrator bestows particular commendation to the friendship that blossoms from this moment onward, especially since it defies the racial intolerance and the patriarchal control of Hideo, Kimie's husband. Hideo orders Kimie to maintain her distance from "those people"—Black Brazilians who are "inferior" people and hate others who are not like them.[55] However, Maria refuses to let Hideo's intolerance prevent her from providing Kimie with medical care, which ultimately saves her life when her new friend falls seriously ill.

When the narrator describes the bond formed between Kimie and Maria, he remarks, "And the two, a Japanese woman and a Black woman, became friends."[56] He refers to each character by their racial affiliation to accentuate that their friendship is indeed interracial. To put it differently, he paints an image of racial harmony in Brazil that celebrates the plurality of races, ethnicities, and cultures that coexist within the national space. The picture calls to mind a cornerstone of Brazil's national narrative that was also discussed in chapter two: *mestiçagem* or "racial mixture."

This reverence of Brazil's racial harmony does not seem surprising when we look at the author of *Nihonjin,* Oscar Nakasato, and his inspiration for writing the novel. In an interview

[55]Oscar Nakasato, *Nihonjin* (São Paulo: Benvirá, 2002), 24.
[56] Ibid., 27.

with Cecily Raynor, Nakasato discloses his desire to create "characters that would break away from Japanese cultural traditions" through practices like miscegenation.[57] He explains how his own marriage to a woman who is not *Nikkei* brought him to explore this theme in his novel. We see the motif of *mestiçagem* surface both through the Kimie's intimate, cross-racial encounter with Maria and later through a Nisei character, Sumie, and her relationship with a white Brazilian man. Moreover, in an interview with Osvaldo Duarte, Nakasato describes his doctoral research that further influenced his writing of *Nihonjin*. In his studies of Brazilian literature, he felt bothered by the lack of representation of Japanese and Nikkei characters, especially since he noticed that other ethnic groups like Italians received attention in various national works. He then felt motivated to write a novel that would help himself and other Japanese Brazilians understand the complex duality of their identities as Brazilians of Japanese descent. *Nihonjin*, he describes, depicts *Nikkeijin* (people of Japanese descent) in Brazil as Brazilian, but with a pride having Japanese ancestry.[58]

As we read in his interview and witness within the text of *Nihonjin* itself, Nakasato engages with *mestiçagem* to give Japanese Brazilians a sense of belonging to Brazil and claim a space for them within the national imaginary. Since Japanese immigrants have not always been considered as part of Brazil's racial mixture between European (Portuguese), African, and Indigenous peoples,[59] the novel suggests a progression forward through which Japanese

[57]Cecily Raynor, "Reflections on Japanese-Brazilian Immigration through Narrative: An Interview with Oscar Nakasato," *Journal of Lusophone Studies* 2, no. 1 (2017): 204.
[58]Osvaldo Duarte, "Entrevista: Oscar Nakasato: Autor de Nihonjin (Romance) e Imagens da Integração e da dualidade-Personagens Nipo-Brasileiros na Ficção," *Polifonia, Cuiabá, MT* 21, n. 30 (2014):299.
[59] As previously introduced in chapter two, the idea of a harmonious blending between European (Portuguese), African, and Indigenous peoples in Brazil appeared before Gilberto Freyre's *The Masters and the Slaves* (1933), but his text has certainly had a significant impact on the theory's popularization amongst the Brazilian public. His 1945 book, *The New World in the Tropics*, gives more attention to Asians, particularly Japanese people, who he argues also mix into Brazil's multiracial society. In both works, miscegenation centers on Portuguese male actors whose sexual potency fostered relationships with African and Indigenous women and led to the development of Brazil's advanced "hybrid" civilization. See Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of*

Brazilians have achieved national inclusion. However, within the context of Asian American studies in the U.S., scholars such as Kandice Chuh and Lisa Lowe have critiqued similar narratives of Asian/American linear advancement that reinforce dominant conceptualizations of a "universal" (U.S. and European) liberal subject. For Chuh, the account homogenizes Asian Americans in their difference from white hegemony in the U.S. and emphasizes their past exclusion to render ongoing practices of racialization irrelevant to the "liberatory" and "multicultural" present. Moreover, Lisa Lowe exposes that what makes possible a narrative of liberal subjecthood are "the coeval conditions of settler dispossession, slavery, and indentureship" that define the boundaries of freedom.[60] Yet through an economy of affirmation and forgetting, the story that has lasted is one that privileges a picture of multiracial equality and occludes its violent structural foundations.

Jodi Melamed further helps us to locate the structural roots of the multicultural turn within the development of racial capitalism in the neoliberal capitalist era. She points to the need to "recognize that contemporary racial capitalism deploys liberal and multicultural terms of inclusion to value and devalue forms of humanity differentially to fit the needs of reigning state-capital orders."[61] She reads Ruth Wilson Gilmore's idea of racial capitalism as "a technology of *antirelationality*"[62] that in the moment of neoliberal capitalism makes distinctions between groups of human beings, while simultaneously, creating strategic connections between certain groups when such links support capitalist interests. Knowing the history of the Asian/ Asian-Brazilian economic rise in the 1980s and 1990s, we can then interpret the acceptance of Japanese

Brazilian Civilization, 2nd English language ed., rev. (New York: Knopf, 1956). Gilberto, Freyre, *New World in the Tropics : The Culture of Modern Brazil*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 1959).
[60] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 37-39.
[61] Jodi Melamed, "Racial Capitalism," *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no.1 (2015): 77.
[62] Ibid., 78.

Brazilians into the Brazilian national imaginary as one such link forged to further the Brazilian state's process of capitalist accumulation. We can also draw from Melamed's insight in our analysis of *Nihonjin* to unpack how despite illustrating an interracial friendship, the novel ultimately reinforces divisions between Japanese and Afro-Brazilians by zooming in on only a politics of cultural identity that glosses over the colonial racial capitalist structure that engenders inequality.

The distance between the two women especially plays out in the way each is represented in the text. When the narrator first sketches Maria, he utilizes stereotypical imagery to identify her as Black, so that the reader clearly recognizes Kimie's friendship with her as interracial. He describes her as "a Black woman who recited prayers, made teas, and cured illnesses."[63] The description characterizes Maria according to her religious healing practices, reducing the complexity of her personhood to her embodiment of collective group traditions that identity her as "authentically" Afro-Brazilian. We later learn more about her as a farmworker, mother, wife, and friend, but the generalized introduction insinuates that her spiritual practices are the cornerstone of her character. Even when Maria herself describes her praxis to Hideo, she repeats the same generalizations, saying: "God gave me the opportunity to learn to pray and make teas in order to help those who need prayers and teas."[64] The religious practices themselves receive little elaboration because they matter less to the narrative than Maria's identity as a Black woman.

Ignacio López-Calvo, in his extensive work on Japanese Brazilian cultural production, reads Nakasato's depiction of Maria as part of a larger trend in Japanese Brazilian literature that

[63] Nakasato, *Nihonjin*, 10.
[64] Ibid, 30.

makes use of the "Magical Negro" stock character.[65] The "Magical Negro"[66] serves as a racist archetype that portrays Black characters with some form of supernatural powers or "folk wisdom" that help the white protagonists to overcome their dilemmas, especially in ways that make these white characters into more morally competent and cultured individuals. The Black characters, on the other hand, appear in one-dimensional, supporting roles and their magic only seems to assist the white characters, not themselves. Thus, as López-Calvo argues, the limitation to the depth of Afro-Brazilian characters ultimately undermines the liberatory potential of the Afro-Asian alliance pictured in the Japanese Brazilian texts since the "African characters do not display their full autonomy or agency."[67]

Nihonjin feeds into this representational violence by drawing from the traits of Black caricatures to define Maria's personage. Beyond her prayers and teas that save Kimie's life, resembling the function of the "Magical Negro," Maria fulfills a purpose in the narrative to help reform Kimie's assumptions about Afro-Brazilians. It is through Kimie's interactions and

---

[65] López-Calvo, "From Interethnic Alliances to the 'Magical Negro,'"8.

[66] Various scholars have noted the "Magical Negro" stock character's prevalence in Hollywood, but the trope has also had numerous appearances within Brazilian cultural products. Robert Stam commenting on Brazilian cinema and Joel Zito Araújo remarking on Brazilian telenovelas (TV soap operas) identify how these different texts frequently caricature African diasporic religions and depict Black cultural practices as "folkloric" and "superstitious." See See Robert Stam, *Tropical Multiculturalism : A Comparative History of Race in Brazilian Cinema and Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 206-207. and Joel Zito Almeida de Araújo, *A Negaçã do Brasil: o Negro na Telenovela Brasileira* (São Paulo: Editora SENAC, 2000), 71.
Moreover, João Carlos Rodrigues lists a number of archetypes and/ or caricatures of Black characters in Brazilian cinema that he claims reduces the complexity of Afro-Brazilian individuals to one-dimensional stereotypes. Although the characterizations he identifies do not necessarily qualify as "magical," many of the archetypes such as the "Preto Velho" (old Black person), "Mãe Preta" (Black Mammy), and the "Afro-Baiano" (Afro-Bahian) display African diasporic spiritual traditions from religions like Candomblé and Umbanda that mark the Black characters as "superstitious" or "mystical." In this way, the films and television dramas homogenize the diversity of "Blackness" into a singular, stereotyped imagination conceptualized through a European colonial perspective that condescendingly contrasts African diasporic "superstitions" with modern European science. See João Carlos Rodrigues, *O negro brasileiro e o cinema : 1988, 100 anos de abolição--90 anos de cinema no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Editora Globo, 1988).
For more descriptions on the "magical negro" in U.S. cinema see Matthew Hughey, "Cinethetic Racism: White Redemption and Black Stereotypes in 'Magical Negro' Films," *Social Problems* 56, no. 3 (August 2009): 543-544. Cerise L. Glenn and Landra J. Cunningham, "The Power of Black Magic: The Magical Negro and White Salvation in Film," *Journal of Black Studies* 40, no. 2 (November 2009): 137-138.

[67] Ignacio López-Calvo, "From Interethnic Alliances to the 'Magical Negro,'"1.

observations of Maria that she comes to see the Black woman and her family as "workers like us."[68] Kimie, therefore, forges a connection across racial lines by looking at the class experiences that she holds in common with Maria, similar to the way the Japanese farmworkers in "A Certain Pioneer's Death" noted their working-class ties to the Baiano man. Her desire to befriend Maria, however, contrasts her husband's intolerant stance and his repeated command that she "should not mix" with Black people.[69] The image of "mixing" calls to mind the idea of *mestiçagem* and suggests a contrast between Kimie's support for a harmonious blending of races and Hideo's adherence to a rigid separation between them.

Yet because we do not see Kimie reciprocate the support that Maria gives her, we may interpret one of the pitfalls of racial mixing and multiculturalism when it erases differences that carry significance for one's life outcomes. The celebration of an interracial friendship, in this case, ultimately obscures Maria's distinct needs as a Black, working-class woman exploited and marginalized by the colonial racial capitalist system in Brazil. Instead, it emphasizes the narrative of Kimie's progression toward an enlightened sense of morality that turns her into a Brazilian national subject who exercises racial and cultural tolerance. However, the story devotes little attention to the fact that Maria is the one who facilitates Kimie's ethical development. It is by analyzing Maria alongside the figure of the "Magical Negro" that we gain insight into the one-directional support system between Maria and Kimie that fails to give Maria purpose in the narrative on her own terms.

Furthermore, Black feminist critique enables us to read the tensions within the novel's cross-racial feminist alliances. The analytical lens sheds light on Maria's personage as a Black woman whose representation as a "Magical Negro" crosses over with the Brazilian archetype of

[68]Nakasato, *Nihonjin*, 27.
[69] Ibid., 30.

the "*Mãe Preta*" or "Black Mammy." This trope associates Black women with subservience, conformity, and abnegation, figuring them as faithful "servants" or assistants to the white protagonists. The figure romanticizes the relationship between the Black wet nurse and the white child, thereby diminishing the violence of slavery in favor of a celebration of racial mixing.[70] Joel Zito Almeida de Araújo adds that even though the *Mãe Preta* has its own local referent, its representation has been influenced by the "mammy" image in U.S. popular culture that caricatures her into a "big and plump … Black woman who at the same time is proud, domineering, strong-willed, irritable, yet deeply maternal."[71] Finally, Chesya Burke observes that cultural texts that make use of the stereotype of the "Strong Black Woman" merely give these women the appearance of strength, yet like the "Magical Negro" stock character, this strength only functions to aid white society and portray the Black female character as able to endure the hardships of the hegemonic social order without help from anyone else.[72]

Looking at Maria alongside the portrait of the *Mãe Preta*, we can detect the stereotypes of Black women deployed in the construction of her character. When Kimie first meets Maria, the narrator describes Maria as: "a tall, strong woman of an unbelievably dark color, smiling, her white teeth contrasting her skin."[73] The sketch, here, already illustrates the physical traits of the mammy archetype ascribed to Maria as a larger woman with a strong build. When she directly challenges Hideo to attend to Kimie's sickness, Maria further takes on the strong-willed and

---

[70] In the nineteenth century, *mãe preta* referred to a female Black servant in a white household who acted as a wet nurse to her patron's children. But as decolonial feminist anthropologist Rita Laura Segato argues, the actual Black nannies have been repressed within Brazilian national history and replaced with the discursive figure of the *Mãe Preta* who symbolizes the African culture incorporated into the nation's identity as a racial democracy. See Rita Laura Segato, *O édipo brasileiro: a dupla negação de género e raça* (Brasília: Universidade de Brasilia, Departamento de Antropología, 2006), 12.

[71] He cites Hattie McDaniel's role in *Gone with the Wind* (1939) as one such portrayal that shaped the caricature of the *Mãe Preta* in Brazil. Almeida de Araújo, *A Negação do Brasil*,43-44; 50-51.

[72] Chesya Burke, "Black Women and the New Magical Negro," *African American Cinema Through Black Lives Consciousness*, ed. Mark A. Reid (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2019): 233-234; 240.

[73] Nakasato, *Nihonjin*, *24*.

forceful traits of caricatured Black women. She tells Hideo that if Kimie dies, it would be his fault for not allowing Maria to heal her. At this moment, the narrator then comments, "So that man [Hideo], who always spoke loudly, who was solid as a rock, walked away and stood next to his friend Jintaro, humiliated, watching Maria, who was a woman, who was a foreigner, who was Black, but was big, bigger than himself, kneel at the foot of Kimie's bed."[74]

Although the passage makes clear that the traditional power dynamic between the "honorary white" Japanese patriarch and the Black woman is reversed, the disruptive potential of Maria's defiance of the racialized, gendered hierarchy ultimately remains limited. This is because Maria utilizes her strength on behalf of Kimie, but she does not use it to help herself. For example, after Kimie's recovery, Hideo continues to forbid his wife from socializing with "inferior people."[75] Maria tacitly accepts the ending of her friendship with Kimie and then drops out of the narrative, appearing silent in the face of Hideo's anti-Black racism and sexism. Kimie, too, does not offer reciprocal support to help her friend challenge Hideo and the hegemonic order he represents. It is the toughness bestowed to Maria that ironically becomes the trait that impedes her liberation from the social structures that oppress her. While it gives her the appearance of strength, it also is what makes her seem capable of continuing to live the way she lives now—on the social margins with little to no institutional or communal assistance. The stereotyped images of the Magical Negro and the *Mãe Preta* that construct Maria's character therefore, function to confine her subversive power within the discursive walls of a narrative that reinforces the racial capitalist status quo in Brazil.

A Coalitional Coda

[74] Ibid., 28-29.
[75] Ibid., 30.

However, William Bridges argues that literary interpretations that end with the evaluation of whether representations of Blackness are accurate or not miss the tensions in the text and the instances that point to ways of thinking about race beyond authenticity. He asks what might be made out of "nothingness"—insubstantial depictions of Blackness that silence Black voices and render Blackness into a kind of absence.[76] He sees the possibility for new, generative meanings to emerge from silenced Blackness that haunt the text in moments of Afro-Asian dialogue.[77] With his reconstructive methodology in mind, I will turn to a transnational feminist lens to read lapses in *Nihonjin* that cannot fully contain Blackness to a realm of silence, while looking toward outgrowths of activist work as moments of coalitional possibility.

Although Maria's healing practices underscore her "folk wisdom," at the same time, they enable the formation of communal relations of care between the residents of Ouro Verde. One illustration of her interconnective potential appears when Kimie suffers from a "bicho-de-pé" (foot bug) and Hideo refuses to allow her to go to Maria for treatment. Kimie instead visits her Italian immigrant neighbor, Paula, who shows her how to dig out the bug with a sewing needle. Paula then tells Kimie that Maria taught her this technique, as well as other ways to cure cramps and pains with prayers and herbal teas.[78] Despite Maria's absence from this scene, her local knowledge continues to circulate between these two women and is what brings them together.

Maria's work, too, functions to fill in the gaps of the health care system in Brazil. The narrator makes us aware at the beginning of the story that, to the surprise of Japanese immigrants, institutionalized medicine was not readily available to them in their rural settlement far from Brazilian metropolitan life.[79] Kimie's repeated need for Maria's care demonstrates that

[76] Bridges, *Playing in the Shadows*, 29-31.
[77] Ibid., 32.
[78] Nakasato, *Nihonjin*, 28.
[79] Ibid., 13.

within Brazilian society, she and the other Japanese immigrants belong to a racialized minority group that leaves them vulnerable to the indifference of the Brazilian state. In this regard, Kimie shares the experience of being a person of color—and more specifically a woman of color—in Brazil with Maria, as both have difficulty accessing public resources. Their common experience brings to light the significance of Maria's healing practices that exhibit a tension between their stereotypical representation and the resistance they demonstrate to the Brazilian state's neglect of its citizens of color. Maria's local knowledge actively creates alternative social relations based in principles of mutual aid such as collective care and skill-sharing. She makes possible transnational feminist solidarity between Black, Japanese, and Italian women that exceeds the interpretation of her actions as only a stereotyped representation of Blackness.

Moreover, Hideo's blatant anti-Black racism makes it apparent that although these women may all confront marginalization, they experience it differently and some to more degrees than others. When he calls Maria a woman of an "inferior" race, Hideo provides an illustration of the way that Asian immigrants in Brazil can exercise complicity with white hegemony and contribute to oppressing Black Brazilians. However, his prejudice simultaneously recalls the differences between slaves and migrant laborers in the history of Brazil. He bases his conclusion of Black "inferiority" on Afro-Brazilians being a people who were once slaves, thereby distinguishing himself from them as an immigrant worker.[80] Though this distinction emerges during a moment of racism, its significance overflows Hideo's assumptions and reminds us that Asian immigrant labor cannot be conflated with slavery.

This difference is one point of contention that Asian-Brazilian movements such as the feminist collective, Lotus, and the Brazilian chapter of the anti-racist group, Yellow Peril, call

[80] Ibid., 24.

attention to in their organizing efforts to build Afro-Asian coalitions. Activists like Gabriela Shimabuku, an organizer with Yellow Peril, critique the historical representation of Japanese immigration to Brazil as a passage "aboard ships, in subhuman conditions, taken to work in conditions analogous to slavery."[81] The equivalence drawn between immigrant labor and slavery, as Shimabuku discloses, erases the meaningful differences between these practices and ultimately works to construct a racial essentialist narrative of Japanese Brazilians as a "model minority." Similar to the situation in the U.S., the relative social mobility of Japanese Brazilians after World War II has been used to depict Asians as hardworking, self-sufficient, and highly capable of socioeconomic success in comparison to Afro-Brazilians, who supposedly started from the "same" beginning. This narrative creates a stereotype that has damaging effects for both Asian and Black Brazilians, yet it especially results in a harmful representation of Black Brazilians as "lazy" and, therefore, responsible for their own low economic circumstances. Furthermore, because the representation portrays the once excluded Asian minority to have risen to become a welcomed member of Brazil's multicultural democracy, it creates difficulties for Black Brazilians to attribute their disadvantaged circumstances to racism. On the other hand, Japanese Brazilians gain relative privilege as a "model minority," which is why some individuals choose to embrace the stereotype rather than combat it.

Though *Nihonjin* devotes more attention to Kimie's movement toward a multicultural mindset, Hideo's stagnancy provides a subtle indication of the anti-Black racism that remains even when other peoples of color become incorporated into the fabric of the Brazilian nation. If we continue to dwell on the pitfalls and possibilities of Afro-Asian feminist alliances, what

[81] "A solidariedade antirracista é o maior medo da supremacia branca," *Carta Capital* online, March 28, 2017, //www.cartacapital.com.br/sociedade/201ca-solidariedade-antirracista-e-o-maior-medo-da-supremacia-branca201d/.

additional outgrowths may be inspired by reading *Nihonjin*? What ways might our reconstructive reading of the novel inspire us to rethink Afro-Asian solidarity?

If we return to activism happening within the Japanese diasporic community that extends beyond the text itself, we may learn more from their models of relationship-building. Shimabuku asserts that the Asian movement in Brazil must address anti-Black racism within its organization in order to fight white supremacy. As a racial minority, Asian-Brazilians already struggle to change the structures that uphold white hegemony, yet Shimabuku argues that antiracist solidarity between Afro and Asian-Brazilians is the biggest threat to white supremacy. Jodi Melamed makes a similar point in her discussion of "race radicalisms" as a counter to racial capitalism. Since racial capitalism seeks to divide and isolate, she finds promise in the histories of resistance among different racialized groups that have sought to create alternative collectivities that challenge the logic of antirelationality. From Shimabuku's and Melamed's reflections, we can better understand why accounting for the Black "Other" in the struggle for racial justice is a necessity for the Asian-Brazilian movement's cause, as well as decolonial work within the transpacific.

Conclusion

The juxtaposition of "A Certain Pioneer's Death" and *Nihonjin* within a genealogy of literary representations of Afro-Asian relationships in Japanese Brazilian literature illuminates the repetition of Black stereotypes to facilitate the Japanese diaspora's imagination of its communal identity at different generational moments. While there is a distinction in how "A Certain Pioneer's Death" imagines a *shokumin* identity that is neither Japanese nor Brazilian and

Nihonjin pushes for Nikkei inclusion in Brazil, overall, the two stories could be interpreted as journeys toward understanding the particularity of the Japanese immigrant community.

In "A Certain Pioneer's Death," the narrator portrays conflicting images of the Baiano father as part of the working class like the Japanese farmworkers, yet dissimilar in his aggressive nature. Ultimately, the story makes use of the Black character to bring about Daisuke's downfall and question the ideology of "striving and success" to promote greater class equality among its immigrant readers as they settle into their new home. *Nihonjin*, on the other hand, departs from the stereotype of Black violence and instead depicts an image of interracial friendship between Kimie and Maria. However, like in Tanabe's work, the novel falls back on caricatures of Afro-Brazilians—this time as "folkloric" and self-sacrificing—to help Kimie grow into an exemplary national subject and propound the Nikkei community's belonging to Brazil's multicultural fabric.

Despite the variation between these two stories that emphasize either class or racial equality, as I have argued in this chapter, both neglect to account for the multiple axes of colonial racial capitalism and therefore, reproduce an incomplete vision of justice. The historical development and persistence of disparate racial formations between Japanese Brazilians and Afro-Brazilians that simultaneously reinforce and are reinforced by class formations indicates the necessity of intersectional thinking. Without it, divisions will remain between the two groups since liberation from capitalist oppression and racial domination will not be made a possibility for all. Reading these texts through Black Radicalism and transnational feminism then allows us to re-engage a vision of solidarity as a requirement for cross-racial coalitions. While the analysis helps us to locate the shortcomings in the relationships we see between Japanese Brazilians and Black Brazilians in the two narratives, it also suggests more hopeful possibilities for Afro-Asian alliances.

Moreover, the outgrowths of the literary texts that I have been exploring render visible genuine instances of Afro-Asian solidarity that do not comply with the dominant ideologies of multiculturalism and liberal subjecthood. These examples illuminate what might be shared and learned by working together across difference and listening to the autonomous voice of another. They further ask us to reconsider the place of racial difference within interracial alliances, which require an accountability for those "other" to ourselves—a theme I will continue to unpack in the next chapter. As Gabriela Shimabuku in her conceptualization of Afro-Asian alliances, declares, interracial solidarity (and not just in the Asian-Brazilian community) requires us to dismantle the anti-Black racism within our movements and within ourselves, from the inside out.[82]

Bibliography

"A solidariedade antirracista é o maior medo da supremacia branca." *Carta Capital* online. March 28, 2017. ://www.cartacapital.com.br/sociedade/201ca-solidariedade-antirracista-e-o-maior-medo-da-supremacia-branca201d/.

Aidoo, Lamonte. "Diluting the 'African' Nation: European Immigration, Whitening, and the Crisis of Slave Emancipation," *alter/nativas* 8 (2018): 1-18.

Almeida de Araújo, Joel Zito. *A Negaçã do Brasil: o Negro na Telenovela Brasileira*. São Paulo: Editora SENAC, 2000.

Azuma, Eiichiro. "'Pioneers of Overseas Japanese Development': Japanese American History and the Making of Expansionist Orthodoxy in Imperial Japan." *The Journal of Asian studies* 67, no. 4 (2008): 1187–1226.

Bridges, William H. *Playing in the Shadows : Fictions of Race and Blackness in Postwar Japanese Literature*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020.

Bucciferro, Justin R. "Racial Inequality in Brazil from Independence to the Present." In *Has Latin American Inequality Changed Direction?: Looking Over the Long Run*, 171–194. Springer International Publishing, 2017.

[82] Ibid.

Burke, Chesya. “Black Women and the New Magical Negro.” In *African American Cinema Through Black Lives Consciousness,* edited by Mark A. Reid. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2019.

Chandler, Nahum Dimitri. “Introduction: On the Virtues of Seeing—At Least, But Never Only—Double.” CR: The New Centennial Review 12, no. 1 (2012): 1–39. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41949766.

Duarte, Osvaldo. “Entrevista: Oscar Nakasato: Autor de Nihonjin (Romance) e Imagens da Integração e da dualidade-Personagens Nipo-Brasileiros na Ficção.” *Polifonia, Cuiabá, MT* 21, n. 30 (2014): 289-306.

Freyre, Gilberto. *New World in the Tropics : the Culture of Modern Brazil,* 1st ed. New York: Knopf, 1959.

Freyre, Gilberto. *The Masters and the Slaves: a Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization,* 2nd English language ed., rev. New York: Knopf, 1956.

Geiger, Andrea. *Subverting Exclusion: Transpacific Encounters with Race, Case, and Border*. 1885-1928. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

Glenn, Cerise L. and Landra J. Cunningham, “The Power of Black Magic: the Magical Negro and White Salvation in Film,” *Journal of Black Studies* 40, no. 2 (November 2009): 135-152.

Gluck, Carol. *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period. Vol. 1*. Princeton University Press, 2021.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 1: nihongo no nagai tabi[rekishi].* Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2012.

Hosokawa, Shūhei. *Nikkei burajiru imin bungaku 2: nihongo no nagai tabi[hyōron].* Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013.

Hughey, Matthew. “Cinethetic Racism: White Redemption and Black Stereotypes in ‘Magical Negro’ Films.” *Social Problems* 56, no. 3 (August 2009): 543-577.

Kelley, Robin D. G. Kelley. “Foreword: Why *Black Marxism?* Why now?.” In *Black Marxism, Revised and Updated Third Edition: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition. Revised and Updated Third Edition*. Edited by Damien Sojoyner, Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Cedric J. Robinson, xi-xxxiv. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

Koronia shōsetsu senshū, edited by Koronia bungakukai. Sao Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975.

Koshiro, Yukiko. Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Koshy, Susan, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson. Introduction to *Colonial Racial Capitalism*. Edited by Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson, 1-30. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022.

Lesser, Jeffrey. *Negotiating National Identity : Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

López-Calvo, Ignacio. 2018. "From Interethnic Alliances to the "Magical Negro": Afro-Asian Interactions in Asian Latin American Literature." *Humanities* 7, no. 4, 110 (2018): 1-10. https://doi.org/10.3390/h7040110

Lowe, Lisa. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Lu, Sidney Xu. The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Maeyama Takashi. *Bungaku no kokoro de jinruigaku wo ikiru: nanboku amerika seikatsu kara kikoku made jūkyū nen.* Tokyo: Ocha no Mizushobō, 2010.

Maeyama, Takashi. *Ibunka sesshoku to aidentiti : Burajiru shakai to Nikkeijin*. Dai 1-han. Tōkyō: Ochanomizu Shobō, 2001.

Melamed, Jodi. "Racial Capitalism." *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no.1 (2015): 76-85.

Nakasato, Oscar. *Nihonjin*. São Paulo: Benvirá, 2002.

Nishida, Mieko. *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Onishi, Yuichiro. *Transpacific Antiracism : Afro-Asian Solidarity in Twentieth-Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa.* New York: New York University Press, 2013.

Raynor, Cecily. "Reflections on Japanese-Brazilian Immigration through Narrative: An Interview with Oscar Nakasato." *Journal of Lusophone studies* 2, no. 1 (2017): 198–205.

Rivas, Zelideth María Rivas. "Merging the Transpacific with the Transatlantic: Afro-Asia in Japanese Brazilian Narratives. " In *Afro-Asian Connections in Latin America and the Caribbean,* edited by Luisa Marcela Ossa and Debbie Lee-DiStefano, 95-114. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018.

Robinson, Cedric J. "Introduction." In *Black Marxism, Revised and Updated Third Edition: The*

Making of the Black Radical Tradition. Revised and Updated Third Edition. Edited by Damien Sojoyner, Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Cedric J. Robinson, 1-6. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

Rodrigues, João Carlos. *O negro brasileiro e o cinema : 1988, 100 anos de abolição--90 anos de cinema no Brasil.* Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Editora Globo, 1988.

Segato, Rita Laura. *O édipo brasileiro: a dupla negação de género e raça.* Brasília: Universidade de Brasilia, Departamento de Antropología, 2006.

Skidmore, Thomas E. *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.

Somerville, Alice Te Punga. "Inside Us the Unborn: Genealogies, Futures, Metaphors, and the Opposite of Zombies." In *Pacific Futures: Past and Present*, edited by Warwich Anderson, Miranda Johnson, and Barbara Brookes, 69–80. University of Hawai'i Press, 2018. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvvn4fj.7.

Stam, Robert. *Tropical Multiculturalism : a Comparative History of Race in Brazilian Cinema and Culture.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Tanabe Shigeyuki."Aru kaitakusha no shi." In Vol. 1 of *Koronia shōsetsu senshū*, edited by Koronia bungakukai, 15-26. Sao Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975.

Young, Louise. *Beyond the Metropolis: Second Cities and Modern Life in Interwar Japan*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2013.

Zachmann, Urs Matthias. "Race without Supremacy: On Racism in the Political Discourse of Late Meiji Japan, 1890–1912." In *Racism in the Modern World: Historical Perspectives on Cultural Transfer and Adaptation*, edited by Manfred Berg and Simon Wendt, NED-New edition, 1., 255–80. Berghahn Books, 2014.

CHAPTER 5

The Transpacific on Fire: Sparks of Decolonial Resistance Across Okinawa and Brazil in Medoruma Shun's "My Brazilian Grandad's Sake" (1999)

Up until this point, this dissertation has explored the stories of "anomalous" or "subaltern" individuals whose perspectives from the margins of the Japanese diaspora in Brazil expose the workings of power that discursively construct the borders of this community. In doing so, it has endeavored to not only unsettle the social hierarchies that create the labels of "anomaly" and "alterity," but also question the adequacy of using an assumed normative Japanese Brazilian culture as a category for literary analysis. This chapter seeks to continue this work by pushing the boundaries of analysis even further with an investigation of Medoruma Shun's 1999 short story "ブラジルおじいの酒 Burajiru ojī no sake" (My Brazilian Grandad's Sake).[1]

Since the Nikkei-Brazilian Literary Association (previously the *Koronia* Literary Association) defines Nikkei-Brazilian Literature as creative texts written by Japanese immigrants and their descendants who lived long-term in Brazil,[2] Medoruma's positionality as an Okinawan author would suggest that his prose does not belong to this body of literature. However, Medoruma's piece depicts an Okinawan man's immigration to and return from Brazil under the shifting conditions of Japanese colonialism and U.S. occupation in Okinawa, which further calls

[1] I am choosing to translate "おじい *Ojī*" in the title as "Grandad" to capture the familial relationship between the narrator and the elderly Okinawan man that he calls "Ojī" that can mean "grandfather" or "old man." However, when referring to the character, I use the Japanese: "Ojī."
[2] Maeyama Takashi, "Imin bungaku kara mainoritī bungaku he," in *Koronia shōsetsu senshū (dai* 1 *kan*) *paurisuta bungakushō izen,* ed. Koronia bungakukai (Sao Paulo: Koronia Bungakukai, 1975), 307.

attention to the complex relationship between Okinawan and Japanese diasporic individuals in Brazil. Members of both communities continue to demonstrate conflicting, multiple, and volatile ideas about whether the two groups should be considered as one community or separate from each other. However, instead of claiming that Medoruma's writing should be included within the category of "Japanese Brazilian literature," I will argue in this chapter for the productiveness of abandoning an attachment to national and diaspora-as-national(ist) categories and analyzing literature relationally. In other words, I hope to demonstrate what might be gained by considering the literary text's problematics extending beyond these narrow identities and bound up with and between multiply-positioned subjects and transnational power structures.

"My Brazilian Grandad's Sake" specifically deals with the forces of capitalism, colonialism (and/ or settler colonialism), and imperialism as they operate not just in Okinawa, but also across the transpacific as well. It was originally published as part of Medoruma's 1999 short story collection 魂込め *Mabuigumi* (Spirit Stuffing), which contains several stories that take up similar themes of trauma, war, survival, and memory, especially in relation to the Battle of Okinawa. This violent and devastating battle in the Asia-Pacific war in 1945 resulted in the deaths of over 130,000 Okinawan people, with more civilians killed than military personnel.[3] Both Medoruma's parents were survivors of the battle, which has had a major impact on his writing and its politics. Medoruma himself believes that he holds a responsibility to continue to disseminate memories of the war through his literature.[4]

The short story is told by an Okinawan narrator who recalls the close relationship he formed with an elderly Okinawan man nicknamed "Burajiru Ojī" or just "Ojī," when he was in

[3] Kyle Ikeda, "Unarticulated Memories of the Battle of Okinawa: the Early Fiction of Second-generation War Survivor Medoruma Shun," *positions: asia critique* 22, no. 2 (2014): 303.
[4] Ibid., 304.

the fourth grade of elementary school.[5] Ojī generally keeps to himself within the community as a lone farmer and fisherman, but eventually opens up to the narrator and shares with the boy many stories of his past, including magical realist tales of the time he spent as a migrant worker in Brazil in the late 1930s and early 1940s, speculations about his family members' deaths in the Battle of Okinawa, and the very real experience of returning to his hometown without them there. Ojī passes on these memories to the narrator right before his death, which also coincides with a critical moment of transition for the Okinawan community: Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972.

I approach "My Brazilian Grandad's Sake" through both an analytic of colonial racial capitalism and a decolonial transpacific optics to generate a critique of the intersecting relations of power the story glimpses and to imagine alternative forms of interconnection beyond these hegemonic logics. In particular, as I zoom in on the magical realist tale of Ojī's migration to Brazil, I make use of the analytic of "colonial racial capitalism," described in the introduction as a "convergence of settler colonialism, imperialism, anti-Blackness, and capitalism."[6] Reading Medoruma's story through this framework facilitates a tracing of the heterogeneous, multiply-situated, and moving positionalities of Okinawan and Okinawan diasporic subjects in the text and their relationship to the Japanese state, the U.S. government and military, Japanese and Brazilian capitalists, Brazilian workers, and Indigenous human and non-human beings in Brazil.

Specifically, in the first section of the chapter, I focus on the Brazilian workers movement in the story that, while working toward liberation from capitalist exploitation, harms small producers or Indigenous communities in the process. The potential for counterhegemonic

[5] Medoruma Shun, "Burajiru Ojī no sake," *Mabuigumi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1999), 48-89.
[6] Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson, "Introduction," in *Colonial Racial Capitalism*, ed. Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022), 1.

resistance in one register to cause violence to human and non-human beings in another register, I argue, demonstrates the inadequacies of analyzing power dynamics through binary thinking along the lines of domination/subordination. It also shows a need for liberation to be reconceptualized through a framework of accountability. Moreover, reading the story through colonial racial capitalist critique brings to light anticapitalist activism "beyond workers' struggles," acknowledging "'indigenous land-based direct action' as fundamentally revolutionary and anticapitalist."[7] The text highlights these multiple forms of anticapitalist, anticolonial resistance first through the actions of indigenous non-human beings in Brazil against dispossession and then Ojī's tactics to oppose Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972.

These two practices of resistance, I argue, find a connection with one another in "My Brazilian Grandad's Sake," despite their separation by the borders of national histories and their further marginalization within Japanese Brazilian narratives. I utilize a transpacific vantage point to trace these links across generations and geopolitical spaces and further consider the significance of their opposition to what Annmaria Shimabuku calls "transpacific colonialism." Rather than regard Okinawa as a victim of U.S. colonialism layered on top of Japanese colonialism, Shimabuku argues for recognizing "the mutually dependent relationship of two colonialisms that work together with synergistic effects."[8] Medoruma's writing provides an apt example of the transpacific and transwar connections between Japanese and U.S. power formations in Okinawa, especially by exposing Okinawa's "reversion" as a repetition of Japanese colonialism entangled with the U.S. empire. [9] By bringing to light memories of colonial

[7]Ibid., 6.
[8] Annmaria Shimabuku, "Transpacific Colonialism: An Intimate View of Transnational Activism in Okinawa," *The New Centennial Review* 12, no. 1 (2012): 134.
[9] Lisa Yoneyama, "Toward a Decolonial genealogy of the Transpacific," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2017): 472-473.

violence, the narrative troubles regimes of knowledge that (re)produce a master narrative, which shrouds transpacific colonialism as what conditions the U.S. military presence in Asia and the Pacific Islands.

Moreover, my analysis of Medoruma's story that focuses on resistance builds off the scholarship of Wendy Matsumura, who proposes a "nonapocalyptic history" of Okinawans that disrupts the portrayal of the people of Okinawa as a homogeneous group of victims who have been unable to overcome the enduring forces of Japanese and U.S. domination.[10] Rather than see the past struggles of Okinawans as only part of a narrative that ends in defeat, she argues:

> to suspend each moment of collective action…in full color through an antihistoricist style of storytelling that can counter narratives of failed struggle with those of ordinary people who came together in their differences, united in their desire to destroy the forces that threatened to mutilate their lives.[11]

I, too, regard the everyday counterhegemonic actions that Ojī performs in the text as significant moments that speak to alternative ways of living with humans and non-humans on this earth that can be resurrected to move us beyond the logics of colonial racial capitalism.

Finally, in the last section of the chapter, I bring Ojī's practices of dissent into conversation with Arakawa Akira's "反復帰論 *hanfukkiron*" (Anti-reversion theory) and Choi Jinseok's "sequel" to "Anti-reversion theory" to interrogate what Medoruma's text may offer to the varying liberatory visions of anti-reversionism. Although Choi agrees with Arakawa's notion that anti-reversionism should think beyond the logics of the state and nation, he critiques Arakawa's conceptualization of state refusal as an individual action that neglects to consider the Other within the process of liberation. I utilize Choi's reframing to interpret the significance of

[10] Wendy Matsumura, *The Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 10-18.
[11] Ibid., 15.

Ojī's memory-sharing as an anti-reversionist action that takes place through his interactions with the narrator. Not only does it involve looking outward to enact resistance as a social praxis, but it also passes on memories attuned to the intricacies of transpacific social relations. I argue that "My Brazilian Grandad's Sake" sheds light on what must be remembered in order for liberatory work to remain accountable to the Other's vision of self-determination and to be able to practice solidarity across difference.

Ultimately, my examination of "My Brazilian Grandad's Sake" in this chapter emphasizes the layers of memories from a plurality of perspectives in the text, which intervene not only into the dominant historical narrative surrounding colonial capitalist modernity in Okinawa, but also into the disciplinization of history and its separation from literature. As I show, the fictional story makes possible transpacific interconnections that too often remain distanced by national histories. At the same time, it challenges the authority given to "History" as a set of "facts" that can transparently portray the past "as it happened." Instead, it engages with traces, ghosts, bodily sensations, and material relationships with the land and sea as meaningful sources of knowledge, pointing to that which exceeds the ability to be represented by historical discourse. In this way, Medoruma's text helps us to learn from what can never be fully known and imagine possibilities beyond transpacific colonial relations.

History of Okinawan Migration to Brazil

To follow how Medoruma's story challenges the representative modes of history as an academic discipline, it is first important to trace the dominant historical narrative surrounding Okinawa and Okinawan immigration to Brazil that it complicates. Area studies, as unpacked in the introduction, has largely contributed to historical knowledge production that separates

Japanese immigration to the Americas and Japanese colonization in East Asia. The story of Okinawa immigration primarily to Hawai'i, Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay in the twentieth century is also blended into the history of Japanese immigration in general. Of the 799 people aboard the Kasato Maru, the first ship carrying immigrants from Japan to Brazil in 1908, 355 individuals (44.4%) came from Okinawa prefecture.[12] Yet most historical accounts do not mention the large percentage of Okinawan immigrants and refers to the entire group as "Japanese." They, therefore, contribute to shrouding the imperialist circumstances surrounding the increase in Okinawan immigration to the Americas in the early 20th century.

After Okinawa's (the former Ryūkyū kingdom's) second disposition in 1879, Japanese colonialism took the form of "nation-building" practices that attempted to subsume the local people into its capitalist system and extract their labor power primarily for its burgeoning sugar industry. While the state's policies shifted from preserving the former kingdom's social systems and customs[13] to assimilation into the economic, political, and social structures of Japanese mainland society, both practices were predicated on the colonial presumption of an Okinawan difference that functioned to justify the peripheralization of the prefecture within the Japanese empire. Culturally, the state engaged in violent practices of assimilation to "civilize" the people of Okinawa, while economically, it appropriated previously communal lands, disproportionately taxed the new prefecture, and allowed mainland sugar companies to move onto the islands and pressure independent Okinawan farming families to cultivate sugar cane to supply their factories.[14] While these colonial practices served as driving factors behind Okinawan migration,

[12] Okinawa-ken Kyōiku Īnkai, ed, *Okinawa-kenshi. Vol. 7, Imin* (Okinawa: Okinawa-ken Kyōiku Īnkai, 1974), 270.
[13] While it made claims that Okinawans were imperial subjects of Japan, the state also managed the region differently than other prefectures through its establishment of the Preservation of Old Customs Policy. This policy left many of the Ryūkyū kingdom's social systems intact so that former officials incorporated into the state's political and economic structures would support the transition to capitalism. See Matsumura, *The Limits of Okinawa*, 3; 27-28.
[14] Matsumura, *The Limits of Okinawa*, 124.

Wendy Matsumura and Tomiyama Ichirō have also evidenced that the act of migration, at times, constituted an act of defiance to the colonial capitalist state.[15] That is, Okinawan small producers—rather than turning all of their family's agricultural operations into an instrument in the capitalist supply chain—would send a family member to the mainland or outside of Japan when they needed to exhaust more labor to sustain themselves and their families.

The Japanese state's management of migration to Brazil in the 1920s appears even more contradictory when looked at this moment in relation to Okinawan peoples. From 1919 to 1926, Japanese migration officials banned Okinawan emigration, fearing that "lazy" and "backward" Okinawans might lead to an unfavorable reputation for the Japanese in Brazil and eventually the fate of exclusion, as had been the case in the U.S.[16] However, with the implementation of pre-departure education that extended the state's forced assimilation policies to the realm of migration, the now "civilized" Okinawans became one of the groups targeted by Japanese migration recruiters—alongside other "surplus" populations such as *Burakumin*,[17] miners, and farmers. Yet despite promises made by migration officials to own their own land in Brazil, various Japanese and Okinawan immigrants felt deceived or abandoned when they found their plots to be located far from state infrastructure and in a condition that required clearing and heavy preparation before farming could begin.[18]

Moreover, "My Brazilian 'Grandad's' Sake" engages with the history of colonial modernity in Okinawa from the perspective of Okinawans who stayed on the islands, which

---

[15] Ibid., 144. Tomiyama Ichirō, *Kindai nihon shakai to 'okinawajin,'* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōron sha, 1990), 61.
[16] Fujinami Kai, *Okinawa diasupora-nettowāku: gurōbaru no naka de kaikō wo hatsu* uchinānchu," (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2020), 66-67.
[17] *Burakumin*, which translates literally as "hamlet people," names a minority caste in Japan that originally was a feudal class associated with "impure" occupations connected with death like butchers and leather workers. However, their outcast status is not only related to labor, but also deeply racialized.
[18] Mieko Nishida, *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 24-25.

differs greatly from the dominant narratives surrounding the Battle of Okinawa and U.S. military presence in the prefecture. These discourses work to occlude Japanese colonial violence, in addition to preventing comparisons to be drawn between the former Japanese empire and the current U.S. empire in Asia and the Pacific. For example, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science (MEXT) compels textbook companies to differentiate the collective suicides of Okinawan civilians during the Battle of Okinawa from "the purportedly insignificant, difficult-to-substantiate instances of civilian murder by Japanese military personnel."[19] Furthermore, Japanese media representations often construe an image of martyrdom to paint Okinawan deaths in the battle as heroic sacrifices for the nation.[20] These images gloss over Okinawan experiences of confusion, incomprehensibility, fear, trauma, etc. and the complex ways in which Okinawan soldiers participated in the violence.

Following the war, U.S.-centric accounts claim the U.S. government "liberated" Okinawa from Japanese control and was dedicated to bringing political and economic stability to the region.[21] However, the U.S.'s status as the "liberator" of Okinawa coincided with its occupation of the prefecture and the building of permanent U.S. military bases there starting in 1949. Outraged by the actions of the U.S. administration, thousands of Okinawans protested the expropriation of their lands without adequate compensation.[22]

---

[19] Norma Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991), 62.
[20] Glenn D. Hook, "The American Eagle in Okinawa: the Politics of Contested Memory and the Unfinished War," *Japan Forum*27, no. 3 (2015): 305-310. Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 48. Glenn D. Hook cites the example of the Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum's representation of the Battle of Okinawa that was altered after the 1998 election of Inamine Hirokazu, a more conservative governor than the previous leader Ōta Masahide. Inamine's administration had the former representation on a diorama of a Japanese soldier aiming his weapon at a mother and her baby changed to the soldier holding up his gun to shield the woman and her child (307).
[21] Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins*, 46.
[22] The U.S. armed forces placed local Okinawan civilians into internment camps, while the U.S. military took charge of Okinawan lands. See Yuko Kawato, *Protests Against U.S. Military Base Policy in Asia: Persuasion and Its Limits* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2015), 42.

To quell Okinawan hostility toward the U.S. and increasing calls for Okinawa's independence, the U.S. state conceded to recognizing Japan's "residual sovereignty" over Okinawa at the 1951 San Francisco Peace Conference to offer the appearance of a promised end to U.S. occupation. Annmaria Shimabuku points to how this decision emerged from U.S. fears that if it continually infringed upon Japan's sovereignty, it would evoke anti-American sentiments at a time that it needed Japan as an ally against communism in East Asia during the Cold War.[23] Moreover, the U.S. held concerns that Okinawan resistance would be responsible for creating a rift between the U.S. and Japan.[24]

In 1960, the U.S. and Japan signed a security treaty that included the Status of the US Forces Agreement (SOFA), which continues to be recognized today. The agreement permits the U.S. to station its military in Japan and grants U.S. authorities the jurisdiction to handle any crimes committed by military personnel. Even with Okinawa's "reversion" to Japan in 1972— a so-called moment of liberation from U.S. occupation—U.S. military bases did not disappear from Okinawa and in fact occupy about 20 percent of the island of Okinawa.[25] The activist, filmmaker, and Marxist theorist Kawada Yō further argues that reversion is merely Okinawa's third disposition within a cyclical history that repeats the capitalist practices of enclosure and dispossession.[26] Arakawa Akira similarly views reversion as a repetition of colonialism rather than mark of social progress.[27] Activists in Okinawa today, as well as transnational allies,

[23] Shimabuku, "Petitioning Subjects," 363.
[24] Takizawa, "Okinawa," 497.
[25] Kozue Akibayashi and Suzuyo Takazato, "Gendered Insecurity Under Long-term Military Presence: the Case of Okinawa," in *The Gender Imperative: Human Security vs State Security*, ed. Betty A. Reardon and Asha Hans (London: Routledge, 2019), 42-43.
[26] Kawada Yō, "Kokkyō - kokka – dai san ji Ryūkyū shobun," *Jōkyō* (April 1974), 1-4.
[27] He connects reversion to assimilation, critiquing the colonial logics involved in "becoming Japanese" that occurred under the Japanese empire and are destined to repeat with the return to Japanese rule. See Choi Jinseok, "Specters of East Asia: Okinawa, Taiwan, and Korea," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 14, no.18.4 (2016), 10.

continue to push for decolonization in Okinawa and the Pacific, as well as for finding ways to address everyday concerns over safety, health, and environmental well-being. Medoruma Shun, too, has been active within these struggles, frequently publishes social commentary in local and national newspapers in Japan.[28] His literary writing, as I will next explore, extends this political work, especially through the way it challenges the disciplinary division between history and literature that reinforces the representational authority of hegemonic historical discourses.

Transpacific Resistance, Settler Colonialism, and Okinawan Immigration

In the middle of "My Brazilian 'Grandfather's' Sake," after Ojī and the narrator have started to develop a friendship with one another, Ojī shares a story about his time in Brazil that includes fantastical elements reminiscent of the magical realist genre. His account details encounters between an array of actors—small producers, migrant laborers, capitalists, mercenaries, and animals— from Brazil, Okinawa, and Japan. This section will unpack the intricacies of these social relations with attention to practices of resistance that push back against colonial racial capitalism, as it operates in the contexts of Japanese imperial expansionism and Brazilian nation-building. Particularly, it will clarify the multilayered significance of Ojī's migration to Brazil as simultaneously an act of anticapitalist struggle linked to labor movements in Brazil and Okinawa, and a practice of settler colonialism.

Ojī's story revolves primarily around his experience working on a large plantation owned by a local Brazilian landlord. Ojī migrates to Brazil at age 25 slightly before the start of the Shōwa era (1926) with his aunt, uncle, and cousins. When they arrive in the rural region home to

[28] Michael Molasky, "Medoruma Shun: the Writer as Public Intellectual in Okinawa Today," in *Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power*, ed. Laura Hein and Mark Selden (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 165.

many Okinawan diasporic small producers, they find that their assigned farmland is not yet ready for farming and it must be cleared and prepared before cultivation can begin. For this reason, Ojī finds contract work on a large plantation nearby to help support his family while they tend to their plot of land.

One day near the plantation, Ojī encounters a man in his forties with tattered clothes and long, dusty hair who seems to be divinely possessed. The man is surrounded by a group of about 20 people to whom he preaches that he is the fourth reincarnation of Jesus Christ and that the world will soon be destroyed.[29] This "prophet"[30] reappears a couple times, each time with a larger crowd following him. He catches the attention of the police, yet always manages to escape their confrontation with a mysterious act of magic. Rumors spread that the prophet liberates exploited workers from large plantations, which further increases the amount of people following him. Brazilian workers, women, elderly persons, in addition to Ojī and other young Okinawans join together and march toward the large plantation where Ojī is employed.[31] However, having been warned of his arrival, the plantation owner had contracted about one hundred mercenaries armed with guns. The mercenaries fire into the crowd, killing the prophet and wounding many workers like Ojī, who gets hit in the shin.

Yet suddenly, hundreds of scarlet parrots fly in from the sky and perch themselves amongst the crowd, threatening to attack them. From the ground, Ojī tries to make out what some of the parrots are doing near where the prophet fell. However, he is unsuccessful because

---

[29] Medoruma, "Burajiru Ojī," 66.

[30] The word Medoruma uses is "神懸り者 *kamigakari-sha*," which translates as "a divinely possessed person" or "an eccentrically behaving person." However, Ojī comments that he did not find the man to be all that strange because he was used to seeing similar spiritual persons in his village in Okinawa like *yuta* female mediums and *kaminchu* priestesses (65). I, therefore, am choosing to refer to the man as a prophet because I think it captures his mysteriousness without connoting too much strangeness or even insanity that can be associated with "possession." "Prophet" also fits with his action of foretelling the future, and the rhetoric within the Christian religion with which the man identifies.

[31] Ibid., 67.

soon everyone is forced to flee the area as flames erupt from a fire set to the forest in the midst of the commotion. Ojī describes this incident as the reason why he was forced to wander Brazil for about ten years after his family's farm was destroyed by the fire.[32] It is also what kept him from returning to Okinawa sooner than ten years later.

Although Ojī does not explicitly mention the Japanese state in his story, he utilizes the rhetoric of "pioneering" and "overseas development" fashioned by the Japanese government and its migration agents that we explored in chapter one. He notes that as soon as he and his uncle's family had unpacked their bags, they were already off to begin the work of pioneering, clearing the dense forest to make room for growing crops.[33]

However, unlike the dominant discourse's attempts to interpellate immigrants as imperial subjects who would carry out a heroic mission in Brazil on the Japanese empire's behalf, the narrator identifies how Ojī's rationale for migration diverged from this nationalist vision. He remarks: "There was the dream of achieving success that brought people to go to the other side of the world, but Ojī looked at his family's situation living in poverty, and thought of reducing the number of mouths to feed and sending them back remittances."[34] The expression that the narrator uses for "achieving success," which can also be translated as "make a name for oneself," is: "一旗揚げる *hito hata ageru*." It is composed of the kanji characters "旗"(national flag; banner) and "揚" (raise; extol), which embed a hint of nationalism into the phrase by picturing the action of "raising a flag." Its logographic connotation, alongside its linguistic meaning, therefore, point toward the way Japanese migrant agents often tried to fold the individualist

[32] Ibid., 71.
[33] Ibid., 65.
[34] Ibid., 64.

ideology of "striving and success" into the nationalist project of expansionism overseas.[35] By making this connection, we can then interpret how Ojī's alternative reason for moving to Brazil works against the discourse of "pioneering" that only accommodates a certain classed subject.

Recalling the history of Okinawan migration to the mainland and immigration abroad from the previous section, we may interpret Ojī's rationale for migration as a demonstration of defiance. In choosing immigration to help provide for his family through remittances, he refuses to be incorporated into the Japanese state's capitalist structures and its efforts to transform farming families like Ojī's into dependent tenant farmers bound to industrial factories. Not only that, but his decision also rejects the nationalist call to migrate as a duty to Japan. Ojī makes use of the government-sponsored migration system to support his family in a way that allows them to maintain their household economies and, therefore, some of their anticapitalist communal relations. Though state officials recognize immigrants as imperial subjects, Ojī shows how they do not hold full control over these individuals, especially when they choose to diverge from the imperialist mission. In this way, the agency embedded in Ojī's act of migration is critical to our understanding of the intersecting systems of capitalism and Japanese imperialism as incomplete—neither succeeds in completely transforming Ojī into an instrument of capitalism or a loyal "pioneer" of imperial expansionism.

Ojī's narrative further challenges the heroic vision of Japanese immigrants as agents of overseas development by pointing to the gaps between the promises of migration leaders and the actual circumstances of life in Brazil. As Ojī cites the land's unready condition as explanation for his entry into work on the large plantation, he describes a common experience of Japanese and Okinawan immigrants—as discussed above—who expected the land allotted to them by

[35] See chapter one and Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier*, 97-99.

migration agencies to be already suitable for farming. And like these immigrants, Ojī expresses a feeling of "being at a loss," given the isolation of the settlements that differs from what he was led to anticipate.[36] On the one hand, by witnessing the state's neglect for the well-being of the immigrants it sponsors, we gain an awareness of how it left Okinawan and Japanese individuals vulnerable to poverty, worker exploitation, and harsh living conditions. Yet on the other hand, the state's indifference leaves room for Ojī to adapt to the situation by finding contract work outside the Japanese and Okinawan settlements, which eventually leads to him linking up with other anticapitalist struggles.

The possibility for transnational alliances emerges through Ojī's encounter with the prophet, who appears in the narrative as a counterhegemonic figure with the capability of rallying workers across Brazil into a movement against capitalist exploitation. Although the mysterious man himself has little to say about labor rights specifically, his march through plantation communities fuels rumors that he liberates tenant farmers from corrupt landowners.[37] Moreover, as the crowd around him grows, Ojī highlights the presence of "the elderly and women" amidst the alliance of workers.[38] With this detail, there grows a sense of the prophet's significance as a symbol of resistance not just against capitalist power, but also other intersecting forms of domination. Ojī's participation, too, demonstrates how Okinawan workers in coalition with other oppressed groups engaged in collective struggles against Brazilian capitalists and state militarism and thus, escaped the generalization of victimhood clouding the history of Okinawa.

At one point right before the group reaches the gates of the plantation, Ojī remarks how the crowd walks on the same red dust as the dirt in Okinawa.[39] He, hence, draws a further

[36] Medoruma, "Burjiru Ojī," 65.
[37] Ibid., 67.
[38] Ibid., 68.
[39] Ibid., 68.

transnational connection between anticapitalist struggles in Brazil and Okinawa. The link becomes even clearer, considering the liberation movement's culmination into a fire set to the plantation. In the early twentieth century, during the Japanese state's land reorganization project, small producers on the island of Miyako in Okinawa utilized arson to protest the state's appropriation of the local community's lands to build a government office.[40] Similar practices of setting fires in Cuba—especially to sugar cane fields—has been identified by Gillian McGillivray as a tactic employed by workers and revolutionaries to create jobs when the economy was suffering, demonstrate against repressive political regimes, and attack colonialist rule, which she also traces across Latin American and Hawai'i.[41] This history of burning land to resist capitalist and colonial domination helps us first, to interpret the plantation fire in the text as a deliberate act taken to demand better working conditions and second, to recognize anticapitalist struggles as a transnational phenomenon. We, as contemporary readers, may read the links across these different genealogies in Latin America and the Pacific as a spark of possibility for transnational, coalitional work between peoples fighting for liberation in local contexts tied to global processes.

The motif of fire returns at several points in the narrative, one being the fire set to Ojī's possessions after his funeral, since he had no living relatives to pass them on to. Among the pile of goods, the narrator makes note of a porn magazine he had caught sight of the first time he entered Ojī's home. At that previous visit, Ojī had quickly thrown the magazine into another room to remove it from the fourth-grade student's view.[42] By recalling this object that had made him feel uncomfortable, the narrator hints at unspoken dimensions of Ojī's personhood—

[40] Matsumura, *The Limits of Okinawa*, 78.
[41] Gillian McGillivray, *Blazing Cane: Sugar Communities, Class, and State Formation in Cuba, 1868-1959* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 2-5; 9.
[42] Medoruma, "Burajiru Ojī," 61.

dimensions that may be unethical and in tension with the narrator's idealized imagination of Ojī. The narrator's memory of the porn magazine does not allow the ethical tension surrounding it to be erased even when the material itself is reduced to ash. We may draw parallels between this scene of burning and the fire set by the workers movement since the fire in Brazil also cannot completely efface the harmful dimensions of this action that exists simultaneously alongside its liberatory possibilities. In this case, the memory of Japanese and Okinawan immigrants as actors within a system of settler colonialism calls for us to engage in a more critical view of the social arrangements in Brazil between migrant workers, small producers, settlers, Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous animals.

The tensions between these different groups comes into view in the moments leading up to the fire when the conflict begins to be defined by a widening bifurcation between the working class and the capitalist class. The dualist dynamic collapses the internal differences of the laborers' movement by shifting its focus to capitalist opposition from only the position of the proletariat. The binary opposition manifests visually when the marching workers reach the gates of the plantation and stop opposite the mercenaries and landowners, forming two distinct lines facing one another.[43] When Ojī looks over to the prophet, he notes the light in his eyes dimming and his hoarse voice weakening so that it cannot be heard amidst the rumbles of the crowd.[44] If we consider the prophet as a symbolic figure of coalitional possibilities across difference, we can then interpret how his overshadowing by the crowd portrays a change within the workers' movement that starts to adhere to an "either/or" mindset, which ultimately overlooks subjectivities that cannot be categorized as "proletariat/bourgeoisie."

[43] Ibid., 69.
[44] Ibid., 69.

One positionality obscured by the binary opposition is the Okinawan small producers like Ojī's uncle and his family. Before the march toward the plantation, Ojī's uncle had tried to hold his nephew back from following the prophet. Then after the fire, we learn from Ojī's narration that the flames had destroyed not only the large plantation, but also the immigrant families' farmland that they had just finished clearing so as to begin cultivating their crops.[45] From this scene, we perceive how the workers' movement and the farming families hold different visions of relationality beyond capitalism. The plantation workers, as part of the proletariat, engage in their struggles against the plantation owners with hopes of transforming the capitalist system that has been exploiting them. The small producers, however, push back against the capitalist system by resisting proletarianization. In other words, they demonstrate a desire for an anticolonial, anticapitalist society that builds upon their current organization of communal relations.[46] For them, the maintenance of this community in Brazil, as we have discussed, is linked to the preservation of a similar anticapitalist community in Okinawa that depends on remittances. By thinking only of their subjectivities as part of the working class, the laborers reinforce a Eurocentric understanding of liberation and justice that ultimately has harmful material consequences for the Okinawan farmers.

Yet it is critical to call attention to the fact that though the immigrant families lose their allotted acres in the fire, they came to own these lands through their complicity with a migratory system that operates through the logics of dispossession. The farming families live on the land as settlers whose presence overlaps with the control of the White settler state that can be traced back to Portuguese colonization. Medoruma's story reminds us of this history of multilayered settler colonialisms through its introduction of the flock of parrots. These birds fly onto the scene

[45] Ibid., 71.
[46] See Matsumura 20.

from their forest homes, which continue to shrink from agricultural developments invading their spaces. However, they appear as a strong force of nature in the text that attacks and threatens the human beings in conflict with each other. They do not make a distinction between the workers and the capitalists since both sides disrupt their state of living. The only person spared by the parrots is the prophet, who again figures a possibility of solidarity that moves beyond a binary oppositional framework.

The presence of the parrots calls to mind the Indigenous inhabitants who may be harmed by counterhegemonic movements that do not utilize an intersectional lens to envision liberation. Though only Indigenous non-human beings appear in the story, we, as readers attuned to the history of multiple settler colonialisms in Brazil, may further speculate about Indigenous human beings as part of this web of social relations. These Indigenous groups point out the inadequacy of antithetical imaginations such as workers/capitalists and oppressors/oppressed through illustrating the subjectivities that exceed these clear-cut boundaries, while still existing in relation with those who identify with them. In her discussions of Asian and Indigenous relationships in the Americas, Quynh Nhu Le illustrates how under the uneven forces of racialization, imperialism, and settler colonialism," the liberatory demands (or resistance) of one racialized/colonized community can hinge on the very logics that dominate the other."[47] This is why, she argues, the complexity of these social relations must be disentangled through an analysis that works beyond the simplistic identifications of "victim" and "perpetrator." "My Brazilian 'Grandfather's' Sake," through its illustration of the tensions between an anticapitalist workers' movement and Indigenous residents, exemplifies Le's theorization of relational

[47] Quynh Nhu Le, *Unsettled Solidarities: Asian and Indigenous Cross-Representations in the Américas* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019), 4.

entanglements that require an other-than-oppositional way of thinking to imagine liberation as a truly collective project.

Dean Itsuji Saranillio offers a reframing of decolonial liberation within the context of Asian settler colonialism in Hawai'i that provides a generative way of reading the Indigenous and immigrant relationships in the story. Describing Asian American anti-capitalist struggles in Hawai'i,[48] Saranillio writes, "While I politically agree with an anti-capitalist vision…these movements should be accountable to Native people by considering a preceding moment in time, a different arrangement of land, resources and a way of life that predates the settler state."[49] He then suggests that non-White settlers should engage with Indigenous knowledges to rethink liberation as a project of self-critique and solidarity to transform the colonialist and racist violence of the White settler state. Medoruma's narrative allows for a similar imagination of decoloniality that requires accountability for Native human and non-human beings in Brazil. But rather than look prior to the settle state formation, "My Brazilian 'Grandfather's' Sake" asks us to look toward alternative practices of community rooted in self-determination that continue to exist throughout the uneven development of the capitalist state.

With the Okinawan small producers and the Native Brazilian residents both attempting to preserve anticolonial, anticapitalist ways of life, how might putting their knowledges in conversation open up a possibility for imagining liberatory possibilities? With an eye toward

[48] Saranillio notes that some Asian American scholars have celebrated instances when Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Filipinos, and Koreans came together to form cross-cultural, working-class communities and through their anticapitalist struggles, played a central role in shaping the modern development of Hawai'i (289). Saranillio, however, identifies the claim that these racialized groups contributed to development and therefore, should be recognized as part of the fabric of the U.S. is an argument that first, assumes Hawai'i to have been an "undeveloped" place prior to the arrival of these immigrants. Second, it gives praise to practices of primitive accumulation that destroy Indigenous ways of life and thus, complies with the settler state's logic. See Dean Itsuji Saranillio, "Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters: a Thought Piece on Critiques, Debates, and Indigenous Difference," *settler colonial studies* 3, no.3-4(2013), 280-294.
[49] Ibid., 290.

decoloniality, we may disentangle the varying and shifting positionalities of Okinawan immigrants in Brazil relative to the intertwined structures of settler colonialism, imperialism, and global capitalism. We then may begin to reconceptualize the critique of these workings of power by pushing for a politics of accountability in conjunction with goals of liberation, so as not to neglect the needs of anticolonial and/ or Indigenous communities. This thinking from a multi-axed vantage point that challenges the binary logic of hegemony/counterhegemony will continue to be important as we contemplate the short story's relationship to anti-reversion movements in Okinawa.

Toward an Anti-Reversionism of Multiplicity

When Ojī returns to Okinawa about ten years after the incident on the plantation, the prophet's foretelling of the "destruction of the world" takes on a new meaning—the world had been on fire in the wake of colonialism, global warfare, and capitalist oppression. His visit to his hometown confirms the deaths of his parents and siblings, in addition to the rumors he heard in Brazil about Okinawa's devastation during the Asia-Pacific War. Dealing with this grief, Ojī decides to go back to a cave in the forest where his father had brought him right before he left for Brazil. In the cave, his father had hidden a bottle of Okinawan *awamori* sake behind a rock and told his son that the sake would be fermenting until they could drink it together again.[50]Although Ojī finds the bottle in the place his father showed him, he also discovers alongside it the remains of human beings and their possessions, all covered in black soot from U.S. flamethrowers that fired into the cave during the war. The words his father had spoken to him, "Do not forget,"

[50] Medoruma, "Burajiru Ojī," 81.

resound within the text, calling out not only to Ojī, but to us as readers as well, to remember the victims of the Battle of Okinawa.[51]

From the traces of ash in the cave, we become aware of the parallels between the fires in Okinawa and Brazil in the mid-1940s. The Japanese state's direct actions of colonialism in Okinawa, as well as its inactions that left immigrants vulnerable to hardship and oppression in Brazil caused devastation for the people of Okinawa in both places. Yet at the same time, the two fires call to mind the different experiences of violence for Okinawan individuals who lived in the prefecture during the Asia-Pacific War and those who migrated outside it, as well as for non-Okinawan humans and non-humans impacted by Japanese imperialism. Ojī experiences his difference from his family as trauma as he tries to come to terms with having survived. In this section, I will discuss Ojī's response to state violence through enacting everyday practices of resistance against Okinawa's reversion to Japan. I will especially look closely at Ojī's act of sharing his memories with the narrator, which I read as a demonstration of anti-reversionism that exposes the repetition of Japanese imperialism in collusion with ongoing U.S. imperialism in Okinawa.

Towards the beginning of the story, the narrator mentions that there were frequent demonstrations and strikes in his town to protest Okinawa's reversion, which sometimes resulted in school cancellations.[52] One of these occasions is when Ojī saves the narrator and their friendship begins, alerting us to the fact that Ojī does not participate in the protests. While Ojī, too, opposes Okinawa's "return" to Japan, he shows his dissent through the way he lives his life day to day. The differences between the protestors and Ojī bring to mind the multiplicity of struggles against capitalism and colonialism that we similarly noted in Ojī's account of Brazil,

[51] Ibid., 82-83.
[52] Ibid., 55.

which points to the heterogeneous positionalities and range of visions within the anti-reversion movement as well.

The choice of focus calls to mind Medoruma's distinction from the earlier generation of postwar Okinawan writers. Many of these authors of poetry and fiction actively participated in anti-eviction protests in the 1950s as part of a coalition of students, teachers, farmers, labor unions, and other activists and saw literature as a crucial medium through which to critique the U.S. occupation.[53] Some students at the University of the Ryūkyūs started the radical literary magazine *Ryūdai bungaku*, which published creative and critical pieces of writing to intervene in the social and political arena. Among these writers were Kishaba Jun, Okamoto, and Kawamitsu Shinichi, as well as Arakawa Akira, who will be discussed in more detail in this section, all who developed strong political consciousness during the uprisings.

Born in 1960 after the protests of the early postwar generation, Medoruma's investment in sociopolitical criticism and activism instead stems from his experiences hearing his family's memories of the Battle of Okinawa and later working in the city of Nago at the height of the controversy over the proposal to move the U.S.'s Futenma Air Base offshore near Nago and Henoko.[54] As Kyle Ikeda categorizes Medoruma as a "second-generation survivor," he explains Medoruma's difference from Okinawan writers who lived through the Asia-Pacific war in his "focus on how a war survivor has lived since, rather than during the war."[55] In "My Brazilian 'Grandfather's' Sake," Medoruma similarly centers the perspective of someone who did not experience the Battle of Okinawa directly. He thus, pictures anti-reversionism from a position

[53]Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson, *Southern Exposure: Modern Literature from Okinawa*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000, 5; 25-26.
[54] Molasky, "Medoruma Shun," 161.
[55] Ikeda, "Unarticulated Memories," 305-306.

outside the mainstream movement, offering an alternative way to consider addressing the ongoing transpacific colonialism in Okinawa.

For Ojī, resistance takes the shape of small-scale farming and fishing practices to sustain himself. As the narrator delineates, Ojī's home sits alongside a small river on the periphery of a plot of land owned by a large sugar factory. The house's small frame and corrugated metal roof stand in contradistinction to the factory's vast industrial complex. Recalling the history of the introduction of the sugar industry in Okinawa in the early 1900s, we can interpret Ojī's occupation of space as a continuation of past struggles by small producers to refuse complete conversion into suppliers of raw materials for the factories. We especially become aware of the way in which Ojī maintains small cultivation practices when the narrator and his school friends playfully torment Ojī at the start of the story by stealing his papaya, *sumomo* plums, *shīkwāsā* (hirami lemon), and other indigenous fruits from his farm.[56] The diversity of crops he continues to grow on a small scale for his own subsistence demonstrates anticapitalist practices within a capitalist space—a means of nonengagement with the hegemonic system.

In addition to farming, Ojī practices fishing in a way that defies the capitalist logics of accumulation, expansion, and consumption that have taken their toll on the local human and non-human community. One major consequence of the sugar factory is pollution, which has contaminated the river that once held great significance to the local community's birth and death rituals, as well as their everyday lives.[57] Moreover, the waste and sewage dumped into the water by the industrial complex has killed all the fish in the river with the exception of tilapia that suffered deformities instead.[58] Yet despite the environmental destruction, Ojī has adapted to the

[56] Medoruma, "Burajiru Ojī," 52.
[57] Ibid., 78.
[58] Ibid., 53.

situation and has found a place by the reef, past where the river flows into the sea, where he can catch a species of healthy parrotfish using an aquascope.[59] His innovation figures the efforts he continues to pursue as alternatives to big industry's violent forms of dispossession and the ways he pushes back against the pressures the capitalist state exerts to turn fishermen like Ojī into dead labor.

Before befriending the narrator, Ojī's everyday struggles against capitalist subsumption and domination exhibit a praxis of resistance that resonates with Arakawa Akira's anti-reversion theory. Arakawa was born in 1931 as the son of a mainland-born mother and an Okinawa-born father and spent a large amount of time in Yaeyama,[60] both of which shaped his understanding of Okinawa's heterogeneity. His "Anti-Reversion Theory" detailed in his 1971 book, 反国家の兇区：沖縄・自立への視点 *Han kokka no kyōku: Okinawa—jiritsu he no shiten* (The unpropitious space of antistatism: Okinawa—A view toward independence), argues for the liberation of Okinawa, but in a different way than the discourse of the Ryūkyū independence movement that Arakawa himself critiques. Rather than advocate for a sovereign Okinawan state, Arakawa asserts that anti-reversion is synonymous with "anti-state" and "anti-nation."[61] He identifies a danger in the independence movement's call for "an Okinawan society made by Okinawans" because it produces an Okinawan nationalism constructed in opposition to Japanese nationalism that fails to free itself of the pitfalls of nationalism and statehood.[62] It produces a representation of a homogeneous Okinawa that depends upon the exclusion of the community's

[59] Ibid., 63.
[60] Yaeyama was a peripheralized region of the former Ryūkyū Kingdom that created persisting divides between *Uchinaa* (Okinawa) and *Eema* (Yaeyama). See Eiiji Oguma and Leonie R. Stickland, *The Boundaries of 'the Japanese': Volume 1: Okinawa 1818-1972* (Tokyo: Trans Pacific Press, 2014), 323-324.
[61] Arakawa Akira, *Hankokka no kyōku: Okinawa jiritsu he no shiten* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1996), 304.
[62] Ibid., 133.

internal "Others" and allows for the system of state power to continue that will only repeat the violence of state institutions and its control that extends down through people's thoughts, feelings, and actions.[63]

In contrast, Arakawa defines "Anti-Reversion Theory" as a "spiritual inclination (志向 *shikō*) to continue to reject unification with the state until the bitter end."[64] To him, anti-reversionism is less about the larger institutional and territorial factors and more about one's own decision of whether to allow oneself to be subsumed by the state or fight subsumption with all one's strength. It is a way of living as a "*hikokumin* 非国民 (stateless person).[65] In his explanation, he repeats words associated with the self and one's interior being—みずから *mizukara* (oneself), 内発的 *naihatsuteki*(intrinsic), 個の位相 *ko no isō* (level of the singular), 自己 *jiko* (self)—and calls "Anti-Reversion Theory" an "inward-facing manifesto" to emphasize its practice on an individual level. He urges Okinawans to emphasize their "otherness" and heterogeneity to counter the state's totalizing logic and liberate themselves from its hegemonic ideologies.

Ojī's farming and fishing practices that reject assimilation into the capitalist state hold similarities with Arakawa's understanding of anti-reversion, insofar as he carries out these actions on an individual level as a seemingly "stateless person" or someone without a nationality. His disidentification with any collective identity may be attributed to his life experiences of dislocation and exile. After the plantation fire, Ojī is forced to wander across Brazil—through the

[63] Ibid., 305-306.
[64] Ibid., 304.
[65] Ibid., 304.

countryside and the city—looking for work to earn enough money to return to Okinawa. When he does repatriate, he once again finds himself displaced by the presence of the U.S. military base in his hometown and the absence of close relatives with whom he can stay. He continues to live as an outsider in the narrator's town with little interaction with his neighbors and eventually becomes a target of gossip among the community locals. These stages in Ojī's life linked to itinerancy and social distance evoke a feeling of "statelessness" or "nationlessness" that Arakawa describes as being at the core of the spirit of anti-reversionism. His experience of loss further gives him cause to position himself outside the state that has taken so much from him. The illustration of his anticapitalist lifestyle until his death pictures an embodiment of Arakawa's anti-reversionism as a refusal to be fused with the state by all means possible.

However, as we witness in the story, Ojī begins to turn outward through his connection with the narrator. He teaches the narrator how to find fish unaffected by the factory's pollution and shows him how to cook with local ingredients. Ojī's local knowledge and everyday, individual actions that reject the logics and structures of the state, as well as his memories of state violence, are passed down to the narrator and converted into communal tactics of resistance. Furthermore, the unexpected friendship that forms between Ojī and the narrator, in spite of their differences in age and Ojī's outsider status in their community, embodies a form of dissent—their bond rooted in interdependence signals to an alternative way of life that contrasts the hierarchical social structures under imperialism and capitalism. From the text's imagination of supportive relations across difference, we may be inspired to think on the possibilities of additional communal connections based in reciprocity.

Ojī's transition from the internal to the external, from the singular to relationships, bears a resemblance to Choi Jinseok's "sequel" to Arakawa's "anti-reversion theory" that he describes

in "Specters of East Asia: Okinawa, Taiwan, and Korea."[66] Although Choi appreciates Arakawa's idea of "living as a stateless person," he critiques the way Arakawa views this process as internal and singular. Even though Arakawa rejects Okinawan nationalism, his focus on the self misses "a gaze toward the Other who dwells within" and ultimately fails to escape the dualism of "oppressed/ oppressor."[67] Choi proposes amending "anti-reversion theory" and moving past its oppositional thinking by bringing up the example of chōsenjin[68] who died in the Battle of Okinawa, some at the hands of Okinawans. As Le and Saranillio posit in their discussions of Asian settler colonialism, Choi argues that the purpose of remembering the deaths of chōsenjin is not to identify the different actors in the battle as perpetrators or victims. Rather, he shows how the memory calls attention to chōsenjin as "an internal Other within Okinawa" whose encounter can help to dismantle a singular understanding of the self—especially a self-identity constituted oppositionally—and establish solidarity with different stateless persons.

Similarly, in her analysis of the people of Okinawa as witnesses to the gendered, racialized violence of Japanese *ianjo* ("comfort stations"), Yunshin Hong argues that the conflicted and contradictory positionality of Okinawans draws attention to the inadequacies of a victim/victimizer dynamic since "battlegrounds are intrinsically unstable, violent places where anything goes."[69] While states often try to instrumentalize war memories to support their narratives of victimhood nationalism, Hong shows how personal experiences exceed these closed accounts and shed light on the battlefield as a space of complex social relations. Instead of

[66] Choi, "Specters of East Asia", 13.
[67] Ibid., 13-16.
[68] Chōsenjin refers to the people of the Korean Peninsula (both North and South) and was historically used by the Japanese colonial regime to name the peoples it colonized on this peninsula. Though the term had derogatory connotations, it has been reclaimed more recently by activists who remember the violence of Japanese colonialism and envision a brighter future where the peoples of North Korea and South Korea can once again be brought together. See Ibid., 22-23.
[69] Hong, *Comfort Stations*, 11.

capitalizing on war testimonials to buttress a "politics of grievance," Hong writes, "the challenge is to recognize, compare, and give voice to the grievances of the living *and* the dead."[70] Choi, too, looks to an Okinawan epistemology that views everyday living as a "dwelling together with the dead" to encourage a recognition of the dead as imperative to our current existence. He sees this relationship as a crucial step in holding ourselves accountable for our complicities with past and ongoing violence so that we may help transform them.[71]

Looking at Ojī's relationship with the narrator alongside Choi's and Hong's insights, we can perceive the way both frame Okinawa's "return" to Japan as more than a matter of domination and subordination. Similar to Choi's call to gaze at the Other within, Ojī's act of sharing his story with the narrator encourages a confrontation with the Others within the Japanese empire, for what Ojī passes on to the narrator is a narrative of trauma that contains not only his experience of the traumatic event, but also the voices of others bound up with the past wound. Cathy Caruth theorizes trauma as the repetition of the voice of "the other within the self" whose address illustrates "the way in which one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound."[72] Seen in this way, we can understand how Ojī's story brings with it the past traumas of the prophet's murder, the parrots' dispossession, the small producers' loss of land, and his family's deaths, and how by listening to Ojī, the narrator encounters these different beings. He further communicates this idea when he tells the narrator that butterflies are the spirits of deceased persons who come to visit the earth.[73]

---

[70] Ibid., 18.
[71] Choi, "Specters of East Asia," 7-9.
[72] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 8.
[73] Medoruma, "Burajiru Ojī," 80.

Like the idea of "dwelling with the dead," Ojī envisions living as a co-existence with the dead and an acknowledgement of what their past lives mean to the present.

By recalling these various human and non-human beings in the web of transpacific entanglements, reversion takes on larger implications as a repetition of imperialist, colonialist, and capitalist violence tied to transnational relations of power. While the Battle of Okinawa stands as a significant event within Ojī's story, the trauma surrounding this event is a trauma of survival, of Ojī's absence from Okinawa at the time of his family's deaths. The narrative, thus, pushes us to recognize the incommensurate experiences of violence across the Japanese empire, and to consider this history in accordance with the complex social relations that compose it. The dualist stance of Arakawa's anti-reversionism does not entirely match Ojī's experience because his past shows that total victimization was not a universal experience for the people of Okinawa. We may recall the complicities of Okinawan and Japanese immigrants with settler colonialism, as well as Choi's example of chōsenjin in Okinawa as different outliers that disrupt the boundaries between victim and perpetrator. Hence, the multiplicity of subjectivities that surface in the text urges us to question the assumption that power operates as a binary and recognize the imperative of thinking intersectionally and relationally in order to move toward decolonial liberation.

Finally, the narrator retelling Ojī's story in 1999, while Okinawa was (and still is) under the control of the Japanese state and the location to numerous U.S. military bases, can be interpreted as a move toward building decolonial alliances. "My Brazilian 'Grandfather's' Sake" leads us, as readers, to encounter Ojī and the actors in his story who we may not otherwise hear in dominant historical narratives. The memories serve as a way to intervene in the knowledge-power that upholds the structures of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism and initiate a

critique attuned to their multifaceted, intersecting dimensions. The text, in this way, calls us to remember those who resisted and/or have been harmed by transpacific hegemonies and listen to those who continue to confront conditions of domination. Yet if we are to honor those who have passed away and practice solidarity with those living—a gaze toward the Other—we must reflect on our positionalities within the current arrangement of global social relations and hold ourselves accountable for our actions that may infringe on the liberation of another.

Conclusion

"My Brazilian 'Grandfather's' Sake" is rich in complexity and necessitates an intersectional, multi-directional framework that exceeds binary logic to analyze the relationships it pictures. As we have explored in this chapter, the short story urges us not only to critique the power systems of capitalism, imperialism, and settler colonialism, but also to consider the uneven ways in which individuals interact with each system depending on their positionalities. Relationality emerges as a core theme of the text, as we read about the encounters between immigrants, Indigenous beings, state officials, military personnel, workers, capitalists, students, and the elderly. The intricacy of their entanglements with one another solicits an analytic attuned to workings of power as more than domination/subordination, so that the critique of power addresses its multiple dimensions and specificities. To imagine otherwise from colonial racial capitalist domination, "My Brazilian 'Grandfather's' Sake" makes it clear that liberation must be pursued for all human and non-human beings and requires all parties to hold themselves accountable for their complicities with hegemony. The story suggests the possibility of self-transformation by looking toward the Other—toward beings more vulnerable than ourselves—

which may allow for coalitions to be built between differently-situated "stateless persons" that continue the decolonial work of resistance to modern/colonial systems of power.

In this way, we may reconsider how "anomalies" who sit on the inside border of the Japanese Brazilian cultural identity and subjects of "alterity" who sit outside of it may find productive ways to work across the boundary and form alliances with one another. When Japanese diasporic literature in Brazil is considered a sealed-off category that should be examined as representative of a singular cultural formation, it falls into the trap of self-referentiality and a gaze fixed inward. Yet by analyzing literature relationally through a transpacific lens that disrupts borders and looks outward, we open our thinking to surprising innovations with renewed energy for critical work. Reading Medoruma's "My Brazilian 'Grandfather's' Sake" in relation with the other authors we have explored in this dissertation, as well as those considered to be Japanese Brazilian writers, we gain generative insight into the overlaps, conflicts, and divergences between Okinawan diasporic and Japanese diasporic persons and how these diasporic communities also relate to national, Indigenous, and other non-diasporic actors. The cross-border dialogue begins a process of decolonial relationship-building that further carries a hope of transforming the transpacific power structures that have historically separated these peoples.

Bibliography

Akibayashi, Kozue and Suzuyo Takazato. "Gendered Insecurity Under Long-term Military Presence: the Case of Okinawa." In *The Gender Imperative: Human Security vs State Security,* edited by Betty A. Reardon and Asha Hans, 37-58. London: Routledge, 2019.

Azuma, Eiichiro. *In Search of our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Choi Jinseok. "Specters of East Asia: Okinawa, Taiwan, and Korea." *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 14, no.18.4 (2016): 1-24.

Endoh, Toake. *Exporting Japan: Politics of Emigration toward Latin America*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Field, Norma. *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1991.

Fujinami Kai. *Okinawa diasupora-nettowāku: gurōbaru no naka de kaikō wo hatsu* uchinānchu, Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2020.

Fujisawa Kenichi. "Okinawa ni okeru 'dōka' kyōiku no ronri to nihon shokuminchi kyōiku seisaku kenkyu: Taiwan ryōyū zengo no kyōshizō no kentō wo chūshin ni." *Annual Bulletin of Japan Academic Society for Educational Policy* 2 (1995): 150-166.

Hayashi Hirofumi. "Unsettled State Violence in Japan: the Okinawa Incident." In *State Violence in East Asia*, edited by N. Ganesan and Sung Chull Kim, 75-103. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2013.

Hong, Yunshin. *'Comfort Stations' as Remembered by Okinawans during World War II*. Translated by Robert Ricketts. Leiden: Brill, 2020.

Hook, Glenn D. "The American Eagle in Okinawa: the Politics of Contested Memory and the Unfinished War." *Japan Forum* 27, no. 3 (2015): 299-320.

Ikeda, Kyle. "Unarticulated Memories of the Battle of Okinawa: the Early Fiction of Second-generation War Survivor Medoruma Shun," *positions: asia critique* 22, no. 2 (2014): 301-328.

Kawada Yō, "Kokkyō - kokka – dai san ji Ryūkyū shobun," *Jōkyō* (April 1974), 1-23.

Kawato, Yuko. *Protests Against U.S. Military Base Policy in Asia: Persuasion and Its Limits.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2015.

Koshy, Susan, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson. Introduction to *Colonial Racial Capitalism*. Edited by Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson, 1-30. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022.

Le, Quynh Nhu. *Unsettled Solidarities: Asian and Indigenous Cross-Representations in the Américas*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019.

Lesser, Jeffrey. *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Lim, Jie-Hyun. "Towards a Transnational History of Victimhood Nationalism: On the Trans-Pacific Space." In *Trans-Pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*, edited by Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, 45-60. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2012.

Matsumura, Wendy. *The Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

McGillivray, Gillian. *Blazing Cane: Sugar Communities, Class, and State Formation in Cuba, 1868-1959.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

McLauchlan, Alastair A. "War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity on Okinawa: Guilt on Both Sides," *Journal of Military Ethics* 13, no. 4 (2014): 363-380.

Medoruma Shun, "Burajiru Ojī no sake," In *Mabuigumi*, 58-89. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1999.

Molasky, Michael. "Medoruma Shun: the Writer as Public Intellectual in Okinawa Today." In *Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power*, edited by Laura Hein and Mark Selden, 156-185. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003.

Molasky, Michael and Steve Rabson, editors. *Southern Exposure: Modern Literature from Okinawa*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.

Nishida, Mieko. *Diaspora and Identity: Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018.

Oguma, Eiji and Leonie R. Stickland. *The Boundaries of 'the Japanese': Volume 1: Okinawa 1818-1972*. Tokyo: Trans Pacific Press, 2014.

Okinawa-ken Kyōiku Īnkai, ed. *Okinawa-kenshi. Vol. 7, Imin*. Okinawa: Okinawa-ken Kyōiku Īnkai, 1974.

Nakasone, Ronald Y. "An Impossible Possibility," In *Okinawan Diaspora*, edited by Ronald Y. Nakasone, 3-25. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.

Nomura Kōya. "Colonialism and Nationalism: The View from Okinawa." *In Okinawan Diaspora*, edited by Ronald Y. Nakasone, 112-119. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.

Sakai, Naoki and Hyon Joo Yoo. Introduction. *The Trans-Pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*, edited by Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo. World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2012.

Saranillio, Dean Itsuji. "Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters: a Thought Piece on Critiques,

Debates, and Indigenous Difference." *settler colonial studies* 3, no.3-4 (2013): 280-294.

Shimabuku, Annmaria. *Alegal: Biopolitics and the Unintelligibility of Okinawan Life*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2018.

Shimabuku, Annmaria. "Petitioning Subjects: Miscegenation in Okinawa from 1945 to 1952 and the Crisis of Sovereignty." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3 (2010): 355-374.

Shimabuku, Annmaria. "Transpacific Colonialism: An Intimate View of Transnational Activism in Okinawa." *The New Centennial Review* 12, no. 1 (2012): 131-158.

Takizawa, Makota. "Reversion to Japan and Future Prospects." *Asian Survey* 11, no. 5 (May 1971): 496-505.

Tomiyama Ichirō. *Kindai nihon shakai to 'okinawajin.'* Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōron sha, 1990.

Yoneyama, Lisa. *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Yoneyama, Lisa. 2017. "Toward a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific." *American Quarterly,* vol. 69 no. 3: 471-482. doi.org/10.1353/aq.2017.0041

CONCLUSION

Throughout *Transpacific Anomalies and Alterities: Decolonial Possibilities through Japanese Brazilian Literature*, I have utilized an analysis of Japanese Brazilian literary texts to explore possibilities for transforming modern/colonial power formations across the transpacific into alternative forms of relationality that might better support the well-being of the planet and *all* its inhabitants. At the core of this project has been critical reflection on social relations through the lens of decoloniality—not only social relations that appear in the stories, but also social relations made possible through the reading of these narratives. For the latter, I mean the moments of encounter with the heteroglossia of voices in the texts that take place in the act of reading. Within this dissertation, I have paid particular attention to traditionally marginalized voices from "anomalous" Japanese Brazilians like female and queer immigrants, as well as "subaltern" persons including Okinawan Brazilians, Native Brazilians, and Afro-Brazilians.

Furthermore, the act of analyzing the Japanese Brazilian literary texts has brought me into conversation with critics, readers, and scholars who previously encountered these literary texts. That is, it has allowed me to learn the various interpretations put forward by these persons, while at the same time, it has given me the opportunity to re-articulate their engagements with the texts to show what different meanings the literature may suggest. I have been especially interested in reconsidering the Japanese Brazilian stories within feminist and decolonial frameworks to reflect on what liberatory and transformative meanings they offer as alternatives to the modern/colonial gender system.

While I have tried to allow the texts that I explore to speak for themselves and participate primarily as a listener, I cannot deny my mediation in the process of re-articulation and the

power and privilege I carry as I encounter these different voices. To put it another way, I recognize my complex complicities with intersecting modern/colonial systems of domination, especially as a white, cisgender woman performing academic research at a U.S. university; I additionally see how my encounter with these texts has been conditioned by my position within global relations of power and modes of exchange. Although I attempt critical reflection that includes self-reflection in this dissertation, I understand that I may never be able to completely "hear" what the voices in the literary texts are saying. That there will never be transparent communication between us.

Yet the point of this encounter is not necessarily for me to understand, especially to understand through taxonimized forms of meaning-making and paradigms of knowledge-production with which I am familiar. Instead, it may be more for me to remain open to multiple ways of thinking, being, living beyond what I currently know—to start a process that might transform myself in a way that will move me or perhaps, *us* closer to decoloniality. Plus, it is my hope that this dissertation will be re-articulated. That it might inspire new social relations and bring into dialogue discourses, ideas, and embodied knowledges that may not have previously interacted. And that it might spark subsequent self-transformations among many readers, which little by little might engender everyday decolonial changes in the world.