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# JAPANESE BRAZILIAN SAUDADES

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# JAPANESE BRAZILIAN SAUDADES

## DIASPORIC IDENTITIES & CULTURAL PRODUCTION

**IGNACIO LÓPEZ-CALVO**

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*To the memory of Gonzalo López Martínez, my father, my teacher, my role model.*

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# FOREWORD

JEFFREY LESSER

One of my favorite literary subgenres has "ethnic" cops as heroes. In these novels, "ethnicity" is portrayed as an insider identity generated in largely closed communities whose members struggle in interactions with society at large. Not surprisingly, the ethnic cop genre is often produced by authors who share an identity with the main character: typical is Japanese (US) American Naomi Hirahara's amateur sleuth, who is a seventy-year-old Japanese American gardener.[1] Chinese (US) American author Henry Chang's fictional hero is Jack Yu, a Chinese American cop assigned to New York's Chinatown. In Chang's most recent novel, *Death Money*, a scene in an illegal gambling den in New York City is described by the narrator this way: "There were a few other Asians, he could not tell what kind . . . Cuban maybe?"[2]

Ignacio López-Calvo's *Japanese Brazilian Saudades: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Production* is an academic examination of what Chang means when he describes "Cubans" as a type of "Asian." By treating identity (ethnic, national, regional) as situational, López-Calvo makes an important statement of what has been termed the New Latin American Ethnic Studies, a scholarly

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movement seeking to move beyond the traditional black-white-indigenous social construction of the region.[3] *Japanese Brazilian Saudades* reminds us that the essentialist discourses often found among subjects and scholars when discussing identities are neither uniform nor consistent. Indeed, by deconstructing the many ways that Nikkei construct aspects of their identities, López-Calvo reminds readers that being an "insider" and an "outsider" are two sides of the same coin, constantly being leveraged against an always changing set of traditional norms.

*Japanese Brazilian Saudades* is not just an important addition to the New Latin American Ethnic Studies because of its approach to identity; the book helps readers to understand why moments of normative ethnicity (i.e., as practiced or felt by a majority of any particular ethnic group) seem most likely observed among those least engaged with ethnic institutions. As he shows, Japanese Brazilian identity discourses are much more varied than those expressed by, for example, presidents of *kenjin-kai*, or Nikkei social clubs. By using a wide source base that includes the discursive, the archival, and the visual, Nikkei Brazilians helps to denaturalize ethnicity and to turn identity from essential to negotiated.

Readers will be challenged by a narrative structure that plays with temporality in the same ways that real humans do, something often absent from scholarly works that demand that subjects behave like clocks. López-Calvo, on the other hand, uses the innovative technique of examining contemporary novels and films by the period they cover, rather than the time when they were produced. In doing this, he shows how *saudades*, a word often translated as "yearnings" but which speaks to the national identity of many Brazilians, gets re-created outside of traditional chronologies. This allows him to avoid what I consider the most dangerous word in scholarship, "or," and its binary categories masking conclusions with false questions. Unlike many scholars who ask their subjects "do you feel more Japanese or Brazilian," López-Calvo privileges a different word, "and," and thus analyzes complex responses that do not reduce subject lives to simplicities.

*Japanese Brazilian Saudades* is more than a book about Japan, Brazil, and Nikkei; it is a statement of how scholarly work can best represent the complexities and simplicities of multicultural lives.

## NOTES

1. Hirahara, *Summer of the Big Bachi*. Other examples of "ethnic" cops can be found in Limón, *Jade Lady Burning* and Kaminsky, *Lieberman's Folly*.
2. Chang, *Death Money*, 72.
3. Lesser and Rein, "Challenging Particularity."

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# A NOTE ON TRANSLATION

Where the text's English version does not appear in the bibliography and no page numbers are included after the quotation, the translation is mine. Otherwise, the English version is quoted from printed sources.

The spelling of several Okinawan and Japanese words (particularly when implying a long vowel) changes from author to author and from text to text, as authors often try to transcribe phonetically terms that they learned at home.

# JAPANESE BRAZILIAN SAUDADES

INTRODUCTION

# DIASPORAS, UNSTABLE IDENTITIES, AND NIKKEI DISCOURSE

> To feel at home is to know that things are in their places and so are you; it is a state of mind that doesn't depend on an actual location. The object of longing, then, is not really a place called home but this sense of intimacy in the world.
>
> *(Svetlana Boym 251)*

It is 5 August 2016. Thanks to the opening ceremony of the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games directed by Brazilian filmmaker Fernando Meirelles, the world learns about Brazil's convoluted history: in a spectacle leaning toward inclusive and pluralistic multiculturalism, numerous actors recognize the valuable contributions of indigenous people, Europeans, Africans, Middle Easterners, and Asians to Brazilian society. "Donald Trump will 'hate' the Rio Olympics opening ceremony" (n.p.), stated Meirelles. Yet only the suffering of Africans is acknowledged through the cement-looking blocks on their feet as they walk through the stadium; by contrast, actors carrying big, red, leaf-shaped flags evoke a sanitized version of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to Brazilian shores. Three members of the 2016

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**FIGURE 1.1.** Japanese immigrant family in Japan (collection of the Historical Museum of Japanese Immigration in Brazil).

Brazilian Olympic team are of Japanese origin: the runner Mahau Camargo Sugimati; the rugby player Paula Harumi Ishibashi; and the judoka Charles Koshiro Chibana, who still speaks Japanese at home with his parents. But who are these Nikkeijin? This book provides a glimpse into the Japanese Brazilian world through a focus on Nikkei history, discourse, and Lusophone cultural production in Brazil and Japan since the 1980s. As will be seen, "multiculturalism" is a more elusive term in Japan, a country that until recently has been proud of its ethnic homogeneity and where only 2 percent of the population was born overseas.[1] However, Ryoko Tsuneyoshi and Kaori H. Okano point out that "Japan has been a multi-ethnic and multicultural entity since pre-modern times, as studies have challenged the popular image of homogeneity and advanced what might be called a 'multicultural Japan' thesis" (1). Even though Japan is not known for receiving immigrants, it does boast the second-largest Brazilian community outside of Brazil. Yet, in order

**FIGURE 1.2.** Japanese workers in the banana harvest in Brazil (collection of the Historical Museum of Japanese Immigration in Brazil).

to be admitted as immigrant workers, they must have Japanese ancestry or be married to Nikkeijin, an inherently racist policy endorsed by both the Japanese and the Brazilian governments.

The study of the Asian presence and heritage in Latin America, together with that of cultural production by Asians of Latin American ancestry, is an emerging academic field. Numerous books, articles, journal issues, dissertations, conferences, symposia, workshops, and new journals have been devoted to these topics in recent years. In the field of history alone, six books about the Asian presence in Mexico have been published in as many years.[2] Along these lines, in the field of literary and cultural analysis, several books on orientalism in Latin America and the Caribbean have also been published as well as studies on cultural production by Latin American authors of Asian descent, the representation of Asians in Latin American literature, or literary and cultural relations between Latin America and Asia.[3] As to the specific study of Japanese immigration and settlement in Latin America and the Caribbean, more than one hundred volumes have been published since the pioneering historical studies by C. Harvey Gardiner, James L. Tigner, Iyo Kunimoto, and

**FIGURE 1.3.** Japanese immigrants arriving in Brazil (collection of the Historical Museum of Japanese Immigration in Brazil).

María Elena Ota Mishima. Many other scholars have also explored the Asian experience in Brazil and in other Latin American countries.[4]

This book, a new contribution to the field of Asians in the Americas and a continuation of my 2013 *The Affinity of the Eye: Writing Nikkei in Peru*, studies, for the most part, self-definition and Nikkei discourse in Portuguese-language cultural production by Brazilian authors of Japanese ancestry. This

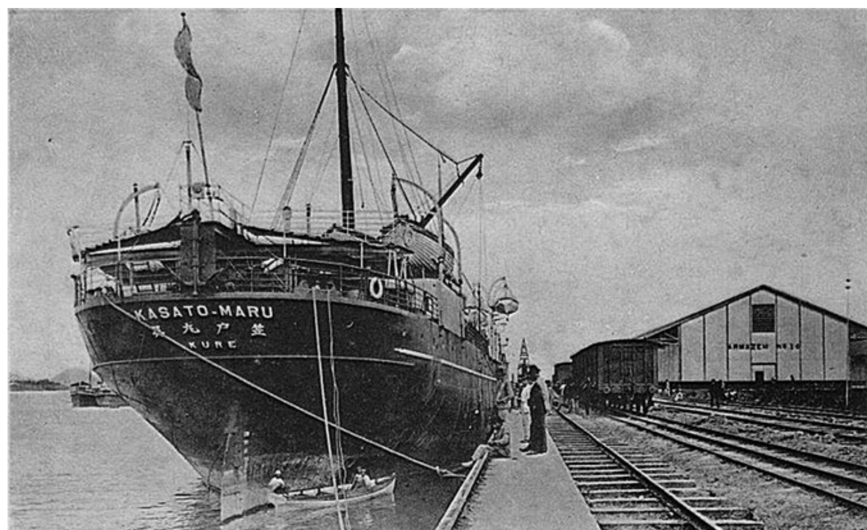


**FIGURE 1.4.** *Kasato Maru* (first ship to bring Japanese immigrants to Brazil) (collection of the Historical Museum of Japanese Immigration in Brazil).

study also analyzes complementary cultural production about Brazilian Nikkeijin written or directed by Japanese (from Japan) and non-Nikkei Brazilians. Therefore, whereas other critics have explored Japanese-language fiction written in Brazil, I will focus mainly on Portuguese-language works and films by Nikkei authors and filmmakers.

Although there are also many Japanese-language texts related to the Brazilian Nikkeijin, they are not the main object of study here, other that the Japanese-language and bilingual films analyzed; however, as stated, several other scholars are currently engaging with this important body of work from the perspective of Japanese Studies, often focusing on Issei literature, which was produced mostly in Japanese and encouraged by Japanese-language immigrant newspapers through prose fiction literary prizes and other means. Other institutions, such as the Bunkyo,[5] founded in 1955 in the Liberdade neighborhood of São Paulo—which serves as cultural center, museum, library, and mutual assistance society—as well as the literary and cultural association Brasil Nikkei Bungaku, founded in 1966, have promoted the publication of both Japanese- and Portuguese-language prose, poetry, and other modes of cultural production as a way to record and

articulate a Nikkei collective memory in Brazil and to promote Brazilian culture in Japan.

Regarding these types of studies in the United States, a recent workshop organized by Seth Jacobowitz, titled "Japan and Brazil: Immigrant Literature and Transnational Migration Workshop," dealt with Japanese literature written in and about Argentina, Brazil, and Peru mostly from the perspective of Japanese Studies. It took place at Yale University on 10 April 2015 and brought together several scholars in the field, including the historian Jeffrey Lesser, who lectured about postwar Japanese Brazilian identity, and literary critics Andrew Leong, who talked about postwar Japanese Peruvian cultural production, Edward Mack, Zelideth Rivas, and Seth Jacobowitz. These last three critics maintained that Japanese immigrants saw their own work as fundamentally connected to their homeland and native language, but with particular "colonial" (*shokumin*) characteristics specific to their Brazilian experience. As to the formation of Japanese Studies in Brazil, Henrique Altemani de Oliveira and Gilmar Masiero have published a detailed study of its history and challenges.[6]

The focus and *locus* of enunciation of this book are then different from those studies on Japanese-language Nikkei immigrant literature (*imin bungaku*) currently being undertaken in the area of Japanese Studies, which are trying to incorporate these works into the Japanese literary canon. Indeed, Japanese Brazilian writing began with the inception of the immigration process since—as the Nikkei *haijin* (haiku poet), farmer, shopkeeper, journalist, and painter H. (Hidekazu) Masuda Goga (1911–2008) claims—the first poems and diaries were written onboard the *Kasato Maru*, the ship that brought the first Japanese immigrants to the port of Santos in 1908 (33).[7] As early as the 1910s, Japanese newspapers began to be published, a venue for the publication of Japanese-language haiku (called *haikai* in Brazil) and other forms of traditional poetry such as *tanka* ("short-form verse") by these immigrants, who introduced new *kigo* (a word or phrase that indicates the particular season to which the stanza refers) to reflect Brazilian nature (Rocha 207).[8] However, my interdisciplinary training in Latin American literary and cultural studies leads me to focus instead on Portuguese-language works, which I consider Brazilian—rather than Japanese—cultural production, since in this book I argue that descendants of Japanese in Brazil should be treated as Brazilians rather than as foreigners.

In this study, I argue that most, if not all, of the Portuguese-language works herein analyzed should be considered Brazilian (and by extension, Latin American) cultural production, rather than Japanese literature, particularly when considering authors born in Brazil. In fact, the veiled goal of many of them is precisely to claim the right to belong within the Brazilian national project. By focusing mostly on Portuguese-language texts and films written and directed by Japanese Brazilian authors and filmmakers, rather than on the Nikkeijin as a literary object of study, I hope to bring to the fore this ethnic group's voice and agency to historicize its own experience. I am especially interested in the Nikkei community's progressive delinking from Japan (the homeland for first-generation Issei and the ancestral land for their descendants) and the progressive identification with the host country and its national history, mainstream culture, language, and society.

I refer to Japanese residing overseas and their descendants through terms such as "Nikkei" or "Nikkeijin." Although, as Daniel M. Masterson and Sakaya Funada-Cassen explain, "The Japanese government legally recognizes that people are of 'Japanese descent' if their [Japanese] lineage can be traced back three generations" (xi), in my research I use "Nikkei" or "Nikkeijin" to refer to all persons who have one or more ancestors from Japan or who define themselves as Nikkeijin. This term, which generally refers to the Japanese overseas (first-generation Issei, second-generation Nisei, third-generation Sansei, fourth generation Yonsei, fifth generation Gosei), has been increasingly used in Latin America since the late 1980s. These terms, whether in Japanese or in Portuguese, tend to indicate the degree of separation from the pioneering Issei who began the immigration process. As expected, the assumption is that the farther removed the characters are, the more integrated they will be into Brazilian mainstream culture and the less they will identify with their ancestral Japanese culture.

Further complicating the nomenclature, as Takeyuki Tsuda points out, though Brazilians of Japanese heritage (Nikkei Burajirujin in Japanese) often call themselves "Japanese" in Brazil, those who have "returned" to their ancestral homeland "call themselves 'brasileiros' [Brazilians] in Japan" (*Strangers* 50), when they move to that country as *dekasegi* (temporary workers, normally spelled *decasségui* in Portuguese). Although Japanese Issei who moved to Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century were also considered dekasegi, in this book I use the term, in the Brazilian sense, only to refer

to migrant Brazilian Nikkei laborers in Japan.[9] And although most dekasegi (their non-Nikkei spouses are also considered dekasegi) are, of course, also Nikkeijin, I use this last term to refer mainly to Japanese Brazilians living in Brazil (or to all Japanese Brazilians).

Jeffrey Lesser also clarifies that Brazilians of immigrant ancestry rarely use hyphenated demonyms, preferring Japanese to Japanese Brazilian or Italian to Italian American, for example (*Immigration* 3). To avoid confusion, this study uses synonyms to refer to this ethnic group that are more in line with US nomenclature for ethnic minorities, such as Japanese Brazilians and Brazilian Nikkeijin. In any case, as Tsuda explains: "Japanese Brazilian ethnic terminology is quite complex, diverse, and confusing, indicating the ambiguous nature of their ethnicity and their constantly shifting identities. In addition to 'Japanese Brazilian' (*nipo-brasileiro*, in Portuguese, or less commonly *japonês-brasileiro*), a multitude of other terms are used, including '*japonês*,' '*brasileiro*,' '*descendente*' (or '*descendente japonês*'), as well as the Japanese generational terms '*issei*,' '*nisei*,' '*sansei*,' depending on the location, the social situation, and the context of speech" (*Strangers* 49–50). Although less commonly used, there is an additional term, *para-nisseis*, which refers to "Japanese immigrants who arrived in Brazil when they were still children and received the same education as Nisei."[10] This diverse and rich terminology reflects the connections between language and subjectivity, cultural differences, and multiple Japanese Brazilian identities, as well as a heterogeneity that is often bypassed in interpretations that exoticize or essentialize this population.

While Brazilian literature has a significant number of fictional and nonfictional works including and addressing Portuguese, Italian, German, and Jewish immigration, not until recently did writers and scholars focus on works dealing with Japanese immigration or written by Brazilian Nikkeijin. Thus, as late as 1984, Katsuzō Yamamoto (1909–), in his 1984 collection of essays *Toda uma Vida no Brasil* (An Entire Life in Brazil, originally published in Japanese in 1973 under the title *Burajiru to gojūshichinen*), laments the Nikkeijin's purported lack of interest in producing cultural artifacts: "It is true that our contribution to agrarian development has been acknowledged by Brazilians. They have also recognized Japanese companies' contribution to Brazil's industrial development. But how about the cultural arena? I am not trying to say that nothing or very little. Would the Japanese and their descendants be able to leave something of which Brazilians could be proud

abroad? I feel a certain sadness when I look for 'proof' of the participation of the Japanese in Brazilian cultural life that may have left a mark."[11] This study constitutes an attempt to demonstrate that the landscape of Nikkei cultural production has changed dramatically since Yamamoto made this discouraging remark.

By contrast, from a historical and sociological perspective, Japanese immigration to Brazil has been thoroughly studied. According to historian Jerry García, there are approximately one hundred books exploring Japanese immigration in Latin America (6). Even Claude Lévi-Strauss, in the twelfth chapter of his 1964 *Tristes tropiques*, titled "Towns and Countryside," focuses on the Japanese in Brazil:

> There were also a lot of Japanese around São Paulo, but they were more difficult to approach . . . The fact that it was extremely difficult to gain access to the offices of the Kaigai-Iju Jumiai, or to the Brazil-Takahoka-Kuaiami, and even more so to get inside the agricultural centers themselves and the almost clandestine network of hotels, hospitals, brickworks and sawmills ensuring the self-sufficiency of the colony, proved the existence of deeply laid plans which had two very different but interconnected consequences: the segregation of the colonists at carefully selected points, and the pursuit (coincidental with the opening up of the land) of archaeological research intended to stress certain analogies between pre-Columbian remains and those of the Japanese Neolithic period. (109–10)

Lévi-Strauss never explains what he means when stating that the inland farms where the Japanese lived were half military camps—it is unclear whether he means that the immigrants at times worked under the supervision of armed foremen, as in the early days, or whether instead he is describing the militarization of the Japanese lifestyle. In this brief passage, however, he notes the isolated, segregated, hermetic, and almost secret nature of these self-sufficient enclaves, as well as the deadly diseases to which workers were exposed. He also notices the Japanese immigrants' desire to return to their native land and their failure to adapt to the local environment, though the towns were developed "so as to give the feeling of never having left Japan" (109). More interestingly, he points out the Japanese minority's early attempts to find a justification for their national belonging in Brazil: through archaeological research, these immigrants were trying to connect native tribes in

Brazil with ancient Japanese populations. Lesser has also drawn attention to these attempts, explaining that Japanese immigrants negotiated their places in Brazil not only through economic success, but also through cultural approaches: "One theory suggested that the Amazonian indigenous people were a lost tribe of Japanese . . . The hypothesis that Brazilian Indians and Japanese immigrants were of the same biological stock, and thus that assimilation was assured, found support among some Brazilian elites" (*Immigration* 161). As I have explained in another work, the Japanese in Peru have made similar attempts to link their nation's history, culture, and ethnic origins to those of indigenous Peruvian populations.

Although the forms I have chosen are neither the only ones nor the most commonly used, I have chosen to focus, for the most part, on literature (including nonfiction, such as memoirs, essays, and testimonials), art cinema, and documentary films because, in my view, they develop and reveal complex postwar Nikkei identitarian issues, articulate a collective Japanese Brazilian discourse, and provide a voice for this historically silenced group in a deeper way than other, perhaps more commercial, media, modes of expression and social discourse, such as radio, television, and journalism. Most texts and films under consideration share authorship by persons of Japanese descent (Japanese born or descendant), regardless of their level of affiliation with Brazil, Japan, or both countries. Yet the topics they address are quite diverse. For instance, while chapter 2 grapples with regional identities (Okinawan vs. Naichijin or mainland Japanese), and class and economic inequities, as well as racialism within and without the Nikkei community, chapter 3 focuses on issues such as gender, sexuality, patriarchy, generational gaps, and class. Numerous Japanese Brazilian narratives also provide intercultural translations to explain ethnic particularity and difference to the reading or viewing public. But they also include intercultural mistranslations, in which strategic self-orientalization gives a more extreme meaning to the word "imagined" in Benedict Anderson's concept of imagined community.

Some works, such as the first *Gaijin* film and Júlio Miyazawa's *Yawara! A Travessia Nihondin-Brasil* (Yawara! Crossing Nihondin-Brazil, 2006), attempt to rescue from oblivion the harsh history of indentured servitude and oppression endured by many Issei pioneers; others, such as Katsuzō Yamamoto's essay collection *Toda uma Vida no Brasil*, function as a celebration of the economic, sociopolitical, and cultural achievements of this ethnic group,

including their contributions to the betterment of Brazil. The works' economic success, in particular, is often included in Japanese Brazilian cultural production to claim its place within the Brazilian nation. Yamamoto's essays memorialize, for example, how Japanese immigrants changed the Brazilian diet by introducing new products (tea, acerola, *cupuassu* [tropical rainforest tree related to cacao], clove, kiwi, lychee, and Jamaica pepper, among others) and acclimatizing others, such as fruits (avocado, pineapple, plum, guava, papaya), vegetables (lettuce, garlic, potato, eggplant, artichoke, tomato, ginger, bamboo), flowers (chrysanthemum, orchid, azalea, camellia), and cereals (soy, rice, coffee). Yamamoto expresses his pride for having brought to his cooperative a technician from Japan who taught him how to prepare tea for export, before beginning his exports to Argentina, Chile, Holland, Germany, and the United States: "It is still bringing foreign currency to the country today. To this day, I feel proud to have initiated the negotiations for the export of Brazilian black tea."[12] His essays also celebrate the Nikkeijin's introduction of silk production and their contribution to the Brazilian ecology with their agricultural development of the Amazonian basin (they harvested rice, jute, and lea) and the Cerrado, the tropical savanna ecoregion in the states of Goiás and Minas Gerais: "The 1970s were the golden era of the famous Cotia Agricultural Cooperative, which no longer exists. Its director was Mr. Hifumi Ogasawara, a visionary who always explained to young farmers that the future of Brazilian agriculture was in the Cerrado."[13]

While much of this cultural production is significantly tied to the Nikkei experience in Brazil, it does not mean that Japanese Brazilian authors address no other issues. Many authors (Nisei poet Teruko Oda; the novelist Akira Nishimura, author of the English-language collection of homoerotic short stories *The Apprentice* (2009); filmmaker Tizuka Yamasaki) have also directed films or written narratives and poetry dealing with topics unrelated to their ethnic background. In the case of Teruko Oda, for example, she uses the haikai format, albeit deviating from the most common Japanese tradition by including the poetic voice's ego in the representation of reality, as well as by using similes and Brazilian *kigos*. Yet topics such as (an often personified) Brazilian nature, death, loneliness, *saudade* (longing, nostalgia, homesickness), the transience of time, urban poverty, or destitute childhood are much more prevalent in her opus than Brazilian Nikkei history.[14] In turn, Nishimura's *The Apprentice* significantly expands the spectrum of Nikkei

literature's themes by focusing on love, homoerotic desire, rape, incestuous and slave fantasies, intergenerational exploitative sex, and fetish, sometimes bordering on pornography.

Among the most recurring tropes and historic milestones addressed in Japanese Brazilian cultural production are the inception of the immigration process, *mestiçagem* (miscegenation), cultural integration, citizenship, oppression, forced relocation during World War II, Shindō Renmei's (Subject Path League) terrorism, and the dekasegi phenomenon. Through the recreation of these transcendental episodes, Japanese Brazilian works delineate their own cultural history and epistemology. Other works, such as the two *Gaijin* films and Nakasato's novel *Nihonjin*, focus on Nikkei women's struggle against patriarchy and other localized forms of resistance, such as the key role of Nikkei women in the sociopolitical and economic success of their social group.

## CULTURAL POLITICS OF INCLUSION AND DIFFERENCE

Portuguese legal scholar and sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos claims that without non-Western-centric global cognitive justice, there can be no global social justice. In his own words, "The epistemological privilege that modern science grants to itself is thus the result of the destruction of all alternate knowledges that could eventually question such privilege. It is, in other words, a product of what I called in a previous chapter *epistemicide*. The destruction of knowledge is not an epistemological artifact without consequences. It involves the destruction of the social practices and the disqualification of the social agents that operate according to such knowledges" (424). Japanese Brazilian discourse contributes to this denunciation of the "cognitive injustice" that fails to acknowledge the value of Global South, non-Western ways of knowing and being in the world. There is, as Santos points out, invaluable wisdom in the epistemological diversity of these worldwide ways of understanding the world, which have been silenced by Western colonization and domination.

As previously stated, the works under consideration are analyzed as tools for both epistemic decolonization and the sociopolitical empowerment of the Nikkeijin, as they are part of a twofold strategic, rhetorical engineering: the affirmation of ethnocultural difference, on the one hand, and the collective

assertion of citizenship and belonging to the Brazilian nation, on the other. In this book, I use the concept of "epistemicide" (coined by Santos) to refer to the governmental attempt to impose a Western value system, Brazilian culture, and Portuguese language on the Nikkeijin, while concomitantly trying to destroy Japanese language and culture in Brazil, through the prohibition of teaching the language in schools, possessing Japanese-language publications, or even speaking it in public. "Western civilization's" philosophical, moral, economic, and intellectual systems were, therefore, considered universal, delegating minority cultures, considered inferior, to the background.

By highlighting identitarian heterogeneity, Japanese Brazilian cultural production prevents (self-)essentialization or the temptation to homogenize Japanese Brazilian consciousness or experiences. From a chronological perspective, these works trace the evolution of Nikkei discursive formations regarding their social and national consciousness, often showing a wide scope of identitarian options. These can range from the inception of the immigration process, often characterized by a sojourner mentality, loyalty to the Japanese Empire and Japanese-language writing, to the present state of cultural integration in which, among other options, many identify as Japanese Brazilian or unhyphenated Brazilian, and write almost exclusively in Portuguese. Many among the younger generations are characterized by a progressive loss of ethnic affiliation.

Members of the world's largest Nikkei community since the 1950s (Manchuria's Nikkei population was larger until that decade), the authors and filmmakers considered in this book are relatively new, peripheral voices that are asking to be heard. In fact, if Brazil, as a country of the Global South in the modern world-system, is located in the "periphery" of metropolitan centers, this group of minority writers and filmmakers resides in the outskirts of the national project or, rather, in an interstitial space between nations (Brazil and Japan). Their narratives, I believe, typify the Nikkei experience in Brazil as well as that of Brazilian dekasegi in Japan. Through its cultural production, this population, which has been subjected to two different diasporas, defies the limits of states and national boundaries, as well as those of Brazilian literary and filmic canons. As will be demonstrated here, these works reflect a lived experience that has drawn new, transnational, and unstable maps beyond the Brazilian and Japanese national borders, while concomitantly building symbolic bridges between the two countries, as well as a third space

of liminality and hybridization. Homi Bhabha maintains that the intervention of the third space of enunciation, a contradictory and ambivalent space located in the interstices of two or more cultures, "challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People" (37). From this liminal space that problematizes the fictional purity and fixity of a Brazilian or Japanese national culture, Nikkei discourse enunciates its claim of cultural difference—in itself different from a received Japanese tradition—as a tool or site of resistance, empowerment, and production of a diasporic minority identities.

Concomitantly with this third-space positioning mentioned by Bhabha, however, these filmic and literary works also attempt to inscribe themselves within Brazilian national culture. Japanese Brazilian production of knowledge is therefore entangled with a will to power and their acceptance within mainstream society. It offers an impressive output of works produced since the 1980s that forms the richest and most variegated cultural production by writers of Asian descent in Latin America and the Caribbean. As the works under study reflect, the Brazilianization of the Nikkei minority was spurred not only by President Getúlio Vargas's compulsory assimilation campaign in Brazil, but also by the traumatic episodes of World War II and the postwar period, including the Nikkeijin's impossibility to return to Japan not only because of economic difficulties, but also because that country had been destroyed by war and, as a consequence, lost its empire. And, of course, the Brazilianization process was also accelerated by the inevitable, organic integration of newer generations into mainstream culture.

Nikkei cultural forms draw attention to transformative landmark events, such as the outbreak of World War II, which accelerated the progressive integration of the Nikkeijin into Brazilian society (once a return to Japan became even more improbable), and the dekasegi phenomenon, which divided families and weakened the minority group with a second exodus of its youngest members. Elisa Sasaki has studied the transcendent effect of World War II on Japanese Brazilians:

> Until the emergence of World War II, Japanese immigrants in Brazil considered themselves *nihonjin*, that is, Japanese, since there was still hope to return to Japan after becoming wealthy. After this event, they moved on to build

> their lives in Brazilian lands, away from the possibility of return. Until the war period, permanence in Brazil was seen as temporary. The war was used as a decisive factor in no longer having to resort to the rationale of the failure to return, which was the case of most immigrants. The definitive stay in Brazil, which had been taking place for at least a decade, is finally assumed and accepted. The war was the symbolic excuse to legitimize the process, which was inexorable, of the definitive permanence in Brazil.[15]

The issue of national identification among Brazilian Nikkeijin during the pre–World War II period, however, is quite complex and it would be simplistic to assume that before the war they all identified as Japanese and then they suddenly became Brazilians after the war. In any case, the end of the war was indeed a point of inflection that brought about a shift in self-identification and national affiliation among many of them, who became naturalized Brazilian citizens. Moreover, their offspring tended to call themselves Brazilians of Japanese ancestry during the postwar period. As a result, in spite of their determined resistance against President Vargas's assimilationist measures directed against Japanese-language publications and schools, which were implemented in the late 1930s, many Japanese Brazilians turned to the Portuguese language in most of their literary production and films, even though some authors continued to write haiku and tanka, and Japanese was still widely spoken. On the other hand, other early Portuguese-language writings by young Japanese Brazilians responded instead to the integration process that was already organically under way before the imposition of Vargas's restrictions. One must also keep in mind that national identity was not determined solely by Portuguese-language competence and that Japanese immigrants and their Brazilian-born children had already begun to write in Portuguese before the war, albeit mostly in the late 1930s and 1940s.

With time, many of the former loyal subjects of Japan and its emperor began to identify themselves as proud Brazilians, learned Portuguese, and became Catholics.[16] The cultural production under study is precisely part of this continued collective effort to claim belonging within the Brazilian national project and the right to full citizenship in the Brazilian imaginary. That most of these works were written or filmed in Portuguese, even those that were produced at a time when the Japanese language was still widely used by Japanese Brazilians, attests to this Brazilianization effort.[17] As several

texts published by dekasegi illustrate, this process of delinking with Japan and identifying with Brazil is far from over, as many dekasegi in Japan realize their own foreignness in their ancestral land and begin to identify with their native Brazil more strongly than before their departure. It remains to be seen, however, whether this new reterritorialization will one day lead Japanese Brazilians to change national allegiances again, this time to Japan. Another major factor of this transformation is the temporal distance from the arrival of the first wave of Issei laborers to the return of their descendants to Japan. The pioneers worked under conditions similar to those of indentured servants and migrated in family units—Brazilian authorities believed that these units would facilitate their permanent stay and offset their presumed incapacity to adapt to the local society and culture. The dilution of Nikkei ethnic identities among ensuing generations (Sansei, Yonsei, and Gosei) brought about a progressive loss of interest in Japanese language and culture. They also began to lose Japanese physical traits after intermarriage became more socially acceptable within their ethnic group.

Later immigration waves did not have to endure the hardships suffered by the first Issei. Some worked under improved conditions in Japanese-run *colônias* (communities of foreigners) built on land purchased by the Japanese government. Benefitting from the sacrifice of the Issei pioneers, many immigrants achieved economic independence in a much shorter time by purchasing their own land or by becoming independent entrepreneurs in the laundry, barber, or retailing guilds sectors, available, among others, to the Japanese of the time. After its discontinuance during the Second World War, Japanese immigration resumed from 1953 through 1973 with the arrival of 53,000 so-called Japão Novo (New Japan) immigrants, "educated youngsters, specialists qualified in the agricultural and industrial sectors. Subsequently, there was a migration of Japanese brides to marry these youngsters, who settled in Brazilian lands."[18] They took over agricultural areas abandoned by the Nikkeijin after their move to urban areas, bringing skilled labor and valuable technological knowledge to the Nikkei community and to the rest of Brazil. The Nikkeijin Tsugio Shindo (1930–), in his blend of historical study and memoir, *Passos da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil* (Steps of Japanese Immigration to Brazil, 2006), also emphasizes the fact that these new Nikkei immigrants, many of who found work in the Cotia Agricultural Cooperative, inaugurated in 1927, were mostly "highly educated single youngsters."[19]

Through its discursive production, the Nikkei claim belonging to the Brazilian national project and a place in the mythical "racial democracy,"[20] thus quietly contesting another myth, that of Brazil's three founding races (indigenous, black, and white) as well as that of idealized histories about the birth and development of the Brazilian nation.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After African slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888 mostly because of British pressure, Brazilian planters failed in their attempts to attract European field-workers, as they refused to work for low salaries and under harsh conditions reminiscent of those endured by slaves. In 1902, after listening to migrant workers' complaints, the Italian government prohibited subsidized immigration to Brazil (The French and Spanish governments followed this decision.) Since coffee, a labor-intensive crop, continued to be Brazil's main export, the next source of cheap labor considered by planters was Japan, whose government, since the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603–1868) and the beginning of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, was trying to rid itself of its surplus of impoverished farmers. As Jhony Arai and Cesar Hirasaki explain, the visionaries of the Meiji government believed that emigration "would be one of the salvations to contain poverty and overpopulation in the country."[21] Indeed, because unemployment in Japan's rural areas and the high taxes imposed by the Meiji government had left a large part of the rural population landless, the government saw in emigration a way to alleviate the social tension. The Japanese government also expected emigration to open new markets for Japanese products in Brazil and the rest of Latin America, to create Japanese ethnic communities abroad that could export food to Japan, and to improve the Japanese economy with the remittances of Japanese emigrants. Likewise, according to Ondina Antonio Rodrigues, the Brazilian government and plantation owners (*fazendeiros*) were hoping to open new markets in Japan: "to develop commercial relations between the two countries, the conquest of a new market, for our main export product, coffee" (9).

In 1868, the first few hundred Japanese emigrants left the country for Hawaii, Guam, and California, where they earned much more than in Japan but had to work under dreadful conditions. Through the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907, however, the United States agreed not to restrict Japanese immigration

as long as Japan would not allow further emigration to the United States. Eventually, the Immigration Act of 1924 officially ended Japanese immigration. Since Hawaii (it did not become a US state until 1959) and Canada also passed laws restricting Japanese immigration, South America, and in particular Peru and Brazil, became the Meiji government's alternatives. A year after Brazil and Japan signed a treaty to allow Japanese migration to Brazil, the 1908 arrival of the first 781 Japanese immigrants to the port of Santos, near São Paulo (nine years after massive Japanese immigration began to arrive in Peru), marked the inception of the Japanese migration of *colonos* (foreign contract labor).[22] According to Koji Sasaki, between 1899 and 1941, 188,209 Japanese emigrated to Brazil (by comparison, 87,848 emigrated to the United States) (qtd. in Lesser, *Immigration* 151). Because in Japan only first-born children inherited property, most of these immigrants who arrived in Brazil were landless second- or third-born offspring. According to Lesser, in the mid-1920s there was a dramatic increase in Japanese immigration, due to Brazil's interest in the booming Japanese economy and the United States anti-Asian immigration policies: "Japanese made up 2.3 percent of all immigrants to São Paulo in 1923, 4.0 in 1924, 8.7 in 1925, and 11.6 in 1928" (159). In 1934, however, a new clause in the Brazilian constitution imposed quotas for immigration: "an annual quota was fixed at two percent of the number of immigrants from each nation who had arrived in the previous fifty years, giving farmers preferential treatment . . . The official Japanese immigration quota for 1935 was under 3,000, a marked drop from the 23,000 who had entered in 1933" (164). These new laws were often ignored; Lesser explains that 10,000 Japanese immigrated that year and 50,000 in 1934, more than double that allowed by the quota (165). These racially motivated immigration quotas, Lesser adds, prove that the "claims of being a 'racial democracy' were not sustained in the area of immigration" (180).

Since few of these first immigrants were experienced farmers, they had difficulties adjusting to the harsh working conditions of São Paulo's plantations, whose owners, twenty years after the 1888 official emancipation, still had a difficult time abandoning habits acquired during centuries of slave labor. As the Issei painter, journalist, author, and historian Tomoo Handa (1906–96) observes in his *Memórias de um Imigrante Japonês no Brasil* (Memoirs of a Japanese Immigrant in Brazil, 1980), "one must remember that twenty years earlier slave labor was used here. The mentality according to which the worker was only a lesser man does not disappear in just twenty years."[23]

Lesser likewise argues that landowners "often acted as if abolition had never taken place" (*Immigration* 157).

Japanese Brazilian literature and film often take notice of this persistent enslaver mentality. It is important to keep in mind that slavery existed in Brazil well before the beginning of the Portuguese conquest in 1532, as indigenous tribes would enslave one another, and that Brazil was the last Western country to abolish slavery—approximately 4.5 million African slaves, 40 percent of the African slaves brought to the Americas, were imported between 1501 and 1856. Centuries of enslavement of indigenous people, captured mostly by *bandeirantes* from São Paulo (their enslavement continued until the eighteenth century), and of those of African descent had left an indelible mark in the mindset of both large and small landowners that created a desire for cheap labor.[24] Interestingly, even though they authorized emigration to Brazil, Japanese officials must have been aware of the appalling conditions that awaited their countrymen: "before 1905, Japanese diplomats, operating from their Brazilian legation established in 1897, advised against Japanese immigration, based on their perception of poor treatment of Italian immigrant labor in São Paulo State" (Masterson and Funada-Classen 43).

The first immigrants' ship, the *Kasato Maru*, departed from the port of Kobe and rounded South Africa's Cape of Good Hope. Between 1917 and 1940, more than 164,000 Japanese immigrants moved to Brazil; by the 1930s, this country had the second-largest community of overseas Japanese in the world. This population became a serious concern for the Brazilian government, which, considering the Japanese inassimilable, introduced immigration quotas in 1935. Eleven years later, only a single vote in the Constituent Assembly prevented the prohibition of Japanese immigration from being included in the Brazilian Constitution. Although Japanese immigration to the Americas began with the Enomoto Colony in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1897 (García 154), Brazil continues to have the largest Nikkei community in the world, with 1,288,000 members in 1988 and between 1.2 and 1.4 million members today (mostly concentrated in the states of São Paulo and Paraná), despite the "return" of a large number of them to Japan in the late 1980s to work as *dekasegi* in Japanese factories. According to Lesser, Brazil's 2010 census confirms that "the total number of self-declared 'yellow' respondents, more than two million, represents more than one percent of the total Brazilian population" (*Immigration* 186).[25]

Disappointed with the living and working conditions in coffee plantations, mostly in the state of São Paulo, some Japanese pioneers soon began to leave them, sometimes escaping at night. But unlike the Japanese in Peru, who soon fled to the cities, in Brazil they stayed in rural areas for decades. Eventually, they were able to own farms and plantations; they even built their own immigrant communities (*núcleos colônias*), which became a source of pride for them. Yet, these settlements also fomented a sojourner mentality, as there was little interaction with majority Brazilians. In contrast with the Japanese experience in Peru, in order to build these agricultural colonies, Japanese immigrants often received the support of the Japanese government through immigration corporations such as the Kaigai Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha (KKKK; Overseas Development Company). In Mexico, there was only one of these agricultural colonies, the Enomoto Colony (the first official Japanese "colony" established in the Americas), a "quasi-government-sponsored attempt to settle Japanese emigrants" (García 23). In Masterson and Sayaka Funada-Classen words, "the era of Brazil's 35,000 pioneers (1908–25) was characterized by the successful transition of most Issei from the status of *colono* wage laborers on one of the huge coffee plantations to that of *sitiantes*, or small farm owners" (75). This transition, he adds, took between two and five years during which time the Issei worked as sharecroppers or lease farmers:

> One example saw former Issei colonists settle on virgin land owned by a planter to plant coffee trees and their own cash crops without paying rent. They would then harvest the first coffee crop after five years, which they were permitted to keep and sell. The land would then be turned over to the plantation owner with its producing coffee trees. Sometimes the Issei would strike a similar deal with another Japanese immigrant family. Because their small savings often were exhausted with the initial land purchase, they would return to colonist wage labor to earn additional savings for their return to colonist wage holding in four to five more years. (Masterson and Funada-Classen 77)

However, *colonos* also suffered setbacks in their *núcleos*. As Thomas H. Holloway explains, "All the colonies established in western São Paulo from 1897 to 1911 were in marginal lands that the previous owners were anxious to sell to the state, and most were in areas where coffee did not do well or where the coffee cycle was past its peak. A worker who bought a plot took

on a five- to ten-year debt with uncertain return. The low purchase price and easy time payments may have looked like a bargain to some, but there were risks and limitations involved in nucleo farming that the plantation colono did not have" (138). At any rate, even though Japanese colonists were often praised for their impressive diligence, their desire to become independent farmers soon gained them a reputation for being an unreliable longtime labor source, an outcome that infuriated some Brazilian legislators.

Nikkei works often echo the first immigrants' dream of attaining wealth by working in coffee plantations for a few years before returning to Japan, even though saving money was difficult. Besides receiving very low salaries, Japanese immigrants were forced to purchase their living needs at high prices in the plantation store. The examined works also reflect their shock upon encountering such a different culture, one with strange customs, religion, dietary habits, and language. Because they considered themselves sojourners until the end of World War II, few Japanese immigrants bothered to adapt to Brazilian culture or to learn the Portuguese language; they instead grouped together, living in relative isolation from mainstream culture and practicing endogamy within their ethnic group. Besides creating suspicion among Brazilians, the isolation in which they lived would bring tragic consequences during World War II, after President Vargas's nationalist Estado Novo dictatorship (New State, 1937–1945; following a period of indecision about what powers Brazil should support in World War II) implemented a homogenizing "Brazilianization" campaign that repressed German, Italian, and Japanese communities by forbidding them to speak their native languages publicly or to teach them to their children.[26] Since many Issei did not know Portuguese, once their Japanese-language radio stations and newspapers (nearly 90 percent of the Japanese could read) were outlawed, they became misinformed about the war's developments. Masuda Goga adds that the closing of Japanese-language newspapers "marked the beginning of the 'cultural crisis' in the community."[27] Indeed, it had traumatic effects, since, as María Zelideth Rivas points out, "The presence of Japanese-language print media in Brazil created an in-between cultural space that aimed to capture Japanese Brazilian identities and culture, emphasizing a linguistically linked people. Here, the immigrants and their descendants could explore new aspects of their lives in Brazil, constantly turning to articles that emphasized life in Brazil while also staying abreast of news in Japan" ("Songs" 792). Anti-Japanese hysteria

would reach its apex after Brazil joined the Allies in 1942. This population withstood the hostile environment, which included surveillance; movement restrictions; property confiscation; relocation; imprisonment; and the closing of Japanese schools, associations, and newspapers.

As reflected in Japanese Brazilian works, Issei immigrants and their descendants reacted differently to these adverse circumstances by resorting to mimicry and emulation, organizing themselves in associations and clubs, isolating themselves from majority Brazilians, founding Japanese schools and keeping them clandestine after they were outlawed, and even forming a powerful, ultranationalist terrorist group. Lesser has summarized some of these resistance techniques: "Fazendeiros hoping for docile colonists found that poor treatment was no more acceptable to Japanese workers than to others. Newcomers who thought they would become rich felt tricked, and some remigrated to Argentina where salaries were higher. Some fled from plantations to urban areas in the states of Minas Gerais, Paraná, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. Others moved into railroad construction, and Campo Grande, a large city near the Bolivian border, is still renowned for the size of its Okinawan-descended population" (*Immigration* 155).

After Brazil joined the Allies and declared war on Japan in August 1942, numerous Japanese families were removed from the coast (mostly from Santos) for fear that they could be providing intelligence assistance to the Axis Powers. This sad episode is re-created, for example, in Maria Cecília Missako Ikeoka's (1941–) *Banzai Brasil! Banzai Japão!: Histórias de Seis Gerações* (*Banzai Brazil! Banzai Japan!: Stories of Six Generations*, 2008). The author's family—along with those of other Japanese, Germans and Italians—was given twenty-four hours to prepare and was then resettled by the army on 8 July 1931, in compliance with President Vargas's orders: "that way, suffering mistreatment, my parents, along with all the Japanese who lived on the coast of São Paulo, were forced to abandon their homes. The army trucks left us at the train station, in downtown Santos; soon, the Japanese left for the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes [immigrant inspection station], in São Paulo, where they stayed some days."[28] This type of denunciation of past abuses is common in Nikkei cultural production. The Japanese were also banned from participating in political activities or holding meetings, and were ordered to carry a safe-conduct pass issued by the police to travel within the country. Japanese companies' goods were confiscated. People and mail from Japan

were prohibited from arriving in Brazil and, since radio sets were forbidden, Japanese immigrants no longer listened to war news through short wave transmissions coming from Japan. Even when they were able, they were misinformed, because the Japanese government often manipulated information to avoid revealing that they were losing the war.

Two key episodes in the history of the Nikkeijin in Brazil are often reenacted in Japanese Brazilian literature and film. The first one is the appearance, in the state of São Paulo during the 1940s, of the first modern terrorist group in the Americas: the Japanese organization Shindō Renmei, founded in 1942, which will be discussed at length in chapter 4. The second key episode is the dekasegi phenomenon (discussed in chapters 5 and 6) of the late 1980s, the "reverse" migration of the Nikkeijin to Japan. The late 1980s saw the beginning of the "return" migration of 250,000 Brazilian Nikkeijin, who fled economic recession by moving to Japan to work as dekasegi. Masterson and Funada-Classen assert that the weakness of the Brazilian economy and the lack of attractive jobs for university-educated Nikkeijin explain "their willingness to seek opportunities in Japan, where they were less fettered with family obligations or careers of long standing. Additionally, these young Brazilian Nikkei-jin were more able to do the hard and dirty factory work required of them in Japan" (247).

As some works considered in this book point out, newer generations of Nikkeijin are fully adapted to mainstream Brazilian culture and increasingly less involved in Nikkei associations or issues related to the Nikkei community. Along with the dekasegi phenomenon, the aging population, and a low birth rate, the popularity of intermarriage with other ethnic groups is progressively decreasing the Japanese Brazilian population and the importance their members give to ethnic identities. Yet today, Nikkeijin continue to enjoy social prestige in Brazil thanks to their socioeconomic success as well as Japan's postwar economic miracle, which turned the country into the second-largest economy in the world until it was recently surpassed by China. The last two chapters of this book study the reasons why this social prestige has not followed Brazilian dekasegi to Japan.

## (INTERNAL) COLONIAL DIFFERENCE AND ATTEMPTED EPISTEMICIDE

It is no secret that the Brazilian government and planters preferred European agricultural workers, as they equated "whitening" the Brazilian

population with bringing the country closer to Western modernity; yet European immigrants refused to work under the exploitative conditions offered to them years before. In this context, the global theater and the geopolitics surrounding it complicate the usual dichotomy between Western / white / European / more technologically advanced colonizer and non-Western / nonwhite / non-European / underdeveloped colonized. Even though Brazilian coffee plantation owners saw themselves as white, hence "superior," the Japanese, during the first massive migrations, came from a more developed country. The Japanese Brazilian experience, in this regard, tests and questions the center-periphery model of both postcolonial studies and the decolonial project. Lesser reveals that through Japanese diplomats' efforts, "Japanese immigrants were presented as everything the Europeans were not: quiet, hardworking, and eager to become Brazilian" (Lesser, *Immigration* 152) and that "Japanese immigrants were well received by many in the Brazilian elite who accepted the Japanese government's claim that its people were the 'whites of Asia'" (*Discontented* 5). This presumed mark of whiteness of the Japanese, together with their recent military victory over a European power, the Russian Empire, clashed with the racialism of the "Yellow Peril" negative markers associated with Chinese immigrants.[29] These contradictions were the source of fascinating negotiations and dilemmas, some of which are reflected in this corpus of works. Following a hemispheric trend, both contrasting stereotypes eventually morphed into a different one, known in the United States as the "model minority." The myth of the lazy native, so common in the colonial world, rarely affected Asian populations in the Americas.

Furthermore, whereas innocent Japanese immigrants suffered internal colonialism in Brazil, their country of origin had recently begun its imperial expansion in East Asia, when, in 1869, the new Meiji government renamed Ezo or Ezochi (as the island was formerly known to the Japanese, among other names) as Hokkaido and annexed it into the emerging Japanese nation-state. Then, it formally annexed the Ryukyu Islands and turned the kingdom into the new Okinawa Prefecture in 1879. Soon thereafter, Meiji Japan won the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) over the Qing dynasty in China, a victory that opened the door to the eventual control of the Korean Peninsula (Korea would be formally annexed in 1910), and gained two new colonial possessions for Japan, the Liaodong Peninsula and the island of Taiwan. Japan's

policy of aggressive territorial expansion was thus well underway when the first Issei immigrants landed at the port of Santos. This historical perspective further complicates the dichotomy of colonizer versus colonized, particularly when considering that some Japanese immigrants brought along the jingoistic ultranationalism, the imperialistic spirit, and the sense of ethnic/racial superiority taught in Japan since the 1868 Meiji Restoration. Moreover, the fact that modern Brazilian society was in itself the outcome of Portuguese imperialism and colonialism further complicates these social dynamics.

Japanese immigrants and their descendants were demonized as potential saboteurs, spies, and soldiers in disguise during the anti-Japanese hysteria of World War II, which the US government encouraged throughout Latin America. They became victims of geopolitics and an internal colonialism that became intensified by a culture of fear in Brazil.[30] In this study, I analyze, for the most part, Nikkei cultural production in light of this ethnic group's subtle attempt at internal cultural decolonization and at reversing the epistemicidal measures taken by Vargas's Estado Novo, the first case of classic Latin American populism.[31] Through its writers and filmmakers, this social group pushes back at the homogenizing official discourse of Brazilian nationalism during those years. Instead of following the typical colonial process that W.E.B. Du Bois called "double consciousness," the oppressed Nikkei minority that appears in these works complicates the concept: rather than seeing themselves through the eyes of the Other as ontologically inferior or as foreigners in their own country, Nikkeijin rarely relinquished their own sense of ethnic superiority, as evidenced still today by the recurrent declarations of pride in Japanese Brazilian scholarly and socioeconomic achievements in Ryoki Inoue's novel *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 many other Nikkei works. In short, just as some Brazilian plantation owners viewed Japanese immigrants as inferior to them, so did the Issei see themselves at times as ethnically superior to the members of the host society, thus participating in a process of self-essentialization. Interestingly, Ernani Oda argues that the notion of a purported common cultural base for the Japanese nation is quite recent, beginning with the Meiji Restoration. He problematizes this celebratory discourse of Japanese educational virtues and work ethics by tying it to a history of imperialism and brutal colonialism:

> Let us not forget that the celebrated work and educational ethics are much less a tradition from immemorial times than a political program devoted to the introduction of the capitalist system and state centralization during the second half of the nineteenth-century (Mita 1992, 224–247). Moreover, these ethics were an instrument of domination in the colonization of the regions of Okinawa, Hokkaido, Korea, and Taiwan, where native people were forced to work in order to supply the Japanese market, and to study in Japanese schools to forget their "barbarian" customs, and to become deserving subjects of the "Great Japanese Empire." (104)[32]

According to Oda, this acritical and apologetic view of Japanese culture in Brazil facilitates its interpretation as a "homogeneous, immutable, and exotic totality."[33]

The Brazilian government resorted, particularly during World War II and its aftermath, to different technologies of power in order to control the Japanese. This subjugation even reached the level of language, as they were forbidden to speak Japanese in public or to teach it in schools, to own Japanese-language books, or to have a Japanese-language press. This episode is central in Lúcia Hiratsuka's novel *Os Livros de Sayuri* (Sayuri's Books, 2008), where the young protagonist's family has to bury their Japanese-language books because they have just been forbidden by the Brazilian government, along with all Japanese schools: "and the box was buried. As if the books were dead. Or as if they were treasures?"[34] Because they looked like the enemy, the Nikkeijin were dehumanized and racially profiled as an "enemy within" who was ready to support a Japanese invasion, especially after Brazil declared war on the Axis Powers. This perception has not completely disappeared, as Lesser points out that "many people in Brazil erroneously assume that Nikkeijin feel 'Japanese' and thus have an emotional attachment to Japan as an irrefutable homeland" (*Discontented* xxi). In any case, the potential consequences of Brazil's direct participation in the war inevitably created anxiety and apprehension among the Nikkeijin.

While Japanese identities became disqualified and the Nikkeijin were forced to relocate inland from strategic Atlantic coastal areas, the United States did not pressure the Brazilian government to send its Japanese population to internment camps in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Crystal City and Kenedy, in southern Texas, as was done with Peru and sixteen other Latin American countries, mainly because Brazil has no Pacific coastline. Whereas the

Mexican government sent most of its Japanese and Japanese Mexican population to the Hacienda de Temixco internment camp near Cuernavaca, only a very small fraction of the large Japanese community in Brazil was sent to an internment camp in the Japanese community of Acará (today's Tome-Açu) in the Amazonian area of Pará. The Brazilian government refused to create internment camps within its frontiers for the remaining Japanese nationals and their descendants perhaps because of the sheer size of the community (200,000) and the fact that most lived in relative isolation in rural areas of the states of São Paulo and Paraná. According to Lesser, it was the result of two different fears: "that the population was too large and well armed to intern or deport without creating a rebellion, and that Japan might attack (and defeat) Brazil if Japanese citizens were rounded up" (168). But the Vargas regime did try at all costs to prevent the Nikkeijin's affiliation with Japan and its emperor, Hirohito. The aggressive nationalism and prejudice of the Brazilian government, combined with the general population's economic resentment (felt toward Chinese and Japanese throughout the Americas), made the daily life of the Brazil's Nikkeijin difficult.

Although repression ended shortly after World War II, Nikkei writing and film suggest that this ethnic group has been plagued ever since by feelings that could be perceived as ambivalent: a contradictory desire to belong within the Brazilian nation while distinguishing themselves from majority Brazilians. As Lesser points out, "Nikkei subjects resented representations of diasporic ethnicity by majority society and rejected the idea that they were 'Japanese.' These same people, however, saw themselves as different from normative Brazilians, and their stereotypes of 'Brazil' and 'Brazilians' as 'other' were often as strong as the majority stereotypes of 'Japan' and 'Japanese'" (*Discontended* 151). On the other hand, one can also find the opposite phenomenon. As Cristina Rocha has revealed in her study of Zen Buddhism in Brazil, it was European orientalism, rather than the local Nikkeijin, that mediated the Brazilian intelligentsia's perception of Japan, Buddhism, and haiku: "Rather than viewing Japanese immigrant communities in Brazil as a source of the 'exotic East,' Brazilian artists and intellectuals—and eventually the general public—were inspired either indirectly by ideas of Orientalism originating from cultural centers in the West such as France, England, and the United States, or directly through assumptions about the 'authenticity' of Japan itself" (200). This suggests that majority Brazilians did not consider the

Nikkeijin's Japaneseness authentic enough to consider them a reliable source of information on Zen Buddhism. In Rocha's words, "While the Brazilian cultural elite were drawn toward fantasies of lost wisdom in ancient Japanese classical ages long past, they did not view Japanese immigrants in Brazil as legitimate carriers of this heritage" ("Zen in Brazil" 201).

From this perspective, can we talk about decoloniality when dealing with Asians in Latin America? How then do we contextualize the liminal nature of Japanese immigration in Brazil within the context of center/West versus periphery/non-Western countries? Japan's emulation of European colonialism and imperialism, together with its fledging status as a world power with the strongest armed forces in Asia, complicated both Japanese self-perception in Brazil and majority Brazilians' view of them. I argue that, indeed, Japanese Brazilian cultural production can be conceived of as a veiled display of agency and as a collective counternarrative against this sentiment of internal colonialism. Some texts exhibit a therapeutic impetus to heal the colonial wound inflicted first by the Japanese government, which considered the future emigrants excess population, and then by Brazil, which exploited them as cheap labor. Such works enact a contestatory disposition by which their authors, becoming the voice of their ethnic group, talk back to the regional, sociocultural impositions of the nation-state, proposing instead a new, transnational geocultural space.

Just as Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism*, provides instances of European literature being used as a tool for justification of imperialism and colonialism, Japanese Brazilian cultural forms have also been used to empower the Nikkeijin, as a subversive resistance and decolonizing tactic against the techniques of power of two different states. Through their films, novels, short stories, poetry essays, and testimonials, ethnic Japanese in Brazil recall (or imagine) their own past and historicize it by bringing back repressed memories and silenced histories. But, emulating nationalist discourse, this act of remembering is sometimes followed by a collective, societal amnesia of certain historical episodes. By becoming culture producers, Japanese Brazilians combat the epistemic racism and the racialization of thought that have devalued or, even worse, ignored their worldviews and ways of being in the world. The goal is, therefore, not only to enter Brazilian national consciousness, but also to question a hitherto mostly Eurocentric and Western national culture that has often been considered "universal."

## MODERNITY AND SPLIT TEMPORALITY

Works such as *Crônicas de um Garoto que Também Amava os Beatles e os Rolling Stones* (Chronicles of a Boy Who Also Loved the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, 1988) by the dekasegi Agenor Kakazu present both the Japanese in Japan and Japanese Brazilians (conceived of as a sort of outgrowth of the economically successful Japan) as models to be emulated by majority Brazilians. Kakazu proposes in his chronicles the need to Nipponize his native Brazil, not necessarily by letting Japanese Brazilians pave the way, as happened with President Alberto Fujimori in Peru, but rather by emulating Japan itself. He proposes a Japanese coworker, Shioya, as a model to follow for Brazilians, as he is willing to work relentlessly for the betterment of his country: "At the time, at age forty-nine, Mr. Shioya still looked like a strong and vigorous youngster, ready to work and to contribute to the growth and progress of his country. Undoubtedly, he was a remnant of those who helped elevate Japan to a world power level, with their daily contribution of sweat and blood. It was the millions of strong arms like his, of dedicated servers that rebuilt a nation reduced to ashes by two atomic bombs."[35]

Likewise, in a pedagogical tone, Silvio Sam's *Sonhos Que De Cá Segui* (Dekasegi Dreams, 1997) and other texts approach the recollection of recent and past history as a patriotic knowledge-production exercise that should contribute to the eventual betterment of Brazilian society. These works engage in strategic cultural politics by openly encouraging readers to learn from Japanese or Nikkei behavior. In this context, Lesser argues that as Brazilian society essentialized the Nikkeijin, they also contributed to this notion by essentializing themselves, claiming that Brazil was a country in need of Nipponization. Japanese Brazilians supposedly embodied Japan's hypermodernity: "the same people who believed Nikkei to be ethnically rigid and impenetrable (and thus not truly Brazilian) often took the position that the Brazilian nation would improve by becoming 'more Japanese.' Nikkei by and large accepted an identity where they were not Brazilians of the present but were Brazilians of the future" (Lesser; *Discontented* xxvi).

In the context of the internal colonialism suffered by Japanese Brazilians, this demeanor is diametrically opposed to the typical colonized mind. Thus, in the opening of *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*, 1952), Frantz Fanon, within the framework of his psychiatric and psychological

analyses of the dehumanizing effects of colonization, suggests the existence of an inferiority complex among the colonized by stating that "the black man wants to be white" (9) and "for the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white" (10).[36] In contrast with Fanon's devastating conclusions, part of the Japanese Brazilian discourse proposes a radically different solution: to have majority Brazilians emulate the Nikkeijin or Japanese work ethic, and to adopt their faster rhythm thereby overcoming the purported time lag between Brazil and Japan. No inferiority complex exists in this type of discourse. Incidentally, as I discussed elsewhere, former Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori resorted to these same strategic modernizing and essentializing arguments in his 1990 presidential campaign; its motto was "work, honesty, and technology."[37] In Brazil and Peru, therefore, Nikkei communities have strategically affiliated with the spectacular economic and technological achievements of post–World War II Japan, presenting themselves as a role model for society and as a more advanced population than the slightly "backwards" majority Brazilian and Peruvian societies.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, in his *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000), criticizes the Eurocentric model by which Europeans recommend that the colonized wait, constantly reminding them that they were "not yet" civilized enough to rule themselves and consigning them to an imaginary waiting room of history. In reaction to this stagist and historicist distinction between the modern and the nonmodern, during the nationalist struggles in India, the nationalist elite rejected "the 'waiting-room' version of history when faced with the Europeans' use of it as a justification for denial of 'self-government' to the colonized" (9). European colonizers believed that the peripheral histories of others were mere variations of a master narrative on the history of Europe. Later, Japan would adopt this approach as a strategy for its own colonialist aspirations, an ethnocentric worldview that has perhaps partly survived in Brazil.

Paradoxically, the same Japanese Brazilians who subtly denied coevalness (to use Johannes Fabian's phrase in his 1983 *Time and the Other*) or contemporaneity for majority Brazilians would later feel rejected as foreigners in Japan once the dekasegi remigration began. For this reason, the study of Brazil's Nikkeijin and of their cultural production must be done in both spatial and temporal frames; while the spatial encompasses the two transoceanic diasporas, the temporal frame takes into account two different temporalities

by which Japan and, by extension, Japanese Brazilians are strategically represented as models to be imitated. Curiously, in light of this assessment, Japanese Brazilians, having suffered internal colonialism, unintentionally use the typically colonial discourse of the temporal modern/nonmodern split, perhaps as an atavistic leftover of the affective cartography of the Japanese Empire, by which the Meiji government redefined other East Asian countries as peripheral to Japan and degraded their citizens as barbarians in need of civilization: backward, inferior, and nonmodern colonized people are considered to be lagging and must "catch up" with modern colonizers. As discussed further on, some Nikkei texts offer cultural borrowing as a gift for Brazilian self-improvement.

As the term indicates, Japanese Brazilian cultural production is still Brazilian; therefore, its relation with the mainstream of Brazilian cultural production must be examined and a question must be posed: is Japanese Brazilian production unique in comparison with the literature and film of other Brazilian social groups (Afro-Brazilians are not a minority) or with mainstream Brazilian cultural production? In my essay "Exoticization, *Mestiçagem*, and Brazilian National Consciousness in Carlos Diegues's *Quilombo*," included in *Celluloid Chains*, I mention that two Brazilian historical films, Yamasaki's *Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade* (*Gaijin, a Brazilian Odyssey*, 1980) and Carlos Diegues's *Quilombo* (1984), examine Japanese indentured servitude and African and Afro-Brazilian resistance to slavery respectively. Notably, Nikkei cultural production is not unique in its attempt to recover a silenced history of unfreedom, racism, xenophobia, and internal colonialism by challenging official histories. Other ethnic groups, particularly those of non-European descent who share similar emancipating efforts, also use literature and film to rediscover their roots and to challenge the different types of marginalization endured through the collective voice of their respective communities. Brazil's Nikkeijin are not unique in their effort to recover their social memory, to struggle against epistemicide and racialization, and to combat their exoticization through literature and film. Furthermore, postwar, Lusophone, Japanese Brazilian cultural production exhibits no particular formal differences from Brazilian cultural production, or from other diasporic, ethnic Brazilian literature and film. Haiku writing, for example, is not exclusive to Nikkei poets, as numerous non-Nikkei Brazilian haijin have excelled in this practice, as Masuda Goga discloses (34–35).[38] Two different cultural

trajectories intersected during the postwar period: the Japanese-language *haikai*[39] written by Japanese immigrants and the Portuguese-language ones written by mostly Euro-Brazilian writers influenced by Western Japonisme.

However, Nikkei works do privilege, as may be expected, Nikkei characters and topics, all the while echoing the Nikkeijin's evolving ideological and historical subtexts. Their uniqueness resides, therefore, in the narrative content rather than in the form: mainly (perhaps only) in their often ambiguous and ambivalent stance between a claim to full Brazilian citizenship and a contestatory affirmation of cultural difference. Whether insinuated or manifested, Nikkei cultural production's postulation of the Japanese people in Japan and, occasionally, of Japanese Brazilians as role models for Brazilian society, undoubtedly separates it from other Brazilian cultural production and probably also from that of most minority discourses, with the exception of other Japanese Latin American groups.

## AN ARCHIVE OF EMOTIONS

These works recast the image of the Nikkeijin by providing a collective (albeit heterogeneous) self-definition of their ethnicity, along with a sense of belonging and citizenship that is often tied to historical and spatial contexts. Even a cursory look at texts such as Agenor Kakazu's *Crônicas de um Garoto que Também Amava os Beatles e os Rolling Stones* or Maria Cecília Missako Ikeoka's *Banzai Brasil! Banzai Japão!: Histórias de Seis Gerações* is enough to find the insistence on the Brazilian patriotism of the authors' families. In the second book, though the author's parents are proud to be Japanese, they constantly remind their children that they are Brazilian and should be proud of it. The parents even paint their house with the colors of the Brazilian flag: "The house was well kept and needed no repairs; still, it was painted all over in yellow, with the windows and doors in green."[40] Along these lines, when they find out in May 1943 that Brazil has joined the Allied forces in World War II, the Okinawan parents encourage their children to fight for Brazil if needed: "'My children, this is a very difficult time. Brazil is at war with Japan. Blood unites us, but duty separates us. You are Brazilian citizens and must fight for Brazil if you are summoned to war.' Finally, he said to Kincas: 'serve your country with pride and courage'" (142–43).[41] Each work, therefore, contributes to the creation of an affective cartography, an archive of feelings

that traces, throughout generations, the genealogy and transmission of private and public emotions. These feelings may be positive, such as pride and self-confidence, or negative, such as shame, bitterness, regret, failure, despair, resentment, saudade, alienation, self-hatred, loneliness, and melancholy in the pathological sense. Recurrent aesthetization of affective life and the inclusion of the same (or similar) forms of feeling from text to text reveal the collective, intersubjective, and public nature of these emotional experiences. More important, as the texts reexamine Nikkei history, is that these intersubjective emotions form an archive of feelings that is transmittable throughout generations.

It is also apparent, however, that these feelings do not remain the same; they evolve as time passes and as characters move from Japan to Brazil, from rural to urban areas, or from Brazil to Japan. Shame or national/ethnic pride may shift over time, progressively wane, or disappear altogether. Simultaneously, the changes in modalities of feeling and material practices, which are oftentimes deeply tied to epochal transformations and migrations, ultimately reveal the unstable or uncertain nature of Nikkei identities. These—which include emotions, feelings, and affect—are also historically constructed. Embedded in the formation of the modern Japanese and Brazilian nation-states, this cultural history of the transmission of Japaneseness, Nikkeiness, and *brasilidade* (Brazilianness) reveals the birth of a transnational third space that thrives in the interstices of both nations. From the periphery of the modern world-system, Nikkei cultural production echoes the historical transformation of pride, shame and other emotions, depending on spatial changes and temporal frames.

As new generations of Japanese Brazilians become more integrated into mainstream Brazilian or Japanese societies, these works re-create the changing collective structures of feeling. The sociality of emotions is often deeply tied to a material culture related, for example, to the cherry blossom; the kimono; the *ofuro* (a type of Japanese bathtub that originated as a short, steep-sided wooden bathtub); the *bento* box (single-portion takeout or home-packed meal); the *butsudan* (Buddhist altar); and the *shamisen*, the *taiko* drums, and other traditional musical instruments. These narratives' expression of affect is also tied to cultural practices, such as haiku writing, *hanami* (flower viewing), *ikebana* (the art of flower arrangement), food and drinks (sushi, miso soup, sake), *origami* (the folk art of folding paper into shapes), *sadō*

(traditional tea ceremony), and the *tanomoshi* (rotating credit association), along with sumo, kendo, and other sports and martial arts.[42] At one point, this narrative display of quintessentially Japanese, Okinawan, or Nikkei objects, traditions and cultural practices becomes a sort of Japanese Brazilian version of the cabinet of curiosity, or Wunderkammer, in Renaissance Europe, in which each object or tradition contained its own nostalgic history of affective experience. In the long run, however, this open display of the tenuous temporality of yearning may sometimes walk a thin line between cultural pride and self-exoticism, as will be determined. One may also trace these affective cartographies as they travel "back" to Japan with the dekasegi. Once in Japan, the nostalgic cultural and material practices are curiously tied, not to the ancestral homeland, but to symbolic and quintessentially Brazilian artifacts and practices—dancing samba, playing soccer, eating *feijoada* (a stew made with beans, beef, and pork), the highly "nationalized" emotion of saudade, now resignified in a transnational context.

The works analyzed in this book evoke the affective dimensions elicited by these cultural practices and material culture. More important perhaps is that this examination fills the vacuum of the hitherto largely undernarrated Japanese Brazilian cultural history. In this process, it rewrites the ideas of Brazilianness and Japaneseness from both the margins of the nation-state and the interstices between states, while concomitantly exhibiting an epistemic disobedience toward the mandates of a Western modernity with pretensions of universality.

## THE BOOK AND ITS ORGANIZATION

Rather than basing the arrangement of the chapters on the film debut or work publication dates, the chapters are chronologically organized according to which immigration phase is re-created in the work. Thus, the first three chapters include works that address the inception of the immigration process—such as the first *Gaijin* (1980), *Nihonjin* (2011), *Yawara!* (2006), and *Saga* (2006)—even if part of the plot also deals with later periods. In turn, the last three chapters focus, for the most part, on later periods, including World War II and its aftermath, and the second phase of the immigration process when it resumes with the arrival of the "Japão Novo" in 1953 (the two *Corações Sujos* [Dirty Hearts, the 2000 book and 2011 film], *O Súdito* [The

Subject, 2008], and *Os Livros de Sayuri* [2008]), as well as the dekasegi exodus (*Crônicas de um Garoto* [1988], *Sonhos que de Cá Segui* [1997], *Hyôryû-gai* [*The City of Lost Souls*; 2002], the second *Gaijin* [2005], and *Lonely Swallows* [2011]).

The first chapter studies cultural celebration, historical memory, and claiming place in Júlio Miyazawa's novels. It contextualizes the topic of resistance and the emergence of a Nikkei cultural discourse in *Yawara! A Travessia Nihondin-Brasil* with the treatment of those same issues in his second novel, *Uma Rosa para Yumi* (A Rose for Yumi), where the author studies the involvement of Nisei youth against the military dictatorship during the 1970s. The exploration of identitarian issues leads to the problematization of stable Nikkei identities, allowing them to emerge, with all their complexities, as fluid, hybrid, and changing subjectivities.

Chapter 2 explores racism, miscegenation, and ethnic celebration in Ryoki Inoue's novel *Saga*. The author addresses not only Nippophobia, but also the Japanese immigrants' racist and xenophobic feelings toward Okinawans, mixed-race Nikkeijin, and Brazilians. Other issues explored are the relation between tradition and prejudice, as well as transculturation and miscegenation. *Saga*'s celebration of Nikkei sociocultural and economic success becomes a tool for such cultural and identitarian negotiations, which ultimately provide a voice for this ethnic group's collective agency.

Chapter 3 analyzes female agency and the struggle against patriarchy in Oscar Nakasato's novel *Nihonjin*, Tizuka Yamasaki's film *Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade* (*Gaijin, a Brazilian Odyssey*, 1980), and Lúcia Hiratsuka's novel *Os Livros de Sayuri*. In *Nihonjin*, two female characters challenge the stereotype of the submissive and docile Nikkei wife or daughter. Their transgressions, while perceived by other characters as cultural and familial betrayal, do not make them negative characters; on the contrary, their agency turns them into brave women who manage to rid themselves of the oppressive ethnocultural structures that prevent them from feeling accomplished as human beings. Yamasaki's film explores the topics of marginalization, transculturation, and patriarchy during the first decades. In *Os Livros de Sayuri* female agency is represented by an innocent young girl's resistance to anti-Japanese hysteria through her determination to keep a Japanese-language book representing her culture.

Chapter 4 addresses the transformational impact of World War II on the Nikkeijin and the history of Shindō Renmei, as seen in Vicente Amorim's film *Corações Sujos*, Fernando Morais's essay of the same title, and Jorge Okubaro's

text *O Súdito (Banzai, Massateru!)*. In turn, chapter 5 looks at the dekasegi phenomenon as it reflects the clash of two different modernities, the Brazilian and the Japanese ones, in Yamasaki's *Gaijin: Ama-me como Sou* (*Gaijin 2: Love Me As I Am*, 2005), Kakazu's chronicle collection *Crônicas de um Garoto*, and Sam's novel *Sonhos que de Cá Segui*. In the last two works, this collective self-representation of the dekasegi experience turns into the presentation of the Japanese or Brazilian Nikkeijin as role models for the wider Brazilian society. Complementing these Brazilian self-definitions in printed texts, the sixth chapter analyzes the Japanese documentaries *Lonely Swallows* and *A Grandpa from Brazil*, as well as the Japanese feature film *Hyôryû-gai* (*The City of Lost Souls*), as they explore the misfortunes of Brazilian Nikkeijin in Japan.

## NOTES

1. Zelideth Rivas has studied "boutique multiculturalism" in Japan, which is characterized by its superficial relationship to other cultures' products, as well as by the use of mixed race people in the advertisements of luxury goods. In the case of the commodification of the band Linda Sansei's mixed race for Japanese fans, "as consumers of 'boutique multiculturalism,' they do not engage with or consider the economic conditions that brought the girls and their families to Japan as dekasegi. Instead, they leave the performances with more superficial knowledge about Brazil . . . 'Boutique multiculturalism,' therefore, allows fans to locate themselves as consumers of Brazil's surface culture through their consumption of Linda Sansei" (Rivas, "Mistura" 724). According to Rivas, this band markets, in a nonthreatening way, a reshaped Brazil (often associated with crime and poverty in Japanese media) for Japanese audiences.

2. The six studies are the following: Fredy González's *Paisanos Chinos: Transpacific Politics among Chinese Immigrants in Mexico* (2017), Robert Chao Romero's *The Chinese in Mexico 1882–1940* (2010), Grace Peña Delgado's *Making the Chinese Mexican: Global Migration, Localism, and Exclusions in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (2012), Julia María Schiavone Camacho's *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland 1910–1960* (2012), Jerry García's *Looking like the Enemy: Japanese Mexicans, the Mexican State, and US Hegemony, 1897–1945* (2014), and Selfa A. Chew's *Uprooting Community: Japanese Americans, World War II, and the US-Mexico Borderlands* (2015).

3. The publications dealing with orientalism in Latin America and the Caribbean include the following studies: Julia Kushigian's *Orientalism in the Hispanic Literary Tradition: In Dialogue with Borges, Paz, and Sarduy* (1991), Araceli Tinajero's

*Orientalismo en el modernismo hispanoamericano* (2004), Axel Gasquet's *Oriente al Sur: El orientalismo literario argentino de Esteban Echeverría a Roberto Arlt* (2007), and *El llamado de Oriente: Historia cultural del orientalismo argentino (1900–1950)*, as well as my edited volumes *Alternative Orientalisms in Latin America and Beyond* (2007), *One World Periphery Reads the Other: Knowing the "Oriental" in the Americas and the Iberian Peninsula* (2009), and *Peripheral Transmodernities: South-to-South Dialogues between the Luso-Hispanic World and "the Orient"* (2012). Many other books have been devoted to cultural production by and about Hispanic authors of Asian ancestry, including Debbie Lee-DiStefano's *Three Asian-Hispanic Writers from Peru: Doris Moromisato, José Watanabe, Siu Kam Wen* (2008), Rebecca Riger Tsurumi's *The Closed Hand: Images of the Japanese in Modern Peruvian Literature* (2012), Koichi Hagimoto's *Between Empires: Martí, Rizal, and the Intercolonial Alliance* (2013), and my *Imaging the Chinese in Cuban Literature and Culture* (2008), *The Affinity of the Eye: Writing Nikkei in Peru* (2013), and *Dragons in the Land of the Condor: Writing Tusán in Peru* (2014).

4. There are also numerous publications about the Asian presence in Peru, including Humberto Rodríguez Pastor's *Herederos del dragón: Historia de la comunidad china en el Perú* (2000) and *Hijos del celeste imperio en el Perú (1850–1990): Migración, agricultura, mentalidad y explotación* (2001), Mariella Balbi's *Los chifas en el Perú: Historias y recetas* (1999), Wilma E. Derpich's *El otro lado azul: Empresarios chinos en el Perú* (1999), and Isabelle Lausent-Herrera's *Sociedades y templos chinos en el Perú* (2000). Many other volumes have also been devoted to the Chinese presence in Latin America and the Caribbean, including Lok C.D. Siu's *Memories of a Future Home: Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama* (2005), Walton Look Lai's volume of essays *Chinese in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2010), Rudy P. Guevarra, Jr.'s *Becoming Mexipino: Multiethnic Identities and Communities in San Diego* (2012), Kathleen López's *Chinese Cubans: A Transnational History* (2013), and Elliott Young's *Alien Nation: Chinese Migration in the Americas from the Coolie Era through World War II* (2014). And there are, of course, many other books dealing with Asian immigration in Latin America besides the ones quoted in this study, including C. Harvey Gardiner's *Pawns in a Triangle of Hate: The Peruvian Japanese and the United States* (1981); Roshni Rustomji-Kerns's *Encounters: People of Japanese Descent in the Americas* (1999); Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, Akemi Kikumura, and James A. Hirabayashi's edited volume *New Worlds, New Lives: Globalization and People of Japanese Descent in the Americas and from Latin America in Japan* (2002); Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee's edited volume *Displacements and Diasporas: Asians in the Americas* (2005); Cristina Rocha's *Zen in Brazil: The Quest for Cosmopolitan Modernity* (2006); Walton Lok Lai's *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies 1938–1918* (2013); and Eugenio Chang-Rodríguez's *Diásporas chinas a las Américas* (2015).

5. Bunkyo is an abbreviation of the Japanese name of the association, which means Brazilian Association of Japanese Culture and Social Assistance (Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa e de Assistência Social, in Portuguese).

6. According to them, Asian Studies in Brazil began in the 1960s with the creation of research groups focusing on Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: "The first one was the Center of Afro-Oriental Studies (CEAO) in 1959 at the Universidade Federal de Bahia" ("O primeiro constituído foi o Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais [Ceao], em 1959, e ligado à Universidade Federal da Bahia" 11), which has published the *Revista Afro-Ásia* since 1965. In 1961, Altemani and Masiero add, the Brazilian Institute of Afro-Asian Studies (IBEAA) was created, and it was followed in 1973 by the Center of Afro-Asian Studies (CEAA) at the Universidade Cândido Mendes in Rio de Janeiro, which has published the journal *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* since 1978. In 1965, the Center of Afro-Asian Studies was founded in Natal and in 1977, the Brazilian Institute of Luso-Afro-Asian Culture, in Rio de Janeiro. Altemani and Masiero also reveal that it was at this time that Japanese-language courses began to be taught in public universities. Furthermore, at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP), the House of Culture of Japan, devoted to cultural events and studies, was founded. During the 1960s, the Department of History at the Universidad de São Paulo created the Oriental Studies section, which included a BA in Japanese. Still at the same university, the following decade saw the creation of the Department of Linguistics and Oriental Languages, later called Department of Oriental Languages and Department of Oriental Humanities. In the 1980s, the Study Group on Brazil-Japan Relations was established at the Universidade de Brasília and in 1989, the Center of Japanese Studies was formed at the Escola de Economia da Fundação Getúlio Vargas in Rio de Janeiro. In 1991, the Brazilian Society of Studies on Japan and the Pacific was created, which became, in 1998, the Brazilian Society of Studies on Asia and the Pacific. Altemani and Masiero add that in 1987, the Universidad de Brasília created the Nucleus of Asian Studies (NEÁSIA) as well as a BA in Japanese language and literature. In 1995, the University of São Paulo opened, at the Nucleus of Research on International Relations, a research focus on Asia. In 2002, the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul created the Brazilian Association of Japanese Studies (ABEJ). The Japan Foundation, which has its headquarters in São Paulo, has traditionally supported Japanese Studies in Brazil and elaborated a directory of researchers and institutions. In 2003, the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) created a line for Japanese-language studies. The following year, Altemani and Masiero conclude, saw the creation of the Asia-Pacific Study Group at the PUC/SP.

7. Another Nikkei haijin, Roberto Saito, also observes that the first Brazilian author of Portuguese-language haiku was Afrânio Peixoto in his *Trovas*

*Populares Brasileiras* (Popular Brazilian Ballads, 1919), followed by Wenceslau de Moraes and his collection *Relance de Alma Japonesa* (Glimpse of the Japanese Soul, 1926) (Masuda 9). Waldomiro Siqueira Júnior wrote the first poetry collection exclusively composed of haiku, titled *Hai-Kais* (1933), but it was Guilherme de Almeida who popularized the haiku in Brazil, after adapting it to his own rhyme preference.

8. Masterson and Funada-Cassen quote one of the pioneers' poems, which reflects sacrifices made in their daily lives: "It is sad to see those who hurry to succeed and are sipping rice porridge like water" (77). He quotes it from *Masuji kiyotami* (13).

According to Lesser, "the *Shûkan Nambei* [South American weekly], founded in January of 1916, was the first of three newspapers published for Japanese and Japanese Brazilians, eighty percent of whom lived in rural areas. The *Nippak Shinbun*, founded six months later, published three times a week and claimed a circulation of thirty thousand by the 1920s" (157–58).

9. Yoshioka and Sam explain the etymology of the term, which is formed by the words *deru* (to leave) and *kassegui* (work), meaning to leave temporarily to work elsewhere (21).

10. "Imigrantes japoneses que chegaram ao Brasil ainda criança e que foram educados da mesma maneira como os nisseis" (Ono 142).

11. "É verdade que, com relação à contribuição na área agrícola, temos recebido uma alta cotação por parte dos brasileiros. E também se reconhece a contribuição de empresas japonesas ao desenvolvimento industrial do Brasil. Mas quanto à área cultural? Não tenho a pretensão de dizer que nada ou muito pouco. Os nipônicos e seus descendentes seriam capazes de deixar algo de que o Brasil pudesse se orgulhar perante o estrangeiro? Sinto certa tristeza ao procurar uma 'prova' da participação de japoneses na vida cultural brasileira que deixasse marcas" (196). Likewise, an anonymous critic writes in 1970: "Japanese immigration to Brazil began in 1908 and its contribution to Brazilian literature is still small. To date, no author of Japanese ancestry has done enough to merit citation or closer study by critics." ("A imigração japonesa para o Brasil começou em 1908. E sua contribuição para a literatura brasileira é ainda pequena. Até hoje nenhum autor de origem nipônica marcou sua presença de modo a merecer citação ou estudo mais atento da crítica" [Back cover of the Editôra do Escritor edition of Eico Suzuki's (1936–) *Desafio ao Imortal*].)

12. "Ainda hoje prossegue ganhando divisas para o país. Até hoje sento orgulho de haver iniciado as negociações para a exportação do chá preto brasileiro" (18).

13. "A década de 1970 foi a era de ouro da famosa Cooperativa Agrícola de Cotia, que hoje já não existe. Na sua diretoria estava o Sr. Hifumi Ogasawara, uma pessoa

que enxergava longe, que sempre explicava aos agricultores jovens que o futuro da agricultura brasileira estava no cerrado" (Shindo, *Passos* 49).

14. The writer and politician Henrique Maximiano Coelho Neto defined the word *saudade* in a more poetic way: "A saudade é a memória do coração" (Saudade is the memory of the heart) (Albert et al. 239).

Teruko Oda is the author of poetry collections such as *Nos Caminhos do Haicai* (1993), *Estrela Cadente* (1996), *Janelas e Tempo* (2003), *Flauta de Vento* (2005), and *Furosato no Uta—Canção da Terra Natal* (2010).

15. "Até eclodir a Segunda Guerra Mundial, os imigrantes japoneses no Brasil se consideravam *nihonjin*, isto é, japoneses, uma vez que ainda havia perspectiva de retornarem enriquecidos ao Japão. Depois desse evento, eles passaram a construir suas vidas nas terras brasileiras, distantes da possibilidade do retorno. Até o período da guerra, a permanência no Brasil era tida como provisória. A guerra foi utilizada como o fator decisivo para não ter que acionar o argumento do insucesso do não-retorno de quase todos os imigrantes. A fixação definitiva no Brasil, que vinha ocorrendo há pelo menos uma década, é finalmente incorporada e aceita. A guerra foi o pretexto simbólico para legitimar o processo, que era inexorável, da permanência definitiva no Brasil" (103–4).

16. As Daniela de Carvalho explains, "Japanese officials interested in emigration, fearing that the emigrants would suffer because of cultural and religious differences, persuaded the emigrants to convert to Catholicism, arguing that it was the official religion of Brazil" (16).

17. The few Japanese-language memoirs and other texts analyzed here were all published in Portuguese translation.

18. "Jovens rapazes educados e especialistas qualificados na área agrícola e também em alguns setores da indústria. Houve, subsequentemente, uma migração de noivas japonesas para se casarem com esses rapazes e se estabelecerem nas terras brasileiras" (Sasaki 104).

19. "Jovens solteiros com nível educacional alto" (284).

20. "Democracia racial" (Racial democracy), a term derived from Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre's (1900–1987) study *Casa-grande and senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*, 1933), has often been used to describe the purported absence of racism in Brazilian social relations. According to Freyre, the absence of racial prejudice in Brazil was due to close relations between masters and slaves before the abolition of slavery in 1888 and the supposedly benign nature of Portuguese imperialism. Racial democracy, often contrasted with racial discrimination in the United States, became a source of Brazilian national pride. Since 1974, however, Thomas E. Skidmore, Michael Hanchard, France Winddance Twine, Florestan Fernandes, and others have denounced this theory as a scheme promoted by the Brazilian state

and the white elite to camouflage racial discrimination and to prevent the creation of laws for its elimination. As a telling anecdote, on 2 October 2016 Brazil, the country with the largest black population in the Western Hemisphere (about half of its population), crowned Raissa Santana, only its second Miss Brazil of African ancestry since Deise Nunes won thirty years earlier. Santana was one of the six Afro-Brazilian contestants out of a total of twenty-seven.

21. "A imigração seria uma das salvações para conter a pobreza e a superpopulação do país" (20).

22. However, as Joshua Hotaka Roth points out, "A small number of Japanese unofficially entered Brazilian Amazonia from Peru to work as rubber tappers in the first years of the twentieth century" (21).

Perhaps the mistranslation of the Portuguese word *colono* leads Toake Enroh to erroneously write about "Japan's approach to Latin America via emigration and colonization" (13) or "migration and colonization operations, mostly in Latin America" (69). Needless to say, no Latin American country was ever colonized by Japan.

23. "Deve-se lembrar que vinte anos antes usava-se aqui o trabalho escravo na produção. A mentalidade segundo a qual o trabalhador não passava de um homem inferior não se apaga em apenas vinte anos" (139).

24. Bandeirantes (literally meaning "those who carry the flag") were, for the most part, seventeenth-century Portuguese settlers and their descendants in what is today the state of São Paulo, who led expeditions to the interior of Brazil in search of indigenous slaves (and later, of gold, silver, and diamonds).

25. Daniel Masterson points out that 72 percent of this population lives in the state of São Paulo and 26.6 percent in the city of São Paulo (246). Significantly, while in 1958, 55 percent of the Japanese lived in rural areas, by 1988 only 11 percent did (Masterson and Funada-Classen 246).

26. According to Tsugio Shindo, "Some were arrested over allegations that they were laughing in Japanese." ("Alguns foram detidos com a alegação de que riram em japonês" [*Passos* 220].)

27. "Marcou o início da 'crise cultural' na colônia" (42).

28. "Assim, sofrendo maus tratos, meus pais, juntamente com todos os japoneses que viviam no litoral paulista, foram obrigados a abandonar suas casas. Os caminhões do exército deixáramos na estação de trem, no centro da cidade de Santos; em seguida, os japoneses partiram rumo à Hospedaria dos Imigrantes, em São Paulo, onde permaneceram alguns dias" (145).

Ana Suzuki also describes the displacement of Nikkeijin from the coast in her 1988 novel *Jônetsu: A Terceira Cor da Paixão* (1988):

"My uncle would say that they were given thirty-six hours, with no right to receive any new land. Many could not even carry their belongings."

"And where did they go?"

"Aimlessly, in July's chilly weather. The order was to back out at least fifty kilometers from the beach."

"—Meu tio contava que o prazo foi de trinta e seis horas, sem direito a receber novas terras. Muitos não conseguiram ao menos carregar seus pertences."

"—E para onde foram?"

"Sem rumo, em plena friagem de julho. A ordem foi para que se afastassem pelo menos cinquenta quilômetros da praia" [37].)

29. The *Kasato Maru*, the ship that brought the first Issei immigrants to Brazil, was seized from Russia in Port Arthur in 1904 and incorporated to the Japanese fleet after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5). It was previously used to transport Japanese soldiers who had fought in Manchuria and to take Japanese emigrants to Hawaii, Peru, Mexico, and Brazil between 1906 and 1908 (Arai and Hirasaki 34).

30. As Walter Mignolo explains, "'Internal colonialism' is a concept that describes the mutation of imperial into national management in the ex-European colonies. What is 'internal colonialism' if not the persistence of the coloniality of knowledge (and therefore the control of authority and economy) under nation-building processes after decolonization? This is why coloniality remains as the hidden side of modernity, and why there cannot be modernity without coloniality" (162).

31. In Takashi T. Maeyama's words, "The 'revolution' of 1930 led by Getúlio Vargas may be understood as the results of a populist coalition between the urban middle classes, including national industrialists, and the urban working class" (597).

32. "Não nos esqueçamos de que a tão celebrada ética de educação e do trabalho é muito menos uma tradição vinda de tempos imemoriais, do que um programa político voltado para a implantação do sistema capitalista e da centralização estatal durante a segunda metade do século XIX (Mita, 1992, 224–247). Essa ética serviu, ademais, como instrumento de dominação na colonização das regiões de Okinawa, Hokkaido, Coreia e Taiwan, onde os povos nativos eram obrigados a trabalhar para abastecer o mercado japonês, e estudar em escolas japonesas para esquecer seus costumes 'bárbaros,' tornando-se súditos dignos de pertencer ao 'Grande Império Japonês' (Oguma, 1998)" (Ernani Oda 104).

33. "Totalidade homogênea, imutável e exótica" (104).

34. "E a caixa ficou enterrada. Como se os livros estivessem mortos. Ou como se fossem tesouros?" (12).

35. "Na época, aos 49 anos de idade, Shioya-san mais parecia um forte e vigoroso jovem, disposto a trabalhar e contribuir para que o país continuasse crescendo e

progredindo. Sem dúvida, ele é um dos remanescentes daqueles que ajudaram a elevar o Japão ao nível de potência mundial, dando sua contribuição diária de suor e sangre. Foram milhões de braços fortes como os dele, de servidores dedicados, que reergueram uma nação reduzida a cinzas pelas duas bombas atômicas" (41).

36. "Le Noir veut être Blanc" (7). "Pour le Noire, il n'y a qu'un destin. Et il est blanc" (8).

37. See my *The Affinity of the Eye: Writing Nikkei in Peru* (2013).

38. Among many others non-Nikkei Brazilian haijin, one can include Waldomiro Siqueira Jr., Jorge Fonseca Jr., Oldegar Vieira, Abel Pereira, Guilherme de Almeida, Fanny Luíza Dupré, Luís Antônio Pimentel, Pedro Xisto, Fernandes Soares, Primo Vieira, Jacy Pacheco, Gil Nunesmaia, Martinho Bruning, Álvaro Cardoso Gomes, Dasso (Davidson Panis Kaseker), Alice Ruiz, Paulo Leminski, Olga Savary, Rodolfo Guttilla, Cláudio Feldman, Débora Novaes de Castro, Millôr Fernandes, and Sílvia Rocha (Masuda Goga 70).

39. *Haikai* refers to *haikai no renga*, a popular genre of Japanese poetry that developed in the sixteenth century out of the earlier aristocratic *rengan* Brazil; however, it is often used as a synonym for haiku.

40. "A casa estava bem cuidada e não necessitava de reparos; mesmo assim, ela foi toda pintada na cor amarela, e as janelas e portas na cor verde" (177).

41. "'Meus filhos, este é um momento muito difícil. O Brasil está em guerra contra o Japão. O sangue nos une, porém o dever nos separa. Vocês são cidadãos brasileiros e devem lutar pelo Brasil, se forem convocados para a guerra.' Finalmente, disse para Kincas: 'sirva sua pátria com orgulho e coragem'" (142–43).

42. The case of Brazilian jiu-jitsu is noteworthy. This martial art became independent from Japanese jiu-jitsu and judo thanks to Carlos and Helio Gracie's experimentation and innovation, departing from the teachings of Mitsuyo Maeda (Conde Coma) in the Kodokan, the home of Judo.

# 1

# HISTORICAL MEMORY AND CLAIMING PLACE

Collective historical memory is often mobilized in Nikkei cultural production in order to create an imagined community or to claim belonging within the Brazilian nation. This social group's shared knowledge can be passed on from generation to generation or, on occasion, represent an empowering social construction. The historical episodes that literary and filmic works choose to memorialize and, equally important, those they try to erase are reliable indicators of a Nikkei public memory, even if it is still fragmented and partial. Secondhand "recollections," that is, the reminiscences passed on from generation to generation, are an important source for Nikkei collective memory as well. Among other representational forms, an idealized image of Japan, for example, may be transmitted through oral history from nostalgic Issei to their children and grandchildren. However, once some of these Nisei or Sansei have the opportunity to live in Japan as dekasegi, they may contrast their lived experience to their parents' sanitized memories, noticing shocking differences. This oppositional contestation and reframing of the received image of Japan recur in texts and films by and about dekasegi.

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One text in which historical memory is a major component of the narrative is the Nisei Júlio Miyazawa's (1948–) first novel, *Yawara! A Travessia Nihondin-Brasil* (Yawara! Crossing Nihondin-Brazil, 2006; henceforth, *Yawara!*), which memorializes several key episodes in Japanese Brazilian history.[1] According to the author, with this publication he wished to pay homage to the centennial celebration of Japanese immigration to Brazil that was to take place two years later. However, most of the novel, which shared the 2009 Prêmio Literário Nikkei (Nikkei Literary Award) with two other works, was written between 1978 and 1980.[2] The Nikkei history explored in *Yawara* and in his second novel, *Uma Rosa para Yumi* (A Rose for Yumi, 2013; henceforth, *Uma Rosa*), is the metaphorical "Travessia" featured in the subtitle of his first novel. Along with the sea voyage, this "crossing" refers to a change of mentality and self-identification among Japanese Brazilians. It also reflects different phases (not always chronological) that many members of this minority have undergone: the initial pre–World War II period, when the novel's characters still saw themselves as loyal subjects of the Japanese Empire and identified either as Japanese immigrants or as Japanese born in Brazil; a period of identitarian uncertainty for some characters that transverses both the pre- and postwar periods; and the postwar period, when some characters progressively shift their national affiliation to become patriotic and proud Brazilians.

I choose to dedicate this first chapter to Miyazawa's *Yawara!* because I consider it one of the most sophisticated Portuguese-language fictional explorations of identitarian conflicts among Japanese Brazilians—these conflicts are also a core issue in Nikkei discourse. As the anthropologist Takeyuki Tsuda explains: "Identity refers to a conscious awareness of who one is in the world based on association with certain sociocultural characteristics or membership in social groups. The individual's identity consists of two components: the self and the social identity. The self (or self-identity) is the aspect of identity that is experienced and developed *internally* through the individual's own subjective perceptions and experience of the social environment. However, an identity is also *externally* defined by others in accordance with standardized cultural norms and social roles, which can be called the individual's social identity" (*Strangers* 9–10). *Yawara!* re-creates this traumatic identitarian tension between the Nikkei characters' internal self-perceptions and external social influences, stemming from the majority Brazilian population as well as the Nikkei community. I argue that the author's choice of topic—primarily in

the passages describing Mário Japa's (Mário "The Jap") multiple identities—is related to an intention to validate and vindicate symbolically the hard-fought Brazilianness of the Nikkei. Ultimately, Miyazawa presents this psychological journey as a celebration of his ethnic heritage and, more important, of his ethnic group's contributions to the betterment of Brazil.

In my view, *Yawara!* and *Uma Rosa* are emblematic works in the Portuguese-language Nikkei literary and cultural corpus, as they explore, mostly from the perspective of Japanese Brazilian self-definition and self-representation, why so many Japanese immigrants decided to emigrate and eventually settle in such a distant country that was then deeply committed to a process of whitening its population. Both works draw the sociocultural progress of Japanese immigrants and their descendants through the years, transforming their public image from a perceived inexpensive and docile labor force to a so-called model minority and a key part of Brazilian national identity. As mentioned in the introduction, readers can often find the tension created between Nikkei writers and filmmakers' celebration of cultural difference and the concomitant claim to Brazilianness and national belonging, which is evident in *Yawara!* However, I argue that they are intimately related: the open celebration of Nikkei achievements in different fields—and particularly of the involvement of its leftist youth in national politics during the 1970s—in *Yawara!* and *Uma Rosa* responds to a will to power and, more specifically, to the author's vindication of the true Brazilianness of his ethnic group. It is reflective of Nikkei public strategies to negotiate their own authentic Brazilianness throughout decades, and awareness of notions about the Brazilian national essence, regardless of its mythical or constructed origins. In the process, Nikkei discourse resorts to ethnic assumptions that are equally mythical in nature: in certain cases, in the authors and filmmakers' goal to narrate conflict and trauma, historical amnesia (in this case trying to erase the infamous chapters of anti-Japanese hysteria in Brazil or considering the Shindō Renmei episode a taboo) has been as useful as historical memory. Ernest Renan, in his 1882 *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (*What Is a Nation?*), and Benedict Anderson, in his 2006 *Imagined Communities*, remind us of the power of forgetting for nation building.[3] Likewise, Homi Bhabha posits that "Being obliged to forget becomes the basis for remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imagining the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identification" (*The Location* 161). As negative ethnic stereotypes dealing with "Yellow Peril" prejudice became a

considerable obstacle to Nikkei integration, positive stereotypes dealing with the perceived fixed nature of racial typology have, at times, been embraced in a sort of strategic essentialism that may empower the community. This stance is most noticeable in Miyazawa's works.

Both novels explore the transmission of cultural affect between generations of Nikkei. The reader learns how structures of feeling changed throughout time from an initial collective "unhomeliness"[4]—that is, the sense of being geographically and culturally displaced in a strange and hostile land, or being caught in an undefined cultural identity between the ancestral culture of one's parents and the local culture—to slowly identifying with their native Brazilian culture or having multiple identities. This identitarian diversity, however, should not be read as an assimilationist discourse. In fact, the vindication of cultural difference is a leitmotif in Nikkei fiction, where characters often identify themselves as Japanese, Japanese Brazilian, and/or Brazilian, among other options. At the same time, Miyazawa echoes how Japanese immigration (along with the immigration of other disenfranchised ethnic groups that could not easily be labeled black or white, such as Chinese, Koreans, and Middle Easterners) ultimately changed Brazil and challenged elite articulations of Brazilian national identity. Through this strategic cultural discourse, Nikkei present themselves as an economically beneficial component of the Brazilian national body, a path to modernity, and a model to be imitated by all of Brazil. As Lesser argues, the proof of their strategies and negotiations' success is that "By the mid-twentieth century, elite paradigms about who was and was not an acceptable Brazilian changed so markedly that many Europeans were no longer in the 'white' category while some Asians and Middle Easterners were" ("Ethnic Myths" 68).[5] Indeed, the fictional Japanese immigrants' strategies for survival and community formation, their progressive integration into mainstream society, and their claim to place are all recurrent topics in the collective narrative of Japanese Brazilian cultural production.

## BETWEEN DICHOTOMIES: CULTURAL ISOLATION/ ADAPTATION AND OPPRESSION/RESISTANCE

Miyazawa's exploration of the "crossing" in the subtitle of the novel begins with the inception of the immigration process, focusing, from a sentimental (at times bordering on the melodramatic) perspective, on the reasons for

emigration, the immigrants' nostalgia for Japan, and the identitarian uncertainties they tried to overcome. *Yawara!* addresses the different steps of the immigration process, including the "pull" and "push" factors. It explains, for instance, that the Japanese government and the emperor encouraged emigration as a way to alleviate the social tensions caused by an acute economic crisis. It also reveals that, out of patriotism, many Japanese peasants obeyed the emperor's wishes; others naively believed the official declaration assuring prospective emigrants that it would not take long to become wealthy in Brazil and that they, therefore, could return to Japan after having reached their financial goals. Yet, as the novel reflects, the first group of immigrants soon realized that living and working conditions in the adoptive country were much harsher than advertised by recruiting companies. Toake Endoh exposes the questionable advertising techniques: "The migration promoters may not have intended to deceive the public, but certainly felt the pressure of the self-assigned numerical targets, especially when earlier emigration plans fell short. Their sense of urgency may have driven them to create grandiose or, at times, false recruiting advertisements so as to attract sufficient numbers of emigrants. Fully aware of the risks of such inflated claims, Emigration Administration Guidelines of the Kaikyōren instruct: '[The] method of advertisement needs to be *as stimulating as possible, even at the cost of accuracy* to some extent.'" (92; emphasis in original). Likewise, Ondina Antonio Rodrigues reproduces this false advertising: "In Brazil there is a tree that gives gold, which is the coffee plant. It is only a matter of picking it up with one's hands."[6] Feeling deceived, Japanese immigrants were further disappointed on account of the racism directed at them, particularly during World War II—Brazil joined the Allied cause in August of 1942.

The structure of *Yawara!* meshes three stories of kinship and friendship. The novel re-creates the lives of three Japanese immigrant families who arrived in Brazil in 1936 thanks to the aid of the Associação Nipônica no Brasil (Japanese Association of Brazil). In December 1945, after the war's end, they founded a village in the region of Atibaia, in the state of São Paulo. Although these characters are fictional, the author claims to have found inspiration in the people he met in the region of Jabaquara; the plot's action, however, takes place in real Brazilian locations and includes historical facts. The characters from the original community of Atibaia and their descendants—a synecdoche of all Brazilian Nikkeijin—choose different paths that range from

cultural isolation within their ethnic group to full cultural integration into mainstream Brazilian society. For instance, Kenhiti and his wife, Akemi, one of the three original Japanese families who arrived in 1936, never adapt to the host country. In fact, Kenhiti, a humble peasant from Hiroshima's countryside and a judo expert, worries more about the preservation of Japanese culture than about learning Brazilian customs. His situation worsens when he is unjustly imprisoned for a two-year term after defending his nephew Goro from the physical attack of the Brazilian landowner's son. Once released, he and his wife commit suicide because of the resulting psychological trauma and shame:

> The brightness of the sun bothered the eyes of Kenhiti, who, in his feverish imagination, believed he was contemplating Japanese land. For this reason, he looked at it scared and full of happiness, and screamed:
>
> "*Fuji-San*! Mount Fuji . . . *Fuji-San*! Beloved fatherland!"
>
> . . . Screaming and running through a seemingly shorter path yet leading directly to the cliff, Kenhiti extended his hand to Akemi, who grabbed it. That way, united by the same idea, both jumped to eternity![7]

The delusional vision of the iconic Mount Fuji in the Brazilian countryside suggests their inability to grasp the new reality in a strange and foreign land. The novel implies that Kenhiti's failure to adapt to the new culture, customs, and language—added to the death of his relatives after the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima—contributed to his eventual demise and dragged his wife Akemi to an untimely death.

Saudade is omnipresent in the novel as well as in much of Japanese Brazilian literature and film. While it plausibly reflects a historical reality, the recurrent references to this deep melancholic emotional state of longing for a loved person or thing that is absent and will never return may also be a strategic way to emphasize the true Brazilianness of Nikkeijin, since this feeling is often considered quintessential to the "Brazilian essence or spirit." At the onset of the narrative of *Yawara!*, the nostalgic Issei Koiti Furukawa, head of another of the first three Japanese families who arrived in 1936, is described as he sings sad Okinawan songs, awaits letters from his relatives in Japan, and writes a book he hopes to publish in Japan. Yet, in contrast with his friend Kenhiti, who is always longing to return to Japan, Koiti's early ability to integrate into the new environment saves him from a similar outcome. He

participates in Carnival parades, seemingly the ultimate proof of his integration into Brazilian culture.

Another Issei character who is successful in his attempt to adapt to Brazilian ways is Goro, the older son of Toshiro and Noriko (a married couple, part of those who founded the village in Atibaia). He is motivated to learn Portuguese quickly because of his infatuation with his Brazilian teacher, Antônia, and to put an end to his classmates' mockery. *Yawara!* also reflects how immigrant children had an easier path to cultural adaptation and answers why Nisei and Sansei (including *mestizos*) born after 1940 did not speak Japanese or observe Japanese customs, a fact that created a significant cultural gap with their elders. Another source of discord is the opposition of Japanese parents to mixed marriages. The novel reflects, therefore, the fact that by the third generation, full integration into the wider Brazilian society was achieved.

*Yawara!* provides numerous examples of the oppression that Japanese had to endure, particularly during World War II. For instance, Goro and his younger brother Kootaro have to suspend their studies on account of increased discrimination against Nikkeijin; later, Kootaro is beaten by local boys for naming his horse Burajiru ("Brazil" pronounced with a Japanese accent). The novel reminds us that, during those years, Japanese immigrants were considered internal enemies as they were viewed with suspicion, were forbidden to speak Japanese in public, and were forbidden to hold social gatherings. The omniscient narrator explains that Japanese immigrants were concerned with "the continued incarceration of members of the Japanese community—in many cases, without formal accusations, without right to legal defense, and without knowing the duration of the confinement."[8]

Along with these scenes of oppression, *Yawara!* re-creates Japanese resistance during this period. Thus, when the local oligarch orders Koiti's arrest for purchasing a hunting rifle, Sensei (teacher), a cultured pioneer who helps new arrivals, uses his influence to prevent his imprisonment. Likewise, as a reaction to the oligarch's appropriation of Japanese-owned land and to their constant harassment by his son, the group decides to move to the state of Paraná, where they will be successful by growing and commercializing cotton. Miyazawa also presents solidarity as another form of resistance when the Japanese community offers emotional support and donates money for the imprisoned Kenhiti, whose act of self-defense (the breaking of the

landowner's son's arm) also suggests that Japanese Brazilians did not take oppression passively. Curiously, although the title *Yawara!* makes reference to a Japanese Brazilian 1964 song about struggle and hope, it can also refer to judo or jujutsu. In fact, the book cover includes the kanji for "Yawara," 柔, which is also a Japanese weapon (a small, thick stick that protrudes approximately one inch from each side of the hand when grabbed) used in various martial arts. The narrator mentions that for a time, the Japanese were believed unable to adapt to work in coffee plantations. The real cause of this inability, however, was their refusal to accept class and racial exploitation by landowners.

In spite of these cases of discrimination and oppression, *Yawara!* does not allow for Manichean conclusions. In fact, it includes scenes of interethnic solidarity, as several Afro-Brazilian characters help the Nikkeijin. An Afro-Brazilian neighbor, Zefa (Josefa), feeds Akemi (Kenhiti's wife) when she is weak, breastfeeds her baby after noticing his undernourishment, and invites the couple to dinner on Christmas Eve. Incidentally, Gilberto Freyre finds in the fact that many Afro-Brazilian women worked as wet nurses (*babás*) for Portuguese families one of the historical arguments for his notion of "racial democracy" in Brazil (even though he did not initially use this term in his seminal study *Casa-Grande e Senzala* [*The Masters and the Slaves*, 1933]). Years later, in 1975, another Afro-Brazilian character in *Yawara!*, Alberto, helps Mariano Goro Harikawa (Akemi and Kenhiti's offspring) overcome his psychological imbalance and weeps upon hearing Mariano's sad life story. They eventually become close friends: "I would only allow Alberto to call me 'Japa' when no one was around. He, of all people a black guy, would come up with such cheap racism."[9] These alliances between Nikkei and Afro-Brazilian characters are not uncommon in Nikkei literature.[10] In some cases, the latter come close to Hollywood's selfless "magical negro," a stock character with special insight or power who, often risking his or her life, aids a white protagonist.

But Antônia, the Euro-Brazilian schoolteacher, is the Nikkeijin's most faithful ally during the early years. She asserts that "the war is not the colonists' [immigrant laborers'] fault and they have done nothing to deserve hate."[11] Later, her marriage to Goro becomes a national allegory for peaceful miscegenation and transculturation between the local population and Japanese immigrants. Incidentally, this type of national allegory appears in other Japanese Brazilian cultural production. It is evident, for example, in Tizuka

Yamasaki's film *Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade* (1980), where the relationship between Titoe, an Issei, and Tonho, the plantation's Euro-Brazilian accountant, symbolizes racial harmony and hybridity in a new, more tolerant Brazil. A similar national allegory is evoked through the marriage of a Nisei florist and a Euro-Brazilian man in Glauco Mirko Laurelli's (1930–2013) comedy *Meu Japão Brasileiro* (My Brazilian Japan, 1965), and through the marriage of the Japanese Riokai Ohashi and the Brazilian Helena Pereira da Silva in Eico Suzuki's short story "A Rosa" (The Rose), included in the collection *Desafio ao Imortal* (Dare to the Immortal, 1970).

In contrast with the stereotypical emasculation of Asian men in post–World War II American popular culture, Nikkei men in Brazil have been perceived at times as desirable spouses. Antônia's marriage to Goro in *Yawara!* is, therefore, an example of this type of attraction toward an immigrant male, even though, in most cases, the attraction is elicited by "exoticized" Japanese females. Their marriage symbolizes the birth of a new Brazil, where Japanese immigrants have at last found a home. Antônia has overcome her father's anti-Japanese prejudice to embody her generation's greater tolerance. Along these lines, hers and Goro's relationship opens the door to ending anti-Brazilian and antiblack prejudices of Japanese immigrants. Yet the Nikkeijin's racialist prejudice against other ethnic groups is still noticeable in *Yawara!* Thus, Goro prudishly tells Antônia, "My mother said that a wedding between a Japanese man and a Brazilian woman is not right."[12] Likewise, when Zefa takes Akemi's undernourished baby and breastfeeds her, the Japanese immigrant is at first in shock; then, despite being grateful, she hides the act from her husband, Kenhiti: "she feared being despised by her husband, especially if he knew that Goro was being breastfed by a black woman."[13]

Through a prolepsis that takes us to the São Paulo of the 1970s, Part II of *Yawara!* begins to read somewhat differently. It focuses on the descendants of Japanese immigrants and, particularly, on Kenhiti and Akemi's son, the Nisei Mariano Goro, who, suffering from dissociative identity disorder, becomes a notorious member of an armed group fighting the dictatorship. The sociocultural and psychological dilemmas caused by both Mariano's own identitarian confusion and mainstream society's discrimination have dire consequences on him. With the help of a psychiatrist, he realizes that he suffers from dissociative identity disorder and that he is actually the political fugitive known

as Mário Japa. This mental disorder led him to adopt two distinct identities or personalities that, at different times, take control of his behavior. At least once a month, Mariano Goro / Mário Japa suffers from attacks during which he speaks to an imaginary alter ego whom he calls Caro Mano (Dear Brother). He then tries to relieve his anxiety by running until reaching exhaustion. In one of these "dialogues," Mariano admits to his alter ego that learning about the existence of Nisei revolutionaries made him question his own role in society. He also confesses that the first time he saw a "Wanted" sign with his photograph on it, he pretended not to see it, as did other Nikkeijin who felt embarrassed by a Nisei involved in armed struggle. Therefore, through a sort of double vision, he is able to see himself through the eyes of more conservative members of his ethnic group. Mariano's first reaction is to think: "Damn! Even the Japanese are robbing banks!"[14] The usage of "even" suggests a case of double consciousness in which a Nikkei man sees his own ethnic group through the eyes of majority Brazilians, at the border of the Brazilian nation, or as a human national border. He later adds that that integration was bound to happen because, by the 1970s, many Nikkeijin were more involved in Brazilian mainstream society. Mariano is an example of this process, as he has become politicized almost by accident: he reluctantly wins a union election and then becomes a sort of hero among his coworkers. Noticing that this new facet of his life has helped him overcome his personal crisis, he soon begins to find meaning in life through union struggles.

Mariano, who narrates Part II, explains that the bicultural Nisei's efforts at integration into mainstream society peaked during the 1960s and 1970s: "Many of us wanted to look Brazilian and act Brazilian in how we were, ate, and dressed."[15] He also recalls how his adopted father scolded him during a match between boxers from Japan and Brazil for cheering for the latter. After seeing his son imitate his classmates' mockery of the Japanese slanted eyes, Mariano feels compelled to educate him about racial tensions in Brazil: "To Brazilian children, we are different. To us, they are different. Nothing else. You don't need to do that. You don't need to care about that. We belong to another race. You were born here. Your country is here."[16] As seen in real life, there were often other issues in these clashes, including immigrant and socioeconomic status, but only ethnic differences are mentioned in these passages.

Closing the circle, Part III's protagonist is the sixty-six-year-old Koiti Furukawa, a co-founder of the original Japanese community in Atibaia, who

returns to the homesickness and nostalgia that characterized the first chapters: he bemoans the suicide of his friend Kenhiti and cries when he hears a little girl dressed in a kimono thank him in Japanese: "Thank you . . . grandfather."[17] Koiti again loses control of his emotions in public, thus breaking with emotional self-control and restraint, a traditional Japanese teaching. The journey's trauma has therefore not been overcome—even with the well-adapted Koiti, uprootedness takes its toll.

## BECOMING BRAZILIAN: IDENTITARIAN FORMATIONS AND NIKKEI PRIDE

In contrast with the rural atmosphere and the nostalgic, melodramatic tone of numerous passages in Part I, which narrates the Japanese immigrants' worldview as imagined by Miyazawa, in the remainder of *Yawara!* the tone changes to re-create a shift toward what the implicit author sees as a new, Brazilian mentality. This sudden shift undermines the nostalgia that pervaded the first part of the novel. With this end in mind, Miyazawa portrays fully integrated, urban Nikkei characters who have become involved in local politics and use colloquial, sometimes coarse language. "The bitch is fooling everybody,"[18] observes Mariano, referring to a woman who is screaming in the street. As is common in literature by and about Asians in Latin America, while the original Asian worldview tends to be romanticized and exoticized through a refined atmosphere enriched by sophisticated poetry, music and amorous feelings, the Latin American *criollo* worldview is conceived of in opposite terms: unrefined, coarse, and sexually crude.[19]

In the novel's second part, Mariano's identitarian problems and difficult integration into mainstream Brazilian society synecdochically embody the trials of his ethnic group. Uncertainty about whether he is Japanese, Brazilian or something else consumes him. As stated, this may be another meaning of the word *travessia* in the novel's subtitle. It may allude to Nikkeijin's spatial travel from Japan to Brazil (for many descendants, "back" to Japan), and to their temporal journey from Issei, to Nisei, Sansei, Yonsei, Gosei. This journey involves a psychological crossing from a Japanese identity to various outcomes that unproblematically include a Japanese Brazilian identity, an unhyphenated Brazilian identity in which the cultural or sentimental links to the ancestral land have been more or less erased, or multiple identities. Along

with this identitarian diversity, the novel re-creates the progressive shifts in national allegiance within several generations of these families and the hostile path to full Brazilian citizenship.

In texts that re-create Japanese immigration to Latin America, the "colonists" often make it clear that they wish to earn enough money to return to their homeland and start their new lives. Life goals change, however, among their descendants. In *Yawara!*, Mariano and other Nisei characters that grow up in Brazil no longer dream about "returning" to Japan upon becoming wealthy; in fact, they have never visited their ancestral country. Yet their phenotype, a constant source of mockery and insults coming from majority Brazilians, continues to be a seemingly insurmountable obstacle in their desire to be Brazilians. Mariano Goro / Mário Japa develops two conflicting selves as a result of the discrepancies between his self-identity (the cultural categories the character uses to define himself) and a competing social identity (the cultural categories that society imposes on him). Ultimately, the novel implies that the protagonist's fragmented experience of identity and resulting pathological dissociate disorder (a metaphor for the in-between, hybrid life of Brazilian Nikkeijin) are an outcome of the trauma and stress resulting from a life of discrimination and racial prejudice. His mental struggles represent an effort to heal the wounds of the internal colonialism that oppresses his ethnic group and to be rid of an externally imposed double consciousness. Throughout the novel, he tries to overcome the psychological imbalance produced by the habit—often present among postcolonial subjects—of seeing himself through the hegemonic and prejudicial prism of a racist mainstream society. In addition, he faces the challenge of reconciling Brazilian Eurocentric values with the worldview of his ethnic Japanese heritage. For Nikkeijin like Mariano, it is frustrating to be treated as foreigners or mocked because of their phenotype in their own country. This exclusion from the Brazilian body politic becomes apparent during his arrest, when Mariano is convinced that the police have confused him with someone else. Although the cultural construct of his self-identity tells him that he is a Brazilian because of birthright, the policemen impose a competing societal cultural construct by repeatedly asking him: "What are you doing here in Brazil, Jap? Do you have to get involved in the things of the country? Couldn't you stay quietly in your country?"[20] These repeated traumatic situations create a split between that which Mariano experiences internally and what society externally defines.

In *Yawara!*, therefore, identitarian conflicts and existential dilemmas arise when Nikkei characters believe that they have to choose between Japanese ethnicity and Brazilian nationality. Mariano, perhaps the author's alter ego, embodies this dilemma to the point of suffering from dissociative identity disorder. Even though he feels attracted to the richer, multiethnic life surrounding him and strongly wishes to "act Brazilian," he claims that his Japanese ethnic roots will not allow it. Paradoxically, another source of the protagonist's existential angst and debilitated mental health is his inability to understand the reason behind the existence of Nisei guerrillas, as he feels that Nisei people are stateless: "We are a race, but we don't have a country. That one over there, Japan, was not our country. This one, Brazil, we always rejected."[21] He cannot fathom how revolutionary Nisei youths have been able to overcome their identitarian uncertainties to the point of becoming involved in a revolutionary struggle, "in spite of their skin and their obvious Oriental features."[22] He also resents Japan for its aggressive colonialism before World War II, for abandoning Brazilian Nikkeijin during the war, as well as for its current consumerism and loss of traditions. The non-Nikkei author and journalist Fernando Morais, in his essay *Corações Sujos: A História da Shindo Renmei* (Dirty Hearts: The History of Shindō Renmei, 2000), verbalizes this feeling of abandonment felt by Brazil's Nikkeijin: "Immigrants resented what they saw as lack of patriotism on the part of Japanese diplomats, who left the country immediately after Japan broke diplomatic relations with Brazil, leaving more than 200,000 of them on their own."[23] Likewise, Tsugio Shindo reports: "During the war, at a time when they were being persecuted and discriminated against, immigrants would blame Japan, saying aloud 'Our fatherland *abandoned* us, it does nothing for us.'"[24]

To the reader's surprise, it is later revealed that not only did Mariano participate in the dissidence against the 1964 coup d'état, but he is also the notorious Mário Japa, a member of a subversive group fighting the military dictatorship. He eventually solves the quandary by realizing that the question of whether he is Brazilian or Japanese is flawed: "If many Nisei born in Brazil around those two decades, who underwent that false dilemma, had understood what was going on, they would have had a different approach to life and people. It was a false dilemma because to be Japanese, it was not necessary to renounce one's country of origin; to be Brazilian, it was not necessary to renounce one's race. Each personal experience, each social and

economic circumstance manifested itself in the disparate personality changes produced by that false dilemma."[25] This statement summarizes the essence of Miyazawa's two novels: there is no need to reject one's ethnocultural heritage, because there are different ways of being Brazilian. It follows that there are also different ways of being a Brazilian Nikkeijin.

*Yawara!* includes the chapter of Shindō Renmei's terrorism and the minor negative episode of the fights between Nikkei and Korean youth who, after their arrival in Brazil in the late 1960s, well remembered Japanese World War II atrocities against their people.[26] Yet Miyazawa does not shy away from expressing his ethnic pride in several passages. In the first chapters, for instance, we are told that Brazilian landowners were jealous of the productivity of the lands they leased to Japanese settlers. The novel also celebrates the fact that by the 1950s, some Japanese immigrants already owned large estates and that, years later, certain Nikkeijin had become prominent in Brazilian politics, a definite sign of social integration. It reminds us that this economic and political success would have been impossible without the pioneers' efforts. Another significant milestone is the appearance of the first Japanese homeless people, a source of shame for the minority group (one of these individuals, however, became known for his mastery of mathematics). This fact also suggests the increased diversity in socioeconomic status among Japanese Brazilians.

Beyond celebrating Nikkei achievements, *Yawara!* also suggests pan-Asian pride, perhaps strategically reifying positive stereotypes and the "model minority" myth.[27] The narrator points out, for instance, that besides having a reputation for being honest and serious workers, Nikkei students had the best grades and were determined to keep that reputation, even though it could also be a stigma: "After all, the Japanese and other Orientals were the 'brainiacs.' They had to uphold the reputation of their race."[28] Following close behind students of Japanese and Chinese descent, Koreans are also said to be among the best students. The same pan-Asian awareness is also evident in the epigraph taken from a Chinese legend that opens the novel and is later quoted in the plot.

Mariano, however, delinks from his community by stating that he does not share this widespread ethnic pride, plausibly questioning the "model minority" myth: "I did not feel like one of those who obtained college admission because they were Oriental, Japanese. Hence, an identity crisis began

to arise that also affected Japanese children born between the 1940s and the 1960s."[29] Although this disidentification with pan-Asian pride could be interpreted as a reflection of his identitarian uncertainties, it is probably a sign of his deeper integration into mainstream Brazilian society and of his determination to avoid falling into the traps of ethnocentrism. It also proves that the character (an alter ego of his author) is critical of positive as well as negative stereotypes about his ethnic group.

Overall, Miyazawa traces the psychological evolution of his characters along with the diversity of their experiences and identities. As if they had become aware of the paralyzing potential of nostalgia, some join samba parades during Carnival. Hosokawa Shuhei clarifies that most Brazilians view Carnival "as the major manifestation of Brazilianness (*brasilidade*). In this sense, for both Nikkei and non-Nikkei Brazilians, the carnival is a performative and symbolic site in which their ethnic and national identities are articulated" (61). Other Nikkei characters, however, succumb to melancholia and identitarian uncertainties. In Koiti's case, it is clear that a century after the inception of Japanese immigration to Brazil, the sojourner mentality has not disappeared. Even in the cases of Nisei or immigrant characters who learn Portuguese and adapt to Brazilian customs, the limits of national belonging are exposed once their subconscious betrays them with identitarian dilemmas or majority Brazilians exclude them from the national discourse.

## FROM SURVIVAL TO SOCIAL COMMITMENT

Although the narrator mentions that some characters in *Yawara!* are from the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa), the intersectionality and double oppression, which resulted from membership in ethnic or subethnic groups that were then marginalized in Japan and Brazil, are never addressed.[30] The novel instead denounces the racism and marginalization that Japanese immigrants not only had to endure in rural areas of the state of São Paulo before and during World War II but also, to a lesser extent, in the postwar period. It likewise reflects Nikkei reverse racism against Brazilians and other immigrants whom they considered *gaijin* (outsiders, foreigners, non-Japanese, literally meaning "outside person"—often with pejorative connotations).[31]

*Yawara!* underscores the sociopolitical and cultural heterogeneity among Brazilian Nikkeijin. The author lists, for example, the differences between

Okinawan and Naichi ("mainland" Japanese) cultural traditions. He describes Japanese customs (particularly those from Okinawa) that immigrants brought to Brazil, along with their food, clothing, religious beliefs, hierarchical societal structure, and love for martial arts (judo and kendo) or sports (baseball). The novel includes Japanese and Okinawan terms, which are translated into Portuguese in the footnotes or the text itself. As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin point out in *The Empire Writes Back*, "Such uses of untranslated words do have an important function in inscribing difference. They signify a certain cultural experience which they cannot hope to reproduce but whose difference is validated by the new situation. In this sense they are directly metonymic of that cultural difference which is imputed by the linguistic variation" (52). Interestingly, toward the end of the novel the author begins to leave Japanese and Okinawan words untranslated, as if they had at last lost their lesser status in relation to Portuguese. This choice creates the impression that these untranslated terms open the door to the presentation of an also untranslated culture to readers, challenging them to accept it as it is. In Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin's words, "The post-colonial text, by developing specific ways of both constituting cultural distance and at the same time bridging it, indicates that it is the 'gap' rather than the experience (of at least the *concept* of a gap between experiences) which is created by language. The absence of explanation is, therefore, first a sign of distinctiveness, though it merely makes explicit the alterity which is implicit in the gloss" (64).

Miyazawa highlights the different paths taken by immigrants. This is particularly evident in the chapters that address the brief history of the Shindō Renmei, a terrorist organization composed of Japanese immigrants mostly from the state of São Paulo who, during the second half of the 1940s, refused to believe that World War II had ended and that Japan had surrendered: "a conflict that arose among the Japanese themselves: the dispute between the *kachigumi* and the *makegumi*. He had heard about the Shindō Renmei, whose followers threatened and attacked those countrymen who admitted Japan's defeat, thereby causing thousands of incarcerations in the State of São Paulo."[32] Kachigumi, or "Victorists," were those Nikkeijin who believed that Japan had won World War II and Makegumi were those who believed their country had lost. From 1946 to early 1947, Shindō Renmei's assassins, popularly known as Tokkotai (synonym for Kamikaze), killed with firearms or *katanas* (traditional Japanese swords) at least twenty-three and wounded

147 Makegumi. The terrorists, considering their victims *corações sujos* (dirty hearts) and Makegumi, or "defeatists," accused them of betraying the Japanese emperor. Highlighting a socioeconomic schism within the community, the "defeatists" were usually better informed, wealthy, and adapted to mainstream Brazilian culture. Jhony Arai and Cesar Hirasaki note that "Most Japanese not only believed that Japan had been victorious, but they also paid dues to the sect. There were more than 120,000 sympathizers who paid monthly fees and nearly 20,000 associates in sixty branches scattered throughout São Paulo."[33] Accordingly, a footnote in the novel explains that 80 percent of Nikkeijin sided with Shindō Renmei's Kachigumi. Yet among the members of the original community of Atibaia in *Yawara!,* only the *jichan* (grandfather) Ryutaro seems to support them openly. By contrast, Kenhiti, Mariano, and Koiti (who denies the Japanese emperor's divine nature) believe that Japan has been defeated. The remaining Nikkeijin in the novel simply avoid the topic.

As stated, in *Yawara!* the ultimate proof of Nikkei youth's Brazilianness is the active engagement of some in national politics and in revolutionary groups that fought against the military dictatorship that rose to power after the U.S.-backed military coup against President João Goulart's administration led by Magalhães Pinto, Adhemar de Barros, and Carlos Lacerda, governors, respectively, of Minas Gerais, São Paulo, and Guanabara. This authoritarian government ruled Brazil from 1 April 1964 to 15 March 1985, when José Sarney became president. The military regimes during this period adopted the anticommunist "Doctrine of National Security," which would later be emulated by other nationalist Latin American dictatorial regimes: freedom of speech was censured, and political dissidents were often tortured and murdered.

Yet, according to Lesser, these Nikkei revolutionaries' strategy backfired as it unexpectedly reinforced the Nikkeijin's minority status: "Ethnic militancy was supposed to lead to Brazilianness. Ironically, it did the opposite" (*Discontented* xxx). Moreover, most Nikkeijin, convinced that it was wiser to keep a low profile, rejected these revolutionary activities. Although the existence of Nisei revolutionaries became an embarrassment for the minority group and a taboo that was avoided in conversations, the novel proudly presents Mário Japa as a Japanese Brazilian hero.

Miyazawa's protagonist is based on a real-life person. In his study *A Discontented Diaspora* (2007), Lesser summarized the biography of the Nisei

Mário Japa (1948–), whose given name was Shizuo Osawa (also spelled Chizuo Osava). Now a journalist in Rio de Janeiro, Osawa was a former member of the Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária (Revolutionary Popular Vanguard; VPR), the same Marxist organization to which Brazil's former president, Dilma Rousseff, belonged:

> When Shizuo Osawa became Mário Japa in the late 1967 this was unknown to the state. Authorities only began to learn that Mário Japa was Shizuo Osawa on the rainy night of 27 February 1970. Having gone twenty-four sleepless hours, he decided to drive a load of weapons and revolutionary pamphlets from one hide-out to another when the person assigned to the task did not appear. Driving along the Estrada das Lágrimas (Road of Tears) in greater São Paulo, Osawa fell asleep at the wheel and crashed. In the wrecked car the police found an unconscious Japanese Brazilian whose documents said he was Shizuo Osawa. To their surprise, they also discovered weapons and VPR propaganda in the trunk. Osawa, now awake, was taken first to the emergency room, then to the local police station and finally to DEOPS[34] headquarters "for treatment." (132)

After the accident, Osawa was imprisoned and tortured. For some time, the Brazilian government considered him the right-hand man of Carlos Lamarca, leader of the VPR and a former army captain. In March 1970, Lamarca, fearing that Osawa would reveal the location of a guerrilla training camp, abducted Nobuo Okuchi, the Japanese consul in São Paulo, to exchange him for Osawa, four other revolutionary prisoners, and three children. Incidentally, although not explicit in the novel, Lamarca's decision to kidnap the Japanese consul—rather than the consul of another country—is indicative that he viewed Nikkei Osawa as a foreign, Japanese national rather than as the Brazilian citizen he was. Lamarca demanded an exchange of "Japanese" prisoners from the government, indirectly presenting the Nikkeijin as the stereotypical "foreigner-within."

Lesser's study also reveals that the historical Osawa's concerns about his ethnic group's cultural identity were similar to those of Mariano Goro in the novel: while Osawa was working as a banker in Curitiba, he published an essay titled "They Want to Be Brazilians" in the magazine *Panorama*, in which, using a psychological approach to ethnicity and identity, he insisted "that ethnic integration was not a minority 'problem' but a majority one"

(Lesser, *Discontented* 128). Thus, Osawa's desire to prove his own Brazilianness and that of his ethnic group probably preceded his revolutionary activities. Lesser also discloses the ethnic prejudice that guided the DEOPS's investigations because, instead of creating a file under his birth name, only one under his code name, "Mário Japa," existed. Likewise, Osawa's fellow revolutionaries refused to stop calling him "The Jap," though this posed a serious danger for his security (Lesser 130–31). But the most racist reaction to the realization that there were Nikkei revolutionaries involved in the armed struggle against the dictatorship came from the Brazilian press: "The revelation that a Japanese-Brazilian was among those to be traded for the Japanese consul shocked the public. The *Jornal da Tarde* took the most aggressive approach, publishing an article headlined, PAY CLOSE ATTENTION: JAPANESE TERROR" (Lesser 142). It is evident, therefore, that both the fictional character and the real-life Osawa had to cope with majority Brazilians' inability to recognize a Nikkeijin as a full Brazilian citizen, even though Osawa was fighting bravely for his country's freedom. These episodes of racialization highlight the tenuous citizenship status of Brazilians of Japanese ancestry. The unequivocal sign of integration that is political commitment at a local level did not automatically translate into the unproblematic acceptance of Asians as belonging to the Brazilian national project. On the contrary, as Lesser makes clear, in some cases it contributed to further disenfranchise and alienate the Nikkeijin. Interestingly, in an interview with Guto Silveira, Osawa admits that he took advantage of the positive stereotype of the Japanese as honest people in Brazil: "It was difficult to keep all the clandestine people hidden. It was always necessary to rent houses. And for that, it was useful to be Japanese and to have credibility. I rented many houses without even giving my name."[35] It seems, therefore, that while Osawa rejected the essentialization of his ethnic group and the social identity or cultural categories imposed by wider society, he also knew how to take advantage of positive stereotypes.

Besides Mário Japa, Miyazawa proudly mentions in *Yawara!* other Nisei men and women who participated in the armed struggle, a topic that is further developed in his second novel, *Uma Rosa*. The author praises the self-sacrifice of these brave, young Nikkeijin and laments the lack of recognition they have received: "These episodes, which became part of Brazil's recent history, ended up not being registered in the annals of the Japanese Brazilian community; the memory of the engagement of these Nisei youths

and of others not mentioned here still awaits their community's acknowledgment."[36] Several of them, we learn in *Yawara!*, were tortured and killed by the military dictatorship, including Hiroaki Torigoe, Yoshitane Fujimori, and Suely Yumiko Kanayama. Kanayama (1948–74) was a short, thin, and timid Nikkeijin born in the small town of Coronel Macedo, in the state of São Paulo. She was a literature student and a member of the Brazilian Communist Party (Partido Comunista do Brasil; PCdoB) and of the Araguaia guerrilla, a revolutionary movement created in the Amazonia to mobilize local peasants, fight the military dictatorship, and impose a socialist government in the country. Kanayama's disappearance in Araguaia in 1974 was investigated by the Truth Commission, which looked into deaths and disappearances during this period. The novel mentions that, in real life, Kanayama refused to surrender when surrounded by soldiers in the jungle and, after injuring a soldier, was shot over one hundred times. She was later honored with street names in Campo Grande, Rio de Janeiro, and Campinas, São Paulo. According to Lesser, there are different accounts of her death, mostly tied to her bravery and the typical connection of Nikkei ethnicity to violence; one, in particular, relates a "quasi-mystical interpretation that Kanayama, like a European Catholic saint, remained alive even in death" (*Discontented* 110). In any case, members of the Nikkei community, such as Celia Abe Oi, director of the Museum of Japanese Immigration in São Paulo, also express their admiration for the guerrilla fighter: "'Yumiko was a heroine for us.' When I [Lesser] asked Oi what she meant by that, she explained that Yumiko represented the 'samurai way' of taking things to the limit. And she was, at the same time, a person whose sense of Brazilianness was so strong that she was willing to lose her life for her country."[37]

*Yawara!*, therefore, acquires testimonial traits in these passages that highlight the Nikkeijin's sacrifice for justice in Brazil and respond to the urge to reclaim the past. Perhaps its epigraph is a reference to these lesser-known heroes: "A Chinese legend tells that warriors who live great emotions do not die. Climbing great mountains you will perhaps be able to see them flying softly over great valleys."[38] These "warriors" may refer to either the Nikkei guerrillas or the first trailblazing Issei to arrive in Brazil, who broke ground for the success of future generations. Tellingly, Miyazawa declared, in the website "Projeto Incorporado ao Museu Histórico da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil" (Joint Project with the Historical Museum of Japanese Immigration

to Brazil), that his main motivation for writing *Yawara!* was his desire to leave testimony of the Nikkeijin's painful attempt at becoming fully Brazilian: "For a long time during our youth, we tried to become Brazilian, hiding our eyes behind sunglasses. But it didn't work. They kept calling us Japanese, ordering us to return to our land! How could we return to our land if our land was here, in Brazil? We suffered greatly trying to become Brazilians, we lost our origins and our personality. We adopted another one, difficult to maintain, but possible."[39] From this perspective, Nikkeijin may identify—perhaps falling into a self-orientalizing cliché—with the warrior in the epigraph.

## *UMA ROSA PARA YUMI*: THE RECOVERY OF HISTORICAL MEMORY

Miyazawa continues with the exploration of some of these topics in *Uma Rosa*, but with an explicit emphasis on a historical memory reconstruction—a foundational aspect of social identities—that may not be well received by all Nikkeijin. Whereas *Yawara!* has a wider focus on the history of Japanese immigration, *Uma Rosa* emphasizes, with apparent cathartic results for the narrator, the remembrance of political violence during the authoritarian military dictatorship and its current affective and traumatic consequences on Nikkei psyche. Dedicated "to the freedom-and-equality fighters, both men and women, especially to the revolutionary Nisei,"[40] *Uma Rosa* pays, therefore, a nostalgic homage to their idealism and contribution to the political struggle against dictatorship during the 1970s by rescuing their historical legacy from oblivion and dignifying their memory. In this novel, the author leaves aside the psychological approach of part II of *Yawara!*, resorting instead to real-life names and individual stories in order to memorialize and celebrate their sacrifice. For Miyazawa, the sacrifice for a more just society, which he sees as heroic, is the undeniable proof of Nikkei patriotism and right to full Brazilian citizenship. These leftist Nikkei youngsters risked being ostracized by their more conservative elders in their ethnic group or imprisoned, tortured, and killed by governmental forces; others, making the ultimate sacrifice, gave their lives for Brazil's freedom.

The novel, resorting to social memory, documents a mind shift among Nikkeijin: in spite of the identitarian ambivalence of some Nikkei characters, many now identify as Brazilian, speak only Portuguese, and fight heroically for their native country's freedom, a synecdoche of the patriotism of

all Nikkeijin. Therefore, by including his memoirs of revolutionary activity, Miyazawa moves *Uma Rosa* closer to the testimonial genre: truth telling and the clarification of recent Nikkei minority histories take center stage.

In contrast with the realistic approach and mostly chronological plot development in *Yawara!*, *Uma Rosa* employs numerous analepses and prolepses, as well as metaliterary techniques that often prevent the reader from suspending disbelief in the plotline. It adds, for example, the perspectives and experiences of other survivors and former participants in the revolutionary struggle, including that of the author's alter ego, called Itizó by family and friends in the Liberdade neighborhood, and Ricardo by his classmates at the Universidade de São Paulo. Itizó / Ricardo, whose double name is reflective of a seemingly comfortable double identity as a Nikkeijin and as a Brazilian, recalls the grief that his own political involvement caused within his family. Thus, after losing part of his index finger while trying to throw a tear gas bomb back at the police, he is scolded by his older brother, Tadao, for the suffering he is causing their mother. In response, Ricardo / Itizó (toward the novel's end, the omniscient narrator, having referred to Ricardo / Itizó in the third person throughout, reveals that he, the narrator, is the true Ricardo) criticizes his brother for supporting a military dictatorship backed by selfish people like him. Their argument suddenly shifts from politics to race:

> You are not solving anything with this political thing. In fact, that is not a problem of our race!
>
> —What race? What race are you talking about?
>
> . . .
>
> —I am talking about us, the Japanese. You ought to look at our people, who live here in Brazil. No one is involved in those things. With that thing you're doing, you're hurting everyone, all of us. You're a bad example for the Japanese!
>
> —And you're a traitor to the homeland. You don't even know the National Anthem.[41]

This aggressive exchange illustrates similar political divisions among Nikkeijin and within their families to those briefly addressed in *Yawara!* While the more conservative Tadao sees no reason for Nikkei youth to get involved in local politics, his younger brother considers his a patriotic stance. Yet Lesser

reminds us that though all the Nikkei former revolutionaries he interviewed were disconnected from Nikkei community organizations, "they always mentioned the fact that their traditional and conservative parents supported their decision to join the armed struggle, even when they did not agree with their children's political ideology."[42]

In a different essay, Lesser maintains that besides the struggle for freedom, additional motivations were behind Nikkei participation in revolutionary activities: "Activists, in contrast, usually considered themselves to be outsiders from the formally organized 'colony' of community organizations, newspapers, and festivals. Militancy was not only a challenge to the dictatorship; it was a challenge to the politically and culturally conservative generation of their parents" (*Discontented* 76). Indeed, the open challenge to his relatives is obvious in the arguments made by Ricardo / Itizó; he is convinced that Tadao's passive demeanor is "serving the system"[43] and feels contempt for his cousins, whose only obsession is the symbolic capital provided by material possessions. From his revolutionary perspective, Ricardo / Itizó argues that his relatives are easily manipulated by the censored news aired by the national television network; they are, in his view, out of touch with the sociopolitical reality of Brazil. A few years later, however, Ricardo / Itizó forgives Tadao when he finds out that his brother was actually proud of his involvement in the political struggle. In any case, it is apparent that even though a revolutionary position represented a minority among Nikkeijin, the author applauds the bravery and generosity of the young revolutionaries of those years.

Another real-life revolutionary whose courageous effort and sacrifice are celebrated in the novel is Gushiken, a militant of Libelu, a Trotskyite organization that fought the dictatorship. The narrator also recalls—with the same goal of helping Nikkeijin to come to terms with their past—his beautiful Nisei friend Suzana, who became depressed after realizing (erroneously) that her love for Ricardo / Itizó was unrequited—in reality, they were forever separated because his deep political involvement at the university forced him to go underground for two years. As the narrator recalls, "among the leftist militants, no one belonged to anyone. All belonged to the revolutionary struggle."[44]

Skipping more than thirty years to 2007, Ricardo / Itizó visits several of his former revolutionary friends, thereby enabling the incorporation of their

experiences into the plot. One, the lawyer Regina Alexsandra Nogueira, is a Communist Party leader and a former university classmate who was forced to go underground—unbeknownst to Ricardo/Itizó, she had also been in love with him for some time. Now, Ricardo/Itizó and Regina nostalgically recall their common friend Suely Yumiko Kanayama, also a member of the Communist Party and a Nisei revolutionary whom everyone called "A Japonesinha" (the Little Japanese Woman) and who was shot over one hundred times by government soldiers while fighting with the guerrillas in Araguaia. That "Yumi," as her friends called her, later had a small street in Campinas named after her brings pride and vindication to Ricardo/Itizó and Regina. The novel's title therefore suggests that the entire plot is a nostalgic letter of gratitude to the late revolutionary and others like her, whether dead or alive, who sacrificed their youth fighting the dictatorship.[45] The novel itself, with all its collective memories, is a metaphoric monument, a material memorial to the activists' hitherto silenced heroism and bravery, aimed at questioning institutionalized versions of the recent past.

In a sudden chronological and thematic leap, *Uma Rosa* incorporates Brazilian Nikkei history, including the dekasegi experience, into the plot. Surprisingly, the chapters dealing with this topic provide an alternative story for Suely Yumiko "Yumi" Kanayama. It is then up to the reader to decide which is true. In this version Yumi, rather than shot by government soldiers, becomes a nun in a Japanese convent, after she and her brother Akira have a daughter, Bete (Elizabete). Using an approach reminiscent of Miguel de Unamuno in *Niebla* (*Mist*, 1914) or Luigi Pirandello in *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* (Six Characters in Search of an Author, 1921), in the epilogue, the first-person narrator struggles mentally with his characters, Itizó and Akira (Yumi's brother), who protest their author's intention to be rid of them. Whereas the author insists that Akira must continue to be fictional, the character complains that his return to Brazil and some episodes of Yumi's life have yet to be narrated. Itizó, the author's alter ego, states his mission after claiming to be real: the recovery of Yumiko's true story. In this alternative story, Itizó is a dekasegi who manages to save money only to spend it during the months he remained unemployed after his return to Brazil, a common experience among Brazilian dekasegi.

If one considers a possible allegorical interpretation of this unexpected plot twist, it is not too far-fetched to read it as a commentary on ethnocultural

and racial identity in Brazil. The revolutionary Yumi represents the fully integrated Nikkeijin who views the attainment of social freedom in her native country as a patriotic duty. Her martyrdom provides the ultimate proof of her deep-seated Brazilianness and symbolizes the birth of the new, multicultural, and tolerant Brazil. By contrast, the religious Yumi embodies a silenced and isolated Nikkeijin whose sibling ruins her life. This incestuous episode may be read as a commentary on the long-held isolationist stance and sojourner mentality of remote rural communities in the states of São Paulo and Paraná. Yumi's entering a Catholic convent, on the other hand, also denotes colonialist connotations. The veiled message of the implicit author, therefore, suggests the need for further integration into mainstream Brazilian society. This should not be confused, however, with assimilationist propaganda, as Miyazawa repeatedly celebrates cultural difference in the two novels. In other words, whereas Ricardo / Itizó's double (Nikkei and majority Brazilian) identity is portrayed as an unproblematic life choice, Yumi's alternative story of incest and convent reads as a warning against the perils of a cloistered and isolationist mentality to the Nikkei community.

## THE BIRTH OF LIBERDADE: JAPANESE BRAZILIAN PLACE-BASED IDENTITY

Miyazawa includes, in *Uma Rosa*, the place making of the predominantly Nikkei district of Liberdade, in São Paulo, as one of the main breakthroughs in Japanese Brazilian history. This iconic place holds a unique significance for Japanese Brazilian heritage and self-definition. For this reason, it elicits the author's sense of place, leading him to link ethnic belonging and place attachment. As is common in Nikkei works, the emotions and memories evoked by the district are filtered through the prism of nostalgia: one senses a sentimental yearning for the times of youth, a veiled desire to return to a (perhaps idealized) place that no longer exists.

As proof of Miyazawa's anti-assimilationist stance, *Yawara!* proudly describes daily life and local customs in Liberdade, whose neighbors no longer must defend themselves from racial slurs; in this sense, the district is also a pioneering space of Nikkei resistance politics. Among other historic milestones that reinforce the community's emotional bond to this place, *Yawara!* highlights the creation of the Banco América do Sul (South America Bank)

and the success of Japanese restaurants, publications, movie theaters, different types of Japanese stores (some contribute to carnival), and a casino, all of which helped strengthen, according to him, Nikkei identity in the city.

*Uma Rosa* also presents, again from a nostalgic perspective, the history of Liberdade, home to the largest Nikkei community in the world, conceived of as a symbol of universal unity among different ethnicities: "Here, one can find Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, Vietnamese, Asians in general, their descendants, and Brazilians. In that small area, thousands of people move around, a live demonstration of miscegenation, the natural mixture of culture and races . . . The stores, persons, and typical things of each country found there are proof that universal unity is possible."[46] Resorting to a metanarrative approach, the narrator includes other accounts about the neighborhood from his friends and former freedom fighters' perspectives.[47] Miyazawa's interpretation of the social reality around him, including that of the neighborhood of Liberdade, is often filtered through a Marxist outlook: "As can be observed, with this friend's account, a fellow partner in the social struggles of the next decades, it was possible to have different races and cultures live together, if the economic conditions allowed this just and harmonic development. However, as is known, Brazilians of African ancestry were expelled from its space, mainly for economic reasons, where capitalist profit is ruthless."[48] Here the author laments the fact that the socioeconomic success of his own ethnocultural group (he openly celebrates it in his literature) indirectly contributed to further marginalize and displace Afro-Brazilians, another historically disadvantaged group. As seen, throughout his opus, he tries to connect the struggle of Japanese immigrants with that of a marginalized Afro-Brazilian community, an aspect reminiscent of other authors' attempts, in Brazil and in Peru, to link Japanese history and culture with those of local indigenous communities in order to claim cultural belonging within the national project: "Many Brazilians 'saw' Asians and indigenous Latin Americans as similar, a position taken by some early twentieth-century Japanese scholars and diplomats, who claimed that Amazonian peoples were a 'lost tribe' of Japanese" (Lesser, *Discontented* 92). Lesser argues that these tactics that foment a social memory of mythical origins are often aimed at highlighting the "natural" capacity of the Japanese for adaptation to the local customs or to persist in their claim of rightfully belonging in the country.

In the context of Miyazawa's aforementioned attempts to connect Nikkei history with that of Afro-Brazilians, we learn that, in the early 1950s, Galvão Bueno Street in Liberdade was populated with Afro-Brazilians and it had almost no businesses. Indeed, until 1891 Liberdade was known as Campo da Forca (Field of the Gallows) because executions of slaves and convicts took place there, in a public square now known as Praça da Liberdade. In Liberdade, there was also an organization of former slaves and their descendants known as Frente Negra Brasileira (Brazilian Black Front), and later the Paulistano da Glória housekeepers' union, which would eventually become a samba school, had its headquarters in the district. It was in 1912 when Conde de Sarzedas Street gradually began to be settled by Japanese. The narrator's conciliatory tone is supported by self-criticism of his ethnic group's exclusionist (and perhaps racialist) demeanor: "Brazilians began to leave. Although they were not expelled, whenever they would go into a bar, they felt out of place because there were only Japanese inside."[49] He also alludes to the presence, in Liberdade, of Chinese and Korean immigrants who arrived in Brazil in the 1970s.[50]

Initially, we learn, a small Nikkei group lived in a different area of the neighborhood, where they sold Japanese products made in Japan or Brazil. According to the memories of the narrator's cousin, it was the construction of the Niterói movie theater that caused the rapid growth of Nikkei population in Liberdade during the 1950s, as it soon attracted other businesses, including a house with geishas brought from Japan. Another Nikkei landmark achievement in Monte Alto, as mentioned in the text, is their first daily radio program, referred to as the "Nipponese Hour." The first Japanese in Liberdade, the narrator recalls, were humble families who sold their lands in rural areas of the state of São Paulo and moved to the city, opening businesses there so that their children could continue their studies. Incidentally, this emphasis on education is often highlighted in Japanese Brazilian literature as an engine that drove the material and social progress of Japanese immigrants and their descendants.

During the 1950s, Japanese emigration to Brazil was renewed as a result of the "U.S. ban on Japanese entry and its occupation of Okinawa" (Lesser, *Immigration* 182), where local residents were displaced in order to build military bases. When almost 55,000 Issei immigrants (the so-called Japão Novo) arrived, their relationship with local Nikkeijin, including the narrator and his relatives, became increasingly hostile. For the next decade, legendary

fights took place between the groups in Liberdade. These altercations were somewhat exaggerated by *São Paulo Shimbun* and *Paulista Shimbun*, the local Japanese Brazilian press, to the delight of certain Nikkei youth: "When the new Japanese, the Issei, arrived, they would arrive at Galvão Bueno Street wanting to take over the area and teasing the girls disrespectfully. They were used to that type of harassment in Japan. There were many fights on account of this attitude. Organized Nisei youth responded accordingly."[51] Lesser has also studied these incidents: "Longtime residents were often shocked by the attitudes of young Japanese toward everything, from the emperor to sexual relations. The newcomers were equally confused: They had trouble understanding old dialects filled with Japanized Portuguese words and wondered if earlier immigrants had become *Brasil-bokê* ('made senile in Brazil')" (*Immigration* 182). In the end, there were complaints from the Japanese consulate, which sought the intervention of two Nisei politicians. These fights are evidence of the appearance of a Nikkei cultural identity that is separate and different from that of Japan. Just as Nikkei youth's worldview is often different from that of their low-key parents, they cannot identify with the demeanor and culture of the Japanese newcomers either. While this type of infighting is relatively common among layered migrations, as established communities often condemn the behavior of newcomers of their same ethnic background, it is paradoxical that this anecdote is inserted immediately after stressing the admirable coexistence of people of dissimilar ethnic groups in Liberdade.[52]

Other novels, such as Laura Honda-Hasegawa's (1947–) *Sonhos Bloqueados* (Blocked Dreams, 1991), suggest the existence of an inferiority complex among the Nikkeijin. Nikkei characters' low self-esteem is shown when they feel that they are not able to measure up to the Japanese in Japan. Thus the protagonist, Kimiko, laments: "No wonder that the Japanese from there are considered far more advanced than the ones from here . . . If one compares, we are provincial, survivors of a Japan that no longer exists! . . . I remember when Takarada Akira was here in Brazil, in his movie heartthrob times (never heard of him again), and he said that we, Japanese women in Brazil, were a century behind in comparison with the ones there."[53] She later notices the newcomers' "very white, translucent skin in contrast with the sun-burnt dark tone of the vast majority of Brazilians, even female Nisei."[54] In this regard, the Portuguese social psychologist Daniela de Carvalho posits that

the arrival of new Issei after World War II affected Japanese Brazilian self-esteem and led to an ethnic crisis: "The new immigrants seemed to be the personification of the old immigrant's nostalgic image of Japan. They had white soft skin in contrast with their own, tanned as it was by the Brazilian sun, and they spoke good Japanese, having only just left their homeland" (62).

In any case, through the exploration of the birth of the Liberdade, Miyazawa connects ethnic identity to place attachment, as if this São Paulo district were the birthplace of Nikkei social identity. He considers the emotions and memories elicited by this paradigmatic place strong enough to list it among the main landmarks and milestones in Japanese Brazilian history.

In conclusion, *Yawara!* and *Uma Rosa* offer a panoramic view of Nikkei history in Brazil. They bring to the fore identitarian conflicts that affect the community in the context of internal colonialism, as well as uplifting historical episodes that may contribute to emancipate its collective consciousness. Simultaneously, the two novels serve a didactic mission: like much of Japanese Brazilian cultural production, they educate readers about the formation and the status quo of a hybrid culture that has successfully blended two very different national cultures into a liminal third space from which Brazilian national identity has been challenged and transformed. From this "in-between" space, Miyazawa's writing (and by extension, Nikkei collective discourse) contests the purported fixity, purity, or homogeneity of both Japanese and Brazilian cultures. These two novels, part of the social articulation of a Nikkei minority perspective, become sites of contestation of the very idea of national culture and the Brazilian nation, as both negative and positive ethnic stereotypes are revisited and questioned. "Received" cultural traditions and presumably fixed ethnic traits are ultimately transformed in the very site of the interstices between the purportedly monolithic Japanese and the Brazilian cultures. In this ongoing process of hybridization portrayed in Miyazawa's novels, his characters strategically move in and out of Japaneseness, according to circumstances or their author's intention to emphasize cultural difference or belonging within the Brazilian nation. In the end, Miyazawa, like other authors and filmmakers included in this book, exercises his right to self-representation, to articulate an alternative national history, to present a differential knowledge coming from a minority group, and to elaborate an empowering Nikkei minority discourse from the periphery of mainstream Brazilian society.

Overall, *Uma Rosa* reads as a continuation of the "crossing" (the spatial, temporal, cultural, and psychological transition of the Nikkeijin in Brazil) mentioned in his first novel's title, by adding information on three different, albeit interrelated, topics: the Nisei's political struggle of the 1970s, the dekasegi experience, and the history of the Liberdade neighborhood, which can be read as an exploration of the formation of a Japanese community in São Paulo and, by extension, in Brazil. In this second novel, Miyazawa offers a more experimental text, adding the polyphony of multiple perspectives as well as dialogs among the implicit author and two main characters. Along with these metanarrative techniques, there is a blend of fiction, testimonial, and memoirs, where not only a direct message can be found, but also a plausibly allegorical one. Ultimately, both *Uma Rosa* and *Yawara!* serve the same purpose: to celebrate Nikkei economic, sociocultural, and political achievements in Brazil, particularly the active involvement of Nikkei youth in revolutionary activities during the 1970s dictatorship, thus claiming a place in the national project. In the process, they reveal the Nikkei community's resistance tactics during the first decades, its cultural strategies for community formation, and its progressive integration into mainstream Brazilian society, which, as stated, finds a point of inflection during the 1970s through the sociopolitical commitment of leftist Nikkei youth of which Miyazawa was a member. Both texts, therefore, become indirect tools to negotiate the place of the Nikkeijin in Brazil, without resorting to openly assimilationist discourses.

In the author's note at the end of *Uma Rosa*, Miyazawa offers a disclaimer: he feels no shame or regret for not having fully acquired Japanese culture during his childhood. As he explains, those were different times and circumstances: "Since I did not enjoy the circumstances of living two lives at the same time, I see today that I did not have the opportunity to have the valuable experience of a people and a civilization whence we came, which forged its history through sacrifices, sweat, tears, and joy, Their mistakes and achievements forged their identity as well, one that made an immeasurable contribution to the creation of a new world for all."[55] The author thus suggests that because times have changed and it is now socially acceptable to express pride in one's ethnic heritage without being accused of an anti-Brazilian stance, he is trying, through literature, to challenge obsolete notions of a traditional, fixed, and homogenous Brazilian identity. Instead

of recommending an assimilationist "melting pot" message, *Uma Rosa* provides, like other Japanese Brazilian literary texts, a proud re-creation of Nikkei customs and traditions in Brazil, including *yaitō* (a Buddhist practice of burning a certain area of the body to cure rheumatism and other illnesses) and *miai* (the introduction of a man to a woman so that they may wish to marry). It also describes how Nikkei culture is an ongoing project and not a set of fixed cultural traits, as these traditions evolved or were lost: "Times are changing. If it were as before, you could marry one of Kurō-san's daughters through *miyai*. Now, women choose men. It is not as it used to be—said Fusako."[56] Miyazawa therefore describes a hybridization process accelerated by intermarriage and the erosion of ethnic identity among Sansei and Yonsei. As a result of the interaction between different ethnic groups, new cultural forms emerge, thus challenging hierarchical claims to the purity and singularity of Japanese culture typical of the Nihonjinron genre.[57] In Brazil, Japanese culture has been translated, rehistorized, and resemanticized within the framework of new geographical, historical, and sociocultural circumstances.

Through these two novels, Miyazawa celebrates a new way of being Brazilian by articulating, from the periphery of Brazilian mainstream society, his ethnic roots and cultural difference. At the same time, his appeal to the collective and historical memories of his ethnic group is an attempt to foster group identity and self-recognition. Through literature, he reminds Brazilian Nikkeijin about their past, which may guide them to conceptualize their present, contemplate the future, and encourage them to transmit this representation of their "shared past" to future generations. Finally, his writing has cathartic overtones, as it fills a vacuum for recognition within the Nikkei community as well as in the historical narratives of the country. Although one senses in these two works a sort of teleology, moving from insularity to cultural integration, Miyazawa still leaves space for the appearance of multiple and complex identities among Nikkei characters.

The following chapter continues the historicization of the Nikkei experience in Brazil and the construction of a diasporic ethnic discourse that celebrates the socioeconomic achievements and the progressive cultural integration of Brazilian Nikkeijin. It also condemns a history of racism both in the Nikkei community and in Brazilian society, and celebrates the acceptance of miscegenation among the Nikkeijin.

## NOTES

1. Júlio Miyazawa was born in Guararema, in the state of São Paulo. His father, an Issei named Kurō Miyazawa, was born in Niigata, Japan, and migrated to Brazil in 1938. His mother, a Nisei named Cisuco Miyazawa, was born in Marília, Brazil. At the age of thirteen, Miyazawa moved to São Paulo, where he witnessed the development of both the Japanese community and the neighborhood of Liberdade.

There is also a Japanese manga series by Naoki Urasawa named *Yawara!* that ran in *Big Comic Spirits* from 1986 to 1993.

2. The other two works that received the award were Jorge Okubaro's *O Súdito* and Lúcia Hiratsuka's *Livros de Sayuri*, both examined in chapter 4.

3. "Forgetting, I would even say historical error, is an essential factor in the creation of a nation and it is for this reason that the progress of historical studies often poses a threat to nationality. Historical inquiry, in effect, throws light on the violent acts that have taken place at the origin of every political formation, even those that have been the most benevolent in their consequences. Unity is always brutally established. The reunion of northern and southern France was the result of a campaign of terror and extermination that continued for nearly a century" (Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?," text of a conference delivered at the Sorbonne University on 11 March 1882. N.p.). "From Braudel's remorselessly accumulating cemeteries, however, the nation's biography snatches, against the going mortality rate, exemplary suicides, poignant martyrdoms, assassinations, executions, wars, and holocausts. But, to serve the narrative purpose, these violent deaths must be remembered/forgotten as 'our own'" (Benedict Anderson 210).

4. "Unhomeliness" is Homi Bhabha's term for defining the sense of being culturally displaced, caught between two cultures, and not "at home" in either. It is often felt by those who lack a clearly defined cultural identity (13). Bhabha borrows the concept from Martin Heidegger's *Unheimlichkeit*, explained in his 1927 book *Being and Time*.

5. This position is summarized by "a Federal Deputy who declared in 1935, '(T)he Japanese colonists . . . are even whiter than the Portuguese (ones)" (Lesser, "Ethnic Myths" 68).

6. "No Brasil existe a árvore que dá ouro, que é o cafeeiro. É só colher com as mãos" (21).

7. "O brilho do sol atingiu em cheio a vista de Kenhiti que, em sua imaginação febril, pareceu-lhe contemplar terras japonesas. Por isso, olhou assustado e cheio de alegria e deu um grito":

—***Fuji-San***! Monte Fuji . . . ***Fuji-San***! Pátria amada!

". . . Gritando e correndo por um outro caminho aparentemente mais curto e que porém daria diretamente no despenhadeiro, Kenhiti estendeu a mão para Akemi que a segurou firmemente. Assim, unidos na mesma ideia, os dois saltaram para a eternidade" (98–99).

8. "A continuidade das prisões de membros da colônia japonesa—em muitos casos, sem acusações formais, sem direito à defesa e sem saber o tempo da pena" (45).

9. "Eu só tolerava o Alberto me chamar de japa na intimidade. Justo ele, um negro vir para cima de mim com esse racismo barato" (151).

10. For instance, Afro-Brazilian characters help Japanese immigrants in Oscar Nakasato's first novel, *Nihonjin* (2011); there are also cases of transculturation and miscegenation among Brazilians of African and Japanese descent in stories that are closer to the present, such as the last chapters in Ryoki Inoue's Saga (2006). Likewise, the histories of the Nikkeijin and Afro-Brazilians are conflated in Ricardo Giassetti and Bruno D'Angelo's 2008 graphic novel *O Catador de Batatas e o Filho da Costureira*, as is evident in the subtitle: *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*).

11. "Os colonos não tinham culpa pela guerra e nunca deram nenhum motivo para qualquer ódio" (26).

12. "Minha mãe falou que casamento de japonês com brasileira não dá certo" (32).

13. "Temia ser desprezada pelo marido, ainda mais se ele soubesse que Goro estava sendo amamentado por uma negra" (77).

14. "Puxa! Até japonês já está assaltando bancos!" (117).

15. "Muitos de nós quisemos parecer brasileiros e agir como brasileiros, no modo de ser, de se alimentar e se vestir" (129).

16. "Para as crianças brasileiras, nós somos diferentes. Para nós, eles são diferentes. Não tem nada de mais. Não precisa fazer isso. Não precisa ligar para isso. Nós somos de outra raça. Você nasceu aqui. Aqui é teu país" (144).

17. "*Arigatou . . . jichan*" (252).

18. "Filha da puta, está enganando a todo mundo" (107). He later uses the same insult to refer to Jô, another woman he meets while helping the first one: "Then that's why this bitch didn't mind bringing the crazy suicide, das Dores, to her home. They live close by." ("Então é por isso que está filha da puta não se incomodou em trazer a doida suicida, das Dores, até sua casa. Moram perto uma da outra" [110].)

19. One can find this perceived contrast between a more refined, millennial, and often idealized East Asian culture and a purportedly less sophisticated Latin American contemporary culture in the Cuban Zoé Valdés's novel *La eternidad del instante* (The Eternity of the Instant; 2004) and in the Peruvian Siu Kam Wen's short-story

collections *El tramo final* (The Final Stretch, 1985) and *La primera espada del imperio* (The First Sword of the Empire, 1988), among other works.

20. "O que é que você vem fazer aqui no Brasil, japa? Tinha que se meter na coisas do país? Não podia ficar quietinho no seu lugar?" (163).

21. "Temos una raça mas não temos uma pátria. Aquela, o Japão, não era a nossa pátria. Esta, o Brasil, nós negávamos" (127).

22. "A despeito da pele e dos traços nitidamente orientais" (127).

23. "Os imigrantes se ressentiam do que era tido como falta de patriotismo dos diplomatas japoneses, que deixaram o país imediatamente após o rompimento de relações com o Brasil, abandonando mais de 200 mil pessoas à própria sorte" (63). Indeed, after Brazil broke diplomatic relations with Japan in 1942, "the staff of the Japanese Consulate abandoned the Consulate shouting *Banzai* (hurrah). The Consulate sent a message to the immigrants, on behalf of the ambassador, exhorting them to behave with dignity (Comissão 1992:261)" (Daniela de Carvalho 21).

24. "Durante a guerra, época em que foram perseguidos e discriminados, os imigrantes culparam o Japão, dizendo em voz alta 'A nossa pátria nos *abandonou*, ela não faz nada por nós'" (*Passos* 250; emphasis in the original).

25. "Si muitos nisseis nascidos no Brasil, mais ou menos nessas duas décadas, que passaram por esse falso dilema, caso tivessem compreensão do que ocorria, teriam tido uma outra postura perante a vida e as pessoas. Era um falso dilema porque para ser japonês, não seria necessário renunciar à sua pátria e para ser brasileiro, não seria necessário renunciar à sua raça. As experiências de cada um, suas condições econômicas e sociais, refletiram em maior o menor grau em desvios de personalidade condicionados por esse falso dilema" (125).

26. According to Lesser, "In 2011, the South Korean government extrapolated a population of about fifty thousand, based on families registered at its various consulates in Brazil. More recent nongovernmental figures put the numbers at around one hundred thousand immigrants (not including an equally large number of Brazilian-born children)" (*Immigration* 183).

27. Sharon H. Chang explains that the economic success of different Asian groups in the United States is not as homogeneous as previously thought: "according to a report co-authored by Ramakrishnan and Farah Z. Ahmed for the Center for American Progress last year, Asian Americans are actually one of the fastest-growing populations in poverty since the Great Recession. During that same Census reporting period from 2007–2011 Ramakrishnan and Ahmed showed the number of Asian Americans living in poverty rose by 37 percent—well surpassing the U.S. national increase of 27 percent. And according to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, certain Southeast Asian groups rank among

the nation's poorest: 29.3 percent of Cambodians and 37.8 percent of Hmong live in poverty" (S. Chang, n.p.).

28. "Afinal, japoneses e os demais orientais, eram os 'crânios.' Tinham que manter a fama da raça" (145).

29. "Não me sentia igual a esses que conquistavam as primeiras colocações nos vestibulares, enaltecidos por serem orientais, japoneses. Daí, começava a advir uma crise de identidade, imagino que também sofrida por muitos filhos de japoneses, nascidos entre as décadas de 40 e 60" (124).

30. We learn, however, that there was an Associação Okinawa (Okinawa Association) in Liberdade Avenue: "Most immigrants from Okinawa and their descendants knew that they would not return to their homeland, but even within the community, they had their own identity, trying to keep the cultural link among their fellow countrymen." ("A maioria dos imigrantes de Okinawa e seus descendentes sabiam que não mais voltariam para sua terra, mas mesmo na colônia, tinham identidade própria, procurando manter o elo cultural entre os conterrâneos" [194]). Perceived discrimination against Ryūkyūans (Okinawans) from Naichijin (mainland Japanese) is a common theme in Japanese Brazilian and Japanese Peruvian literature. For example, Ryoki Inoue's novel *Saga* emphasizes the marginalization suffered by Okinawans in Japan and Brazil at the hands of the Naichijin (mainland Japanese). Okinawans are the largest minority group in Japan, with 1.3 million living in Okinawa, 300,000 in mainland Japan, and another 300,000 abroad. The independent Ryukyu kingdom was conquered by the Satsuma Domain of Kyūshū, Japan in 1609. Although it received limited autonomy in 1879, during the Meiji Period, the kingdom was abolished and the islands were officially annexed by Japan, becoming the Okinawa prefecture. Japan suppressed Ryūkyūan languages and culture (close to that of China), which were considered "backwards," in order to force assimilation to Japanese culture. Many Ryūkyūan suffered discrimination in the mainland. After World War II, the Ryukyus remained under US control until 1972, when Ryukyu was returned to Japan.

31. The word *gaijin* is described in a footnote as "Foreigner. How Japanese immigrants, in their communities, referred to other nationalities" ("Estrangeira [o]. Modo como os imigrantes japoneses, nas colônias, se referiam às demais nacionalidades" [28].)

32. "Um conflito que surgiu entre os próprios japoneses: a disputa entre os *kachigumi* e os *makegumi*. Ele tinha ouvido falar da *Shindo Renmei*, cujos seguidores ameaçavam e praticavam atentados contra os conterrâneos que admitiam a derrota do Japão, provocando posteriormente milhares de prisões no Estado de São Paulo" (41–42).

33. "A esmagadora maioria dos japoneses não só acreditava na vitória do Japão como dava contribuições à seita. Eram mais de 120 mil simpatizantes que pagavam mensalidades e cerca de 20 mil associados em 60 filiais espalhados por São Paulo" (134).

34. The Departamento de Ordem Política e Social (Department of Political and Social Order) was a governmental police department created in 1924 to repress sociopolitical movements that fought against the Estado Novo dictatorship and, later, the 1964 military regime.

35. "Era uma dificuldade manter todos os clandestinos escondidos. Era preciso alugar imóveis sempre. E para isso serviu eu ser japonês e gozar de credibilidade. Aluguei muitas casas sem sequer dar nome" (n.p.).

36. "Esses episódios que passaram a fazer parte da história recente do Brasil, acabaram sem registro nos anais da colônia nipo-brasileira e a memória do engajamento desses jovens nisseis e outros não relacionados aguarda o reconhecimento de sua própria comunidade de origem" (228–29).

37. "'Yumiko era uma heroína para nós.' Quando perguntei a Oi o que ela quis dizer, ela explicou que Yumiko representava o 'jeito samurai' de levar as coisas ao limite. E era ao mesmo tempo uma pessoa cujo senso de brasilidade era tão forte que ela estava disposta a perder a vida por seu país" (Lesser, "Reflexões" 277).

38. "Diz uma lenda chinesa que guerreiros que vivem grandes emoções não morrem. Subindo nas grandes montanhas talvez você avistá-los voando suavemente, pelos grande vales" (n.p.).

39. "Durante um longo tempo da juventude, tentamos virar brasileiros, arregalando os olhos. Mas não dava certo. Continuavam nos chamando de japonês, nos mandando voltar para a nossa terra! Como voltar para a nossa terra? Se a nossa terra era aqui, o Brasil? Sofremos muito tentando virar brasileiros, perdemos nossas origens e personalidade. Afirmamos uma outra, difícil de sustentar, mas o possível" (n.p.).

40. "Aos lutadores e às lutadoras pela liberdade e pela igualdade, em especial, aos nisseis revolucionários" (9).

41. "Vocês não vão resolver nada com essa coisa da política. Aliás, isso não é problema da nossa raça!"

> —Que raça? De que raça você ta falando?
>
> . . .
>
> —Estou falando de nós, japoneses. Você tem que olhar para o nosso povo, que vive aqui no Brasil. Ninguém se mete nessas coisas. Com isso que você está fazendo, prejudica todo mundo, todos nós. Você é um mal exemplo para os japoneses!
>
> —E você é um traidor da pátria. Você nem sabe o Hino Nacional." (131).

42. "Eles sempre mencionaram o fato de que seus pais tradicionais e conservadores os apoiaram na decisão de entrar na luta armada, até quando não concordavam com a ideologia política de seus filhos" (Lesser, "Reflexões" 269–70).

43. "Servindo ao sistema" (135).

44. "Entre os militantes da esquerda ninguém era de ninguém. Todos e todas pertenciam à luta revolucionária" (126).

45. Former engaged students, such as Marcel/Fu, a member of the MR-8 revolutionary group and now a government official, and Gilbertinho, a former theater actor and now a homemaker in Recife, appear in the text.

Miyazawa's "letter of gratitude" to Nikkei revolutionaries is reminiscent of Chilean novelist Roberto Bolaño's (1953–2003) "Discurso de Caracas" ("Caracas Address"), his acceptance speech for the Rómulo Gallegos Prize.

46. "Por aqui se encontram japoneses, coreanos, chineses, vietnamitas, enfim orientais, seus descendentes e os brasileiros. Nesse pequeno centro circulam milhares de pessoas, demonstração viva da miscigenação, mistura natural de cultura e de raças . . . Nas lojas e nas pessoas e coisas típicas de cada país presente prova-se que é possível a unidade universal dos povos" (15).

47. In this collective memoir, the author resorts to the recollections of his Portuguese friend Alexandrino, who remembers his friendship with an eighty-year-old Chinese man suffering from cancer.

48. "Como se vê, com o relato deste amigo, companheiro de lutas sociais das próximas décadas, era possível o convívio multirracial e multicultural, caso as condições econômicas permitissem esse desenvolvimento justo e harmônico, mas, como se sabe, a comunidade negra foi sendo expulsa do seu espaço, principalmente por questões econômicas, onde a ganância capitalista é implacável" (58).

49. "Os brasileiros foram se afastando. Não é que foram expulsos, porém, ao entrar num bar, os brasileiros se sentiam mal, pois só dava japoneses" (51).

50. In Mirian Lie Hatanaka's "Liderança" (Leadership), included in her 2001 collection *Olhar*, one can sense the chronicler's uneasiness with this Chinese and Korean presence in Liberdade: "Commerce has been taken over by Chinese and Koreans, the Japanese were practically expelled from the region, the Japanese closed the doors, fleeing the high cost of living, competition, and decreasing commercial activity." ("O comercio está tomado de chineses e coreanos, os japoneses praticamente foram expelidos da região, os japoneses fecharam as portas, fugindo do alto custo do ponto, da concorrência e do movimento em queda" [39].)

51. "Quando chegaram os japoneses novos, os isseis, eles já chegavam na Galvão Bueno querendo ocupar o lugar e mexiam com as garotas, sem o devido respeito. Estavam acostumados a esse tipo de provocação no Japão. Aconteceu muita briga por causa disso. A juventude nissei que estava organizada respondeu a altura" (52).

52. The same occurs, for example, in confrontations between established Chicanos and Mexican newcomers in California.

53. "Não é à toa que os japoneses de lá são considerados bem mais avançados que os daqui . . . Comparando, somos um provincianos, sobreviventes de um Japão que não existe mais! . . . Eu me lembro quando o Takarada Akira esteve aqui no Brasil, nos seus tempos de galã de cinema (nunca mais ouvi falar dele) e disse que nós, as japonesas do Brasil, estávamos atrasadas um século em relação de lá" (57).

54. "A pele muito branca, translúcida destoando do tom moreno queimado do sol da grande maioria dos brasileiros, mesmo as nisseis" (132).

55. "Como não tinha condições de viver duas vidas ao mesmo tempo, vejo hoje que deixei de experimentar a valiosa experiência de um povo e uma civilização de onde nos originamos e que forjou sua história sob sacrifícios, suor, lágrimas e alegria, com seus erros e acertos, forjando também sua identidade que traz imensurável contribuição na construção de um mundo novo para todos" (159).

56. "—É que os tempos estão mudando. Se fosse antigamente, o senhor poderia se casar com a filha de Kurô-*san* através do *miyay*. Agora, são as mulheres que estão escolhendo os homens. Não é mais como antigamente–disse Fusako" (34).

57. The Nihonjinron genre presumes the uniqueness of Japanese national, mentality, and cultural identity, often comparing them to those of European and North American nations.

# 2

# BETWEEN ASSIMILATIONISM AND CULTURAL CELEBRATION

Nikkei author Ryoki Inoue was born José Carlos Ryoki de Alpoim Inoue in the city of São Paulo in 1946. A former medical doctor, in 1993 he was acknowledged by the Guinness World Records as the world's most prolific writer for, since 1986, he has written 1,075 books under his name or thirty different pseudonyms. *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; henceforth, *Saga*) is a well-researched novel composed in five parts, titled "Gaijin," "Issei," "Nisei," "Sansei," and "Yonsei" respectively, in addition to its prologue and epilogue. Although each part explores the social, political, cultural, and economic processes that affected each generation, the last one is significantly lengthier, suggesting that the novel's emphasis is on Yonsei daily life in contemporary Brazil, even though this group only makes up 13 percent of the Nikkei community—the Sansei (42 percent) is the largest group. To Inoue, these Yonsei characters' full appropriation of Brazilian culture and Portuguese language, coupled with their apparent absence of cultural alienation and of dislocation sentiments, proves their ethnic group's

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success and integration. While all characters are fictional (except for the aforementioned Mário Japa), Inoue inserts them into the real-life historical process of the Japanese mass migration to Brazil and their progressive integration into mainstream Brazilian society.

Inoue chooses the title *Saga*, which recalls the romanticized epic narrations of Viking deeds. In the novel, the word has a double meaning: it is the "epic" history of one particular Nikkei family and, by extension, also that of the Nikkei minority. In other words, Inoue re-creates, through the voice of a subjective and omniscient narrator, the trials of four generations of a Japanese immigrant family in Brazil, a synecdoche of their ethnic group's history. The story begins in the Japan of the early years of the twentieth century, when the spirit of Bushidō, the samurai code of conduct, was central to that society's worldview, and moves through the pioneers' adventures in Brazil up to the integrated Paulista urbanites of its last generation, who are represented as well educated, economically successful, cosmopolitan, and proficient in Portuguese language and Brazilian culture. Providing a circular structure to the novel, the prologue and the epilogue take place in the same space: the coffee plantation of the patriarch, doctor Carlos Masakazu Fukugawa, who, by the novel's denouement, has become one of the richest men in Brazil. In his garden, he builds a Japanese castle in the style of the Sengoku period and a *torii* (traditional Japanese gateway often found in Shinto shrines), symbols of his desire to return to his original ethnocultural roots and of his ethnic group's material progress. This is one of the frequent passages in Japanese Brazilian cultural production where one notices the pervasive presence of ethnic nostalgia.

Homi Bhabha has underscored the key position of diasporic, migrant, and colonized discourses in today's world literature thus: "Where once the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees—these border and frontier conditions—may be the terrains of world literature" (12). Transnational Nikkei cultural production indeed belongs to one of these peripheral discourses that are reinterpreting and challenging the definition of national identities and literatures, including the Brazilian. Like Miyazawa's *Yawara!*, Inoue's *Saga* is another piece in a collective Nikkei discourse that demands, since the end of World War II, the democratization of knowledge and the recognition of alternative

Brazilian identities. While it celebrates miscegenation and proposes integration into mainstream Brazilian culture, it also revels in Nikkei achievements.

Jacques Derrida's deconstructive concept of "trace" is useful in analyzing Inoue's exploration of Nikkei identities in Brazil and to lay bare some of Inoue's writing's inner or hidden contradictions. Following Ferdinand de Saussure, Derrida reminds us that, since a sign acquires its meaning from its difference with other signs, and especially with the opposite sign in a binary opposition (presence-absence, inside-outside, speech-writing), it always bears a trace of the other half. Each term or concept in these arbitrary and unstable binary oppositions (always privileging one term over the other) is defined by what it is not: a trace, therefore, is what a sign differs/defers from. This trace marks the absence of an always-already absent presence (the binary's other half). Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism*, reaches a similar conclusion in what he considers a contrapuntal approach: "we are dealing with the formation of cultural identities understood not as essentializations (although part of their enduring appeal is that they seem and are considered to be like essentializations) but as contrapuntal ensembles, for it is the case that no identity can ever exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions: Greeks always require barbarians, and Europeans Africans, Orientals, etc." (52). In this respect, Nikkei self-definitions are inseparable from this contrapuntal dialogue or confrontation with their three or more possible terms in binary oppositions: a supposedly homogenous mainstream Brazilian identity (more strongly displayed in the discourse of the Nikkei diaspora in Brazil), a perhaps essentialized Japanese identity (more ubiquitous in the Nikkei second diaspora "back" in Japan), and Naichijin, or mainland Japanese, as compared with Okinawans.

Japanese Brazilian contemporary identities also carry the self-effacing trace of past identities and of a historical past that may have taken place (historical memory of past traumas, for example) or may have not (social memory, often mystified). In the ethnocultural identity of Nelson Harema Fukugawa, the Yonsei protagonist of the fourth part of *Saga*, traces can be found of not only his Issei, Nisei, and Sansei ancestors, but also of the real and the imagined/essentialized reconstruction of his community's history. The interrelation between identities, the other contrapuntal identities in the binary oppositions, and the trace of former identities create a sort of palimpsest of overimposed identitarian sedimentations.

Said's points out that "self-definition is one of the activities practiced by all cultures: it has a rhetoric, a set of occasions and authorities (national feasts, for example, times of crisis, founding fathers, basic texts, and so on), and a familiarity all its own" (37). Through *Saga* and other cultural production, Brazilian Nikkeijin deliver their self-definition that, not surprisingly, portrays their ethnic group positively. The disposition of the novel's chapters and their titles seems to suggest a historicist, evolutionary teleology whose ideal and ultimate goal is a miscegenized and assimilated better present. This approach, which implies that to understand contemporary Nikkei identities one must be knowledgeable of their historical development over time, unequivocally postulates *mestiçagem* and sociocultural integration (assimilation perhaps?) into mainstream Brazilian society as desirable outcomes. In one scene, for example, Masakazu unsuccessfully tries to convince his Nikkei classmates in college, Motoaki and Kadota, of the benefits of having a good relationship with other members of Brazilian society, instead of continuing to be isolated within the Nikkei community. However, *Saga*, in its rejection of a separatist Nikkei subnation (i.e., a nonadministrative subdivision within the Brazilian state of an ethnic group with common interests) within the country, tries to offset or resist the danger of falling into a celebration of the production of "acculturated" (stressing unidirectionality instead of transculturation) urban subjects by emphasizing the importance of keeping one's cultural traditions. In any case, the last part leaves the reader wondering whether the novel mostly celebrates the telos of social assimilation and the process of homogenization of Nikkei identities. If it does, it stands counter to the mostly anti-essentialist discourse of much of Nikkei literature and film's exploration of Nikkei identitarian heterogeneity.

## INTERSECTIONALITY AND OKINAWAN SUBETHNICITY

Inoue's incursion into the topic of Okinawan discrimination by Naichijin in Brazil echoes findings in recent academic studies.[1] After Japan's annexation of the Ryūkyūan kingdom in 1879, Okinawa became a prefecture and was heavily taxed, though it did not gain representation in the Japanese Diet until 1920. According to the political scientist Robert K. Arakaki, "although officially a prefecture of Japan (which presupposes equality with mainland Japan), Okinawa was, in fact, an exploited colony" (37).[2] Shifting to the

present, he points out that Okinawans in the diaspora are often seen as "the other Japanese" by mainland Japanese as well as by many Latin Americans knowledgeable of the epithet: "One of the unique features of the Okinawan diaspora has been the Okinawans' position as a double minority . . . In many instances, the diasporic Okinawans were forced to construct their identity against three axes of identity: the host culture, the Japanese diaspora, and the Okinawan diaspora. They were often both Japanese and non-Japanese" (37). This is precisely the identitarian challenge that one of Inoue's characters faces.

Japan's nation-building project and its aggressive nationalism imposed numerous normalizing practices on Okinawans (considered backward aborigines) to eradicate their culture and turn them into "good Japanese citizens": "The Japanese government initiated a series of measures intended to extinguish 'uncivilized' Okinawan customs (including their language and their 'irrational' shamanistic spiritual practices)" (Nakasone 18). Although many Okinawans accepted the Japanese colonial project (some changed their names to pass for mainland Japanese), "systematic discrimination forced the Okinawans to occupy the bottom rung of the labor market" (Arakaki 38). The Japanese sociologist Nomura Kōya adds that continued discrimination forced Okinawans to internalize a sense of inferiority that, in turn, accelerated assimilation. This inferiority complex, he speculates, may have endured until the present: "It is difficult to say whether contemporary Okinawans have completely rid themselves of the stigma of being labeled 'backward,' 'uncivilized,' and 'second-class citizens'" (116). From the perspective of ethnic studies, Wesley Ueunten reaches similar conclusions: "Okinawan children learned that their native tongue and culture were barbaric and backward, not fitting for subjects of the emperor. Thus began the stigmatization of the Okinawan identity" (102). This cultural stigmatization, as reflected in the novel, was exported to South America.

Kimberle Crenshaw, a feminist sociology theorist, coined the term "intersectionality" in 1989. As she explained, with black women, racist and sexist experiences tend not to occur in mutually exclusive terrains: "Many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood . . . the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race

or gender dimensions of those experiences separately" (1244). In my view, this concept can be applied to different contexts, such as the double discrimination of Okinawans in Brazil. Indeed, *Saga* explores the intersectionality found among different but interconnected forms of discrimination in ethnic and subethnic terms. As relates to Okinawans in Brazil, their experience must be understood in terms of two separate, socially constructed ethnic (Japanese) and (sub)ethnic (Okinawan) identitarian categories that interact at different levels, contributing to their systemic discrimination and racialization in an unjust social hierarchy. Instead of considering their discrimination by majority Brazilians and by Naichijin separately, one must take into account the interactions that often reinforce each other.

Thus, in the fourth part of *Saga*, Nelson Harema Fukugawa, a Sansei Air Force pilot, gains the unexpected animosity of another Nikkeijin, sergeant Tomita Arakaki. The latter speaks Japanese correctly and behaves "like a real samurai,"[3] but refuses to interact with other Nikkeijin up until he reveals the reason to Nelson by admitting that "'you are a mestizo . . . For that reason, you have an advantage in many ways. But me . . .' He shook his head negatively and whispered: 'This face does not help.'"[4] Sergeant Arakaki is convinced that in contrast with Nelson's more accepted mestizo features (his mother is Euro-Brazilian), his Japanese phenotype and surname prevent him from promotion to the rank of colonel: "Look at me! What do you see? A Japanese! Nothing but a Japanese! If I had a civilian outfit, I would easily be confused with a grocer or a laundry worker."[5] Curiously, these two traditional professions of the Brazilian Nikkeijin, linked to their social integration in urban areas, are here implied to be inferior.

While Nelson initially hesitates to believe that racism remains prevalent in Brazil, Arakaki convinces and reminds him of the double discrimination he suffers for being of Okinawan stock: "When I have to talk with a Japanese, the expression on his face when I give my name is more than enough to show me that I'm not welcome."[6] Plausibly reflecting his author's ideas, he claims that the Naichijin (or Yamatonchu, as Okinawans call "mainland" Japanese) have no reason to feel that way toward Okinawa, considering that it was the only area of Japan to be invaded by the United States and that, as a result, it suffered more casualties than any other in the country, except for Hiroshima and Nagasaki (and Tokyo, I would add). Arakaki consequently suffers the intersectionality of rejection by both Japanese and majority Brazilians.

## MISCEGENATION AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION

The Brazilian Nikkeijin amateur historian Tsugio Shindo, through his study *Passos da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil*, has contributed to the continuation of the racial democracy myth: "It is often said that in Brazil, a country with a mixture of races, there may be racial prejudice, but there is no racial discrimination. That has not changed to this day."[7] The case can be made, however, that his passage is an exception in Nikkei writing. In *Saga*, for instance, the presence of multiple types of racism is recurrent throughout the plot, with characters decrying interracial relationships and claiming that their ethnic group's achievements respond to its higher order in a purported racial hierarchy. Inoue openly addresses Nippophobia in Brazilian society. For example, Fausto, a medical colleague of Masakazu (the protagonist of the novel's third part, devoted to the Nisei generation), provides a new twist on the potential causes for this phobia by arguing that it responds to a fear of the unknown or unreadable: "The Japanese are much more introspective than Westerners. That, in a way, scares us. It is terrible to have a conversation with someone who does not reveal his feelings outwardly. And you guys are good at that!"[8] Fausto therefore builds on the "inscrutable oriental" trope, the "mysterious," reserved, and stoic East Asian immigrant stereotype, which is so common in Western popular culture and that is plausibly related to Yellow Peril prejudice.

*Saga* also acknowledges the Japanese immigrants' racist and xenophobic feelings toward Okinawans, mixed-race Nikkeijin, derogatively called *ainokos* (love children), and Brazilians, both white (*gaijin*) and black. Masakazu has thus to confront his family's disapproval of interracial marriages, even though, according to the psychologist Toshiaki Saito, Nikkei parents were more tolerant of mixed marriages when it was a male, rather than a female, who married outside the ethnic group (199–212).[9] Masakazu's mother, Yoko, scorns his decision to marry Maria de Lourdes, his former patient, as she is convinced that Brazilians dislike Japanese. Like Yoko, Hiromiti Suzuki, a friend of the family, insists on the need to correct the mistake: "You must not think about marrying a gaijin. Doing so is equivalent to betraying us, it would be seen as a rejection of our girls."[10] Suzuki then shows Masakazu a newspaper clipping from 1908 in which Japanese immigrants are described as incapable of adapting to the customs of the host country; he then recalls the removal of Japanese families from the coastline during World War II, though

they did not present a threat to Brazilian national security, solely because Japan had allied with Germany and Italy. More interesting and surprising is that Masakazu, perhaps the author's mouthpiece, upholds the government's controversial decision to displace Nikkeijin forcibly, claiming that no assurance of spy absence could be given. The character's reaction reflects the author's conciliatory approach to race relations in Brazil. Reenacting real-life intergenerational disputes and opposing identitarian choices, Suzuki argues that they are indeed Japanese when Masakazu reminds him that they are not Japanese but Brazilian. Masakazu, upon noticing that his father—the *shizoku* (former samurai) Ryuiti Fujugawa—is conspicuously silent throughout the uneasy exchange, excuses himself to avoid further racist advice. The next morning, his family does not speak to him before his departure to Campos do Jordão.

Suzuki's insistence on the fact that Brazilian Nikkeijin are Japanese reflects Tsuda's study of Nikkei self-identification, particularly after the "return" migration of the *dekasegi* to Japan. In today's Brazil, according to Tsuda, "the Japanese Brazilians have capitalized on the currently pro-Japanese climate by asserting and embracing their 'Japaneseness,' in contrast to their attempts to assimilate to Brazilian society in the early postwar period . . . By developing a strong transnational ethnic identification with Japan, the Japanese Brazilians are able to distinguish themselves from such negative images [of Third World Brazil]" (*Strangers* 70). Paradoxically, as discussed in the last two chapters of this book, the situation changes for the dekasegi: "The dramatic change from positive to negative minority status that the Japanese Brazilians experience when they migrate to Japan is accompanied by an equally significant transformation in their ethnic consciousness . . . In response to such negative experiences, many of them distance themselves from their previous transnational ethnic affiliation with the Japanese and assert a much stronger Brazilian counteridentity in opposition to Japanese society" (*Strangers* 155). That, in Brazil, Nikkeijin refer to themselves exclusively as "Japanese," as opposed to "Nippo-Brazilian" or "Japanese Brazilian," and call non-Nikkei Brazilians "gaijin" symbolizes this negotiation of a distinctive and exclusionary Japanese identity (*Strangers* 81–82).

Masakazu's fiancée, Maria de Lourdes, experiences a similar negative reaction from her father, Nelson Figueredo, who considers the wedding plans a scandal and wonders whether his daughter has lost her mind. Iracema, her

mother, summarizes the prevailing prejudice against the Japanese: "Japanese marry Japanese, my dear . . . They are entirely different from us! They live in a separate world, they don't befriend Brazilians, they don't think like us . . . They are selfish, greedy, interested only in money, they don't respect women, they make them work like slaves . . . To them, having a concubine is normal; some have several wives, like the Arabs! They are not Catholic, they believe in and pray to the Devil! And what's worse, they think they are superior, when in reality they are nothing but manual laborers."[11] Paradoxically, Maria de Lourdes's mother's name, Iracema, brings to mind Brazilian José de Alencar's indigenist romance novel *Iracema: A Lenda do Ceará* (*Iracema, the Honey Lips: A Legend of Brazil*, 1865), a national allegory and foundational fiction dealing with the interracial relationship between Iracema, a Tabajara indigenous woman, and Martim, a Portuguese colonist allied with the Pitiguara, the Tabajara nation's enemies. Since in Alencar's novel, their child, Moacir, represents miscegenation and the birth of a new Brazilian mixed race, there is a possible intertextuality between both texts.

Despite both families' disapproval and absence from the ceremony, Masakazu and Maria de Lourdes get married and cope with rejection for years: they are not invited to festivities, are unable to find Japanese teachers for their children, and are asked to become godparents only because, being wealthy, they are expected to give expensive presents. Yet the couple never loses hope, as they are convinced that discrimination and xenophobia will eventually end. As foretold, after refusing for six years to see his son, Ryuiti, dying from cancer, allows Masakazu to examine him and then realizes how wrong he was to reject his gaijin daughter-in-law, a hardworking and compassionate woman.

The first pages of the fourth part imply that Nikkeijin are less tolerant with mestizos than is the Brazilian society. Thus, whereas Sansei children, like Nelson and Yoko Fukugawa, are accepted in Brazilian schools (professors and classmates affectionately call them *japinhas*, respect them, and admire their academic success), they are rejected by other Nikkeijin, who derogatively call them *ainokos*:

> "There is no use" [Masakazu] complained to her spouse. "The Japanese do not consider our children Japanese. It seems that, for them, Nelson and Yoko will always be ainokos."

> Maria de Lourdes smiled, kissed her husband, and said: "At least, the *gaijin* 'colony' accepts the children very well. One only needs to see how happy they are in school and how they have managed to make friends in such a short time!"[12]

Inoue, through his characters' dialogue, inserts self-critical passages to denounce what is perceived as an island of racism within the context of a more tolerant mainstream Brazilian society.

*Saga*'s fifth part continues the exploration of miscegenation. While the mestizo Ryumi symbolizes the gradual loss of phenotypical and cultural Japanese traits among the Yonsei, his girlfriend Maria Rita embodies the transculturation between Afro-Brazilian and Nikkei cultures. In fact, this Afro-Brazilian character is one of the few non-Nikkeijin in the cultural production herein analyzed that embraces and mediates Japanese or Nikkei culture, making it her own. This way, she exemplifies the two-way path of hybridization (regardless of how asymmetrical it may be) that characterizes the transculturation process described by Fernando Ortiz in his foundational work *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (*Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, 1940). Just as the Nikkeijin appropriate local mores and thus transform their inherited Japanese culture, so do they export theirs to other Brazilian ethnic groups. After all, as the Uruguayan critic Ángel Rama points out, the term "transculturation" "reveals resistance to the consideration of one's own traditional culture, which receives the external impact destined to modify it, as a merely passive, or even inferior entity, destined to be lost without any kind of creative response" (136). Since Maria Rita appears to be more fluent in Japanese culture than the Nikkei mestizo Ryumi himself, these scenes announce his future reidentification with Japanese culture thanks to his new wife's help, or perhaps a "neoculturation" (to use Ortiz's neologism) or creation of a new, synthetic, and original hybrid culture that blends the marginalized traditions of Nikkei and Afro-Brazilian cultures. However, they may also provide an image of the processes of transculturation that is too harmonic, when in the case of the Nikkeijin in Brazil, it often responded to violent, enforced assimilation and hegemonic imposition from the Brazilian state. At the same time, this fictional rendering of sociocultural mixing and intermarriage counterbalances stereotypes regarding the unassimilability and insularity of separatist Nikkeijin in their own ethnic enclaves.

On the other hand, interracial love here exemplifies a sort of litmus test of Brazilianization. Ryumi's physical appearance is also described in detail: he is tall, with wavy hair, and no slanted eyes. Because he is only one-fourth Japanese, his phenotype is no longer typically Asian. In fact, Maria Rita initially does not believe that he is of Japanese descent; his Japanese ethnic heritage is reflected only in his behavior and certain gestures, traits described humorously:

> She was getting dressed when suddenly she made the link between the image of the lawyer she had just met and the "non-Japanese-Japanese" she recalled.
>
> "That's it!" she exclaimed. "Tom Cruise! Tom Cruise in the film *The Last Samurai*!"[13]

In spite of his apparent deethnification or de-Asianization, Ryumi still embodies the balance between Brazilianization and individualism on the one hand, and respect for ancestors and Japanese traditions on the other.[14] His relationship with the Afro-Brazilian Maria Rita reflects the increasing rate of intermarriage, reliable proof of an increased level of Nikkei social integration.

Masterson and Funada-Classen explains that "as might be expected from the strong influence of their Issei parents, intermarriage among the Nisei was rare. Only 6 percent of the second-generation Japanese in Brazil married a non-Japanese, as reported in the 1988 census. In contrast, 40 percent of their children, the Sansei, took non-Japanese spouses. The Yonsei intermarried at a rate even higher, more than 60 percent" (248). In *Saga*, it is evident that the author celebrates these higher rates of intermarriage among the Yonsei because they reflect their ethnic group's increasing sociocultural integration. It also reflects a social reality: "The third and fourth generations are primarily identified as Brazilian and only sometimes decide to learn of their Japanese heritage through various cultural festivals and activities sponsored by the Association for Prefectural Organizations in Liberdade, the Asian district of São Paulo" (Rivas, "Negotiating" 384). The novel, therefore, celebrates Nikkei progressive delinking from a Japanese identity as a social triumph, even if certain Japanese cultural traits and traditions are kept.

As in Júlio Miyazawa's *Yawara!*, another symbol of Nikkei cultural integration in Inoue's *Saga* is the revolutionary Mário Japa. Nelson, who became a military helicopter pilot in 1968 (during the military dictatorship), is combating the rural guerrilla Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária led by, among

others, ex-captain Carlos Lamarca, an army deserter. Taking a page from real life, Inoue narrates how on 27 February 1970, the Nisei Chizuo Ozawa suffered a car accident in São Paulo while transporting numerous weapons. After police interrogation, he was identified as Mário Japa, "one of the most important members of the VPR guerrilla,"[15] who had then completed intensive guerrilla training.[16]

## JAPANESE TRADITIONS AND CULTURAL TRANSLATIONS

Like other Nikkei works, *Saga* devotes several pages to explaining Japanese culture and traditions to readers, an ethnographic approach common to postcolonial literature. *Editorial Globo*'s 2006 edition includes numerous explanatory notes about Japanese history and culture. In fact, these pages devoted to Nikkei cultural difference—which perhaps include too much of the author's research, thus slowing down the flow of the narrative—somewhat help to temporarily offset an apparent proassimiliationist discourse. At the risk of falling into self-exoticization, the author aestheticizes and commodifies his own ethnic culture for non-Nikkei readers. From this perspective, the fourth part of *Saga* offers, along with scenes of racial discrimination, examples of ethnic solidarity. Besides consoling Arakaki, Nelson helps a Nisei shopkeeper, José Yugi Chiba, who has been framed by a jealous majority Brazilian shopkeeper so that he may be rid of this competition. This passage, which recreates economic violence, suggests that a factor in Brazilian Nippophobia, as well as in Peru and other Latin American countries, was economic competition. Likewise, in one of the numerous cultural translations inserted in the plot, the reader learns the Japanese concept of *on* or *on giri* (debt of gratitude, obligation, favor): "'I will never be able to repay what you are doing for me, Fukugawa-san,' Chiba said to the doctor. 'I will die in *on giri* to you, sir.'"[17] This scene also serves as an introduction to the concept of *katakiuchi* (revenge assassination) that resurfaces further on.

In the fifth part, the longest, dedicated to fourth-generation Yonsei, racism is reconsidered during a visit by Yonsei Ryumi (Sérgio Ryumi Marins Fukugawa) to his beloved grandfather Carlos Fukugawa. Even though the latter was among the first Nikkeijin to marry a Brazilian woman, Ryumi wonders whether he will accept his fiancée, Maria Rita, because she is mulatto.[18] Ryumi, in a conversation with her, ponders about racism among

Nikkeijin and mainstream Brazilians: "It's impossible to determine which side's discrimination and prejudice was worse. In reality, though Japanese and Brazilian lived together, they did not accept each other very well. To give you an idea, for the Nipponese, Brazilians were the foreigners . . . And, for Brazilians, the Japanese were a mysterious people, full of different traditions, with a level of education and sensibility superior to that of the average Brazilian, or rather, to Westerners in general."[19]

The last sentence presumes that majority Brazilians have internalized a positive prejudice about Nikkeijin. This is corroborated by Tsuda, who describes Japanese Brazilians as a "'positive minority' whose ethnic qualities are favorably regarded in Brazilian society. In contrast to most minority groups, . . . the Japanese Brazilians occupy a higher socioeconomic status than the majority Brazilian populace and are respected, if not admired for their 'Japanese' cultural attributes" (*Strangers* 65). Eventually, Afro-Brazilian Maria Rita, adopted as a child by a Japanese Brazilian family, wins her grandfather's homesick heart by displaying her familiarity with Japanese cultural traditions: the specific use of different types of kimonos and her successful performance of *chanoyu*, the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. However, these passages make one wonder if it is only this cultural capital or her ability to cross over that "rehabilitates" the Afro-Brazilian woman as a potential wife before the elderly man. They moreover give way to another opportunity to celebrate Japanese cultural traditions and history: the narrator continues, perhaps interrupting the narrative's natural flow, to delve into the history of tea, the tea ceremony, the tea house, and Bushidō.

Inoue offers a narrative justification for the inclusion of these passages that show the need to preserve Japanese cultural traditions: after his wife's death, Carlos becomes obsessed with rescuing those customs that immigrants brought to Brazil. This change in attitude results from his desire to atone for having married a Brazilian: "I swore to myself that, despite marrying a *gaijin*, I would not allow my ancestors' traditions to die."[20] For this reason, he encourages his grandson Ryumi's early interest in Japanese culture and in strengthening his pride in belonging to one of the first 178 immigrant Japanese families in Brazil. Saddened by Nikkei youth's disinterest in Japanese traditions, the grandfather once considered "importing" a Japanese wife for his only grandson; he changed his mind only after discovering how Americanized and materialistic Japanese youth had become.

In consonance with the grandfather's interests, the relation between tradition and prejudice is explored at length in the novel. Thus, after Maria Rita performs the tea ceremony, Carlos avers that "traditions, in reality, derive from rules that were created so that supposedly civilized human beings could better monitor their own conduct. From traditions, in turn, derives prejudice, which is only a manifestation of repudiation of all that, in one way or another, transgresses a tradition."[21] In his seemingly contradictory view, it is best to avoid transgressing traditional dictates because to follow traditions is how best to break taboos and prejudice. Maria Rita responds to these considerations by explaining her fear for her eventual marriage: "We are afraid that our union will not be accepted by the society in which we live and, for this reason, we flee from it . . . This way, we're feeding the prejudice, we're providing ammunition to those who discriminate against us."[22] She is therefore convinced that their interethnic marriage will be beneficial to combat her society's anachronistic social prejudice.

At one point in the plot, Japanese discrimination against mestizos takes a radical turn. Nisei lieutenant Roberto Yoshio Ohno denies Nelson permission to remain at a restaurant. Subsequently, Nelson's girlfriend, Simone, tells her uncle Marins, a captain, about the incident and Ohno is arrested. In revenge for the humiliation, years later Ohno hires two hitmen who kill Simone's uncle. Their arrest prevents them from also killing Nelson, who cannot understand this thirst for revenge after so many years. Another cultural translation is inserted when Masakazu, his father, explains the Japanese concept of *katakiuchi* (revenge assassination): "[It is] revenge. Ohno did not forget what happened. He did not forget his hatred of you. He simply waited for the opportunity to carry out *katakiuchi*."[23] Although the narrator mentions that Ohno is jealous of Nelson's physical appearance and wealthy background (class differences also disrupt Nikkei purported homogeneity), the plot suggests that his disdain is mostly of a racial nature. When Simone expresses her surprise at seeing the only other officer of Japanese descent mistreat Nelson, he reveals the disdain felt by many Nikkeijin toward mestizos: "For many Japanese, even for their descendants, as in Ohno's case, we simply don't exist."[24] Not all cultural traditions discussed, therefore, are seen in the same light: nowhere in the novel is katakiuchi included among those traditions to be preserved. Numerous other cultural translations about Japanese traditions and history enrich the plot with passages about samurai

culture, Japanese eating habits, calligraphy, Noh and Kabuki drama, martial arts, *ikebana* (the art of flower arrangement) and arranged marriages.[25]

## CELEBRATION OF NIKKEI ACHIEVEMENTS AND A PERCEIVED ETHNIC SUPERIORITY

The sociologist Tetsundo Tsukamoto, in a 1958 article, identifies anguish among Japanese immigrants caused by an inferiority complex. In his view, this complex results from anti-Japanese attitudes in Brazilian society; restrictions to Brazilian citizenship; and impediments to the maintenance of Japanese language, religions, and way of life. It is also "caused by the impossibility of offering their children an adequate Japanese education; on the other hand, they also wish to prevent their children from experiencing the suffering, the bitter experiences brought about by cultural and economic obstacles that they faced in their adoptive country."[26] Moreover, another sociologist, Morio Ono, associates this complex with the sadness of having to leave the land of one's ancestors, which can only be tolerated or overcome by achieving a better socioeconomic status or by becoming a landowner (161). In turn, the anthropologist Philip Staniford, bordering on the essentialization of an entire social group, agrees that a negative self-image among Japanese immigrants often arose because of their new lives in a strange land, as they compared themselves with successful compatriots who stayed behind. However, Staniford also brings up their superiority complex when they compared themselves to the host country's population:

> Immigrants shared with compatriots in Japan a solidly developed and positive image of themselves as Japanese. Such a feeling was explicitly or implicitly manifested in the so-called "Japanese spirit" (*yamato-damashii*) and in their conviction that the Japanese are capable of facing and overcoming adversity. They consider themselves hard, intelligent workers, able to control any situation and to find adequate solutions. This positive self-image is more intense overseas when comparing what they consider their "civilized" politeness and finesse with the "rude" characteristics they claim to witness in a foreign culture. We, as a "people," are different from "them," foreigners they considered "primitive" (*geshijin*) and savage (*yabanjin*).[27]

Accordingly, several texts examined here provide grounds for their apparent feelings of superiority.[28] *Saga* participates, like other Nikkei cultural

production, in a subtle denial of coevalness with Brazilian society, as if claiming that rather than being coetaneous citizens, they embody Brazil's future. But, as Lesser explains, non-Nikkei Brazilians already shared this idea: "the same people who believed Nikkei to be ethnically rigid and impenetrable (and not truly Brazilian) often took the position that the Brazilian nation would improve by becoming 'more Japanese.' Nikkei by and large accepted an identity where they were not Brazilians of the present but Brazilians of the future" (*Discontented* xxvi).

As determined, Inoue hides neither the existence of racism within his own ethnic group nor the sense of ethnic superiority that some Japanese immigrants felt. Thus, in the second part of the novel, when the dismayed immigrant Yoshiro Kasai fears that she will never be an equal citizen in Brazil, her husband, Ryuiti Fukugawa, protests: "We don't have to be considered equals, mainly because we're not equal. We are superior and that's what we need to show them!"[29] According to American anthropologist Robert J. Smith, even in today's Brazil, this sentiment is prevalent among some Japanese Brazilians who "feel that their socioeconomic success is the result of applying traditional Japanese values in Brazil, thus directly associating their respected middle-class status with their Japanese ethnic identity" (qtd. in Tsuda, *Strangers* 67). At the end of *Saga*'s second part, this feeling resurfaces when Nikkei college students recall their parents' repeated dictum: "We need to show that we're superior. We are better in all things. Second place is nothing but defeat."[30] Still, the narrator does not shy away from essentialist notions, praising the work ethics, initiative, and superior intellectual ability of Nisei students who, according to him, tended to outscore their classmates. This appreciation continues in the fifth part, where Nelson and Yoko feature among those Nikkei students who receive the best grades and help other students through study groups. The novel shares with much of Nikkei cultural production the celebration of the social ascension of the overachieving Japanese Brazilians as a result of their economic and scholarly success. Lesser corroborates Brazilian Nikkei educational success, stressing that they "were particularly overrepresented in higher education in the sixties and seventies, making up a little over 2 percent of the population of the state of São Paulo but more than 10 percent of its university students" (*Discontented* 9).

Indeed, in *Saga*, as in much of Nikkei cultural production, the most celebrated Japanese values are their impressive work ethics, abnegation,

self-denial, and stoicism. This type of discourse often brings the narrative close to the "model minority" myth (so-called in the United States) that, as David Palumbo-Liu argues, has problematic origins:

> During the late twentieth century, minorities in the United States have been told to stop complaining about oppression and to start drawing upon inner strengths. This formula conveniently absolves the state of responsibility for social justice, transferring that responsibility to (only) those groups affected negatively by injustice. The particular brand of self-affirmative action that is the linchpin of the model minority myth uses an exaggerated representation of Asians as embodying those "traditional family values" whose lack brought about the L.A. riots, according to Dan Quayle and the Bush administration. Here, the "Asian family structure" represents the perfect apparatus for the reproduction of the ethos of diligent hard work, self-denial, and political quietude. (186)

Therefore, toward the end of the novel's first part, Brazilian landowners celebrate their investment in Japanese labor and admire their resilience: "The Japanese are quiet, submissive, peaceful, extremely well mannered, and respectful. They're especially untiring workers. I've often seen them work at night, under street lights."[31] Later in the plot, the remarkable economic success of Nikkei workers in Cotia—often described as a proud achievement in Nikkei discourse—is used as a microcosm for all Japanese communities throughout Brazil. New Issei arrive yearly from Japan to work in Cotia and are joined by Brazilian workers who prefer to work for Japanese employers; they are known to be more respectful with their employees and to pay higher wages—the topic of miscegenation, however, continues to be avoided. The narrator proudly adds that Japanese immigrants brought new farming techniques to Brazil, including the use of bamboo for irrigation. He also includes Shinto, the ethnic religion of the Japanese, as a key element to understanding their national character and their ability to adapt to new circumstances.

Nikkei literature coincides with postcolonial literature in its concern for the dialectic between place and "cultural authenticity," when considering the alienation that results from migration and dislocation. But, as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin point out, within a postcolonial literature context, there is often a risk of falling into essentialism or simplifications: "This is not to say that post-colonial critics have always avoided an essentialist view of language or of some 'authentic' cultural experience. The process of

decolonization, which sometimes becomes a search for an essential cultural purity, does not necessarily harness the theoretical subversiveness offered by postcolonial literatures" (40). Indeed, at the risk of listing cultural peculiarities that may give credence to the belief in Japanese "essential cultural purity," another Japanese trait proudly highlighted in *Saga* is their stoicism and ability to hide true emotions. Thus, in the second part, we find a situation in which the Japanese hide their true feelings to maintain social harmony, a type of behavior that evidences a major psychological split with the local culture. After a greedy Brazilian landowner named Bastos Araújo refuses to lend the Japanese a vehicle to take a sick child to the doctor, the latter ends up dying. Their calm reaction surprises the landowner: "Yet, stupefied, he saw those Japanese simply lower their heads, cross their hands together over their foreheads, and stay quiet. Only Yoshiro and his wife, in silence, shed tears."[32] This surprising outcome, however, should not be viewed as submissive; after the death of a second child, they at last decide to move to another plantation. Along these lines, in the last chapter, Ryumi tells his Afro-Brazilian girlfriend: "You *are* nervous. But you're making an effort to avoid showing it . . . You're playing the role of a Japanese woman, hiding your feelings as much as you can."[33] Her modest behavior is an example of the transculturation of Japanese values in Brazil.

In these passages, without mentioning the terms, Inoue makes reference to two key Japanese cultural concepts used to avoid social conflict and to maintain harmony: *honne* and *tatemae*. The first describes one's real intention, true inner feelings, opinions, desires, and thoughts, all kept in private (disclosed only to close friends), even if they are contrary to social expectations. In turn, the second term refers to a sort of "politically correct" public position or diplomatic facade that includes public behavior and expressed opinions, in accordance with official ideologies or what is socially required or expected from one's position or circumstances. It is a sort of performance of social harmony. Tatemae may be entirely different from honne, yet this type of social behavior is considered to be a sign of maturity among the Japanese. In the aforementioned scenes, the Japanese (or Nipponized) characters exhibit a type of self-restraint, reserve, or diffidence (a quintessential Japanese concept known as *enryo*,[34] which is related to the ambiguity and withholding of self-expression), not because they do not feel pain, rage or fear, but because they are trying to avoid conflict in order to keep social harmony.

In contrast with other passages, Inoue here refrains from inserting a dialogue with a cultural translation to explain this important cultural idiosyncrasy. Still, the scenes are undoubtedly introduced with pride in the Japanese character and capacity for conciliation. In yet another example of Inoue's celebration of Japanese cultural behavior, the omniscient narrator brings up the immigrants' practice of reforestation, years before the preservation of natural resources became an important issue in Brazil: "We don't destroy; on the contrary, we respect nature which, in reality, has to do with Shinto, the only genuine Japanese religion,"[35] Masakazu tells his girlfriend. These insertions contribute to improving the Nikkei image.

Although *Saga* is, for the most part, a celebration of the socioeconomic success and cultural adaptation of the Nikkeijin, it also includes brief stories of failure, such as that of Yoko Fukugawa, Nelson's sister, who becomes addicted to heroin and dies of an overdose. Nelson, on the other hand, is described positively, even though he collaborates with the military dictatorship that ran the country from 1968 through 1974. Yet, when this regime began to reinstate democracy (1974–88), Nelson led the process because he was considered one of the "open-minded officers."[36] On the other hand, the inclusion of this Nikkei military character exemplifies one more time the integration and success of this minority in all walks of life.

Inoue also addresses one of the most shameful episodes in Nikkei history: Shindō Renmei's terrorism. To provide a sociocultural context, the narrator explains the concept of yamato-damashii (Japanese spirit; literally meaning "The great spirit of harmony"), which includes emperor worship and the belief in Japan's military invincibility. During the first half of the twentieth century, Japanese nationalists turned this idea into a central aspect of imperial military doctrines and political propaganda. *Saga* gives "Japanese spirit" as a reason for the violent conflict between the Kachigumi, who believed that Japan won World War II, and the Makegumi, who "were not upset by either victory or defeat of their country of origin, having effectively assumed Brazil as their homeland."[37] Another important factor in the appearance of the terrorist group, according to the narrator, was the presence of former military officers among those Japanese immigrants who arrived in Brazil between 1928 and 1933. Their mission was "to create points of resistance against western political and cultural domination in countries where the Japanese community was beginning to have an impact, both

demographically and economically."[38] In this regard, Asian American studies scholar Wesley Ueunten (qtd. in Tigner) recalls a remark made by Marquis Okuma Shigenobu, founder of Tokyo's Waseda University: "South America was comprised in a sphere of influence to which the Japanese Empire might legitimately pretend, and that persevering emigrants there might build a new Japan" (101). Yet, though it is true that at the time there were rumors about these types of conspiracies, Inoue, through his narrator, might have exaggerated the number and influence of these former military men among Brazilian Nikkeijin. Shindō Renmei's leader, Junji Kikawa, was nonetheless a former Japanese army colonel, an ultranationalist, and a fanatic believer in the yamato-damashii. He founded the terrorist organization in 1942, after a confrontation between Japanese immigrants and Brazilians in Marília; his initial goal was to convince other Nikkeijin to commit acts of sabotage. The narrator reveals that a few months before the Japanese surrender, Shindō Renmei created a list of hundreds of Makegumi to be eliminated. Its first terrorist attacks targeted the properties of silk producers and mint growers, whose products were thought to be aiding the Allies in making parachutes and explosives. The attacks began in early 1943.

In *Saga*, Carlos Masakazu Fukugawa is included in Shindō Renmei's blacklist. The terrorist organization considers him a traitor because, besides being married to a gaijin, he dared to call a meeting in Campos do Jordão to assure his Japanese audience that Japan had lost the war. Hiromiti Suzuki, the same man who advised Carlos not to marry Maria de Lourdes, warns the protagonist about the impending threat, but only as a favor to his father. Henceforth, Carlos goes to work at the hospital accompanied by bodyguards. As mentioned in the novel, by the time the terrorist campaign was over, numerous Nikkeijin had been arrested, imprisoned, or deported. Other Kachigumi committed suicide after realizing that they had been deceived by compatriots who assured them that the emperor wanted them to sell their property and return to Japan or its occupied territories.

All considered, beyond the exploration of racial discrimination, miscegenation, transculturation and tradition, *Saga* is primarily a celebration of Nikkei sociocultural and economic success in Brazil. Although the author does not refrain from recalling the darkest pages in his group's history, including Shindō Renmei's terrorism and its racist discrimination against mestizos, Okinawans and non-Nikkei Brazilians, readers are left with a most favorable

impression of Brazilian Nikkeijin. The last chapter in particular, dedicated to the Yonsei generation, leaves no doubt about their socioeconomic success and complete integration into mainstream society. It may be argued that the plot contains two lessons or messages, in addition to its apology for cultural integration. One is that as important as it is to preserve cultural and ethnic traditions, it should never be an excuse for racial discrimination; the other is the dissemination of cultural translations aimed at encouraging readers to familiarize themselves with (and preserve) Japanese and Nikkei cultural traditions.

The four generations of this family are a synecdoche of the Brazilian Nikkeijin's experience, as a minority and migrant group, in negotiating its cultural differences through many years. In fact, this type of literature becomes a tool for such cultural and identitarian negotiations, one that ultimately provides a voice for Nikkei collective agency. Plausibly, behind the words of the most progressive and tolerant characters is the implicit author's not-so-veiled articulation of his opinions and ideas, including the celebration of miscegenation, transculturation and sociocultural integration. This articulation stands counter to that of the Issei characters who arrived in Brazil at the beginning of the immigration process and of some Nikkei elders today.

Lesser indicates that "most Nikkei subjects see Brazil as their national center. Many majority Brazilians, however, continue to imagine that Japan is the 'homeland' for Nikkei" (*Discontented* 150). Ultimately, *Saga*, like other works by Japanese Latin American authors, presents a claim for national belonging: the transnational Nikkei and, by extension, all Asian communities in Brazil must be added to the national imaginary, alongside the larger communities of European, African, and indigenous descent. Yet we will have to wait for other cultural production to find a more openly antiessentialist approach, as certain passages of *Saga* tend to offer a homogenous vision of what it is to be a Nikkeijin that brings the novel dangerously close to the Nihonjinron genre, as opposed to considering the possibility of multiple identities. Inoue's discourse navigates, in numerous passages, between a proassimilationism approach and a cultural celebration of Nikkei sociocultural and economic success reminiscent of the "model minority" myth.

From mostly male perspectives in the first two chapters of this book, the next chapter historicizes the significant contributions of Nikkei girls and women to the collective construction of Nikkei discourses, as well as of

social and ethnic identities. Like the male ones, these fictional female experiences are often weighed down by nostalgia and intergenerational conflicts, but this time with the added challenge of the struggle for emancipation from stultifying patriarchal social structures.

## NOTES

1. Although "Okinawa" is the name of the main island of the Ryūkyūan Archipelago, it is also used to refer to the entire archipelago and "Okinawan" often refers to the people from both the main and outer islands.

2. Coincidentally, Inoue's character and this political scientist share the same surname.

3. "Como um autêntico samurai" (220).

4. "—Você é mestiço . . . Por isso, leva vantagem em muitos pontos. Mas eu . . .—Bancou a cabeça negativamente e murmurou:—A cara não ajuda." (222). These last words, "—A cara não ajuda . . . ," appear in numerous other Nikkei texts.

5. "—Olhe para mim! O que você vê? Um japonês! Não mais do que um japonês! Se eu estiver com roupas civis, facilmente serei confundido com um verdureiro ou com um tintureiro!" (223).

6. "—Quando tenho de conversar com um japonês, a expressão de seu rosto no instante em que digo meu nome é mais do que suficiente para me mostrar que não estou sendo bem recebido" (225).

7. "Costuma-se dizer que no Brasil, país com mistura de raças, pode haver preconceito racial, mas não há descriminação racial. Isso não mudou até os dias de hoje" (209).

8. "Os japoneses são muito mais introspectivos do que os ocidentais. Isso, de certa maneira, chega a nos assustar. É terrível conversar com alguém que não manifesta na fisionomia os sentimentos. E vocês são especialistas nisso!" (156–57).

9. Tellingly, in an article titled "Casamento Inter-racial," originally published in *Jornal Paulista* and later included in *Toda uma Vida no Brasil*, Katsuzō Yamamoto defends mixed marriages as an example of international fraternization. Yet, he concludes the article by confessing that had he had offspring, he would have recommended them to give preference of persons of Japanese ancestry.

10. "—Você nem deve pensar em se casar com uma *gaijin*. Seria o mesmo que nos trair, significaria que você está desprezando todas as moças de nossa raça" (153).

11. "—Japonês se casa com japonês, minha filha . . . Eles são completamente diferente de nós! Vivem num mundo à parte, não fazem amigos entre os brasileiros, não pensam como nós . . . São interesseiros, ambiciosos, o dinheiro sempre fala

mais alto, não respeitam as mulheres, fazem-nas trabalhar como escravas . . . Para eles, ter uma concubina é coisa natural, alguns chegam a ter várias mulheres ao mesmo tempo, como os árabes! Não são católicos, acreditam e cultuam o diabo! E o pior é que eles se acham muito superiores, quando na realidade não passam de trabalhadores braçais" (154–55).

12. "—Não adianta—queixou-se para a esposa.—Os japoneses não consideram nossos filhos japoneses. Parece que, para eles, Nelson e Yoko sempre serão *ainokos*.

> Maria de Lourdes sorriu, deu um beijo no marido e falou:
>
> —Pelo menos, a 'colônia' *gaijin* aceita muito bem as crianças . . . Basta ver como elas estão felizes na escola e como conseguiram fazer amigos em tão pouco tempo!" (184).

13. "Estava se vestindo quando, num relance, conseguiu estabelecer a ligação entre a imagem do advogado que acabara de conhecer e o 'japonês-não-japonês' que ele lembrava.

> —É isso!—exclamou.—Tom Cruise! Tom Cruise no filme *O Último Samurai*!" (252).

14. In *Saga*, intraethnic racism is not limited to the Nikkeijin. Ryumi's nanny, an Afro-Brazilian woman he calls Tia Rosa, disapproves of his engagement to Maria Rita because she is mulatto. Tia Rosa seemingly worries about his family's reaction: "she's a pretty woman . . . But she's still black!" ("—E uma mulher bonita . . . Mas não deixa de ser negra!" [281]). Tia Rosa internalizes the racism of the Nikkei minority and of Brazilian society.

15. "Um dos mais importantes elementos do quadro de guerrilheiros da VPR" (*Saga* 208).

16. We learn in *Saga* that, since Mário Japa was one of the few people who knew about the existence and location of the guerrilla training site in Registro, in the state of São Paulo, Lamarca decided to abduct Nobuo Okuchi, the Japanese consul in São Paulo, to exchange him for Mário Japa and four other guerrilla members.

17. "—Jamais poderei pagar o que o senhor está fazendo por mim, Fukugawa-san—disse Chiba para o médico.—Morrerei em *onghiri* com o senhor" (193).

18. Although the *Oxford English Dictionary* states that the term mulatto is "now chiefly considered offensive," many people disagree, as one could read on the website in 2008, before it disappeared.

19. "—É impossível dizer de que lado a discriminação e o preconceito foram maiores. Na verdade, japoneses e brasileiros apenas conviviam, não se aceitavam muito bem. Para os nipônicos, os brasileiros é que eram os estrangeiros, para você ter uma ideia . . . E, para os brasileiros, os japoneses formavam um povo misterioso, cheio de tradições diferentes, dono de uma cultura e de uma sensibilidade muito superiores à média dos brasileiros, melhor dizendo, dos ocidentais de modo geral" (285).

20. "Jurei para mim mesmo que, apesar de estar me casando com uma *gaijin*, não deixaria que as tradições de meus ancestrais morressem" (302).

21. "—As tradições, na realidade, derivam de regras que foram criadas para que os seres humanos ditos civilizados possam melhor gerenciar as próprias condutas. Das tradições, por sua vez, derivaram os preconceitos, que nada mais são do que as manifestações de repúdio a tudo aquilo que, de uma forma ou de outra, transgrede uma tradição" (303).

22. "Temos medo de nossa união não ser aceita pela sociedade em que vivemos e, por causa disso, fugimos da situação . . .—Com isso, nós estamos alimentando o preconceito, estamos municiando aqueles que nos discriminam" (304).

23. "Vingança. Ohno não esqueceu o que passou. Não esqueceu o ódio por você. Simplesmente esperou a oportunidade para praticar o *katakiuchi*" (217).

24. "Para muitos japoneses, e até mesmo para seus descendentes, como é o caso de Ohno, nós simplesmente não existimos" (203).

25. For example, the ninety-four-year-old Carlos's decision to create a Tsukiyama-style Japanese garden provides an opportunity to explore, sometimes in footnotes, Japanese people's traditional relationship with their natural environment. Thus, in the first page of the novel, we learn that Tsukiyama style tries to show nature in miniature to encourage contemplation and meditation through balance and harmony.

26. "Gerado da impossibilidade de proporcionar aos filhos a educação japonesa adequada e, por outro lado, o desejo de evitar que estes também experimentem o sofrimento, as amargas experiências impostas por obstáculos culturais e econômicos que tiveram de enfrentar no país adotivo" (Tsukamoto 27).

27. "Os imigrantes partilhavam juntamente com seus compatriotas de uma imagem positiva, solidamente desenvolvida, de si próprios como japoneses. Tal sentimento se manifesta explícita ou implicitamente na forma do 'espírito japonês' (*yamato damashi*) e na convicção de que o japonês é capaz de enfrentar e vencer a adversidade. Consideram-se aptos a trabalhar árdua e inteligentemente, a dominar a situação e a encontrar soluções adequadas. Essa auto-imagem positiva é ainda mais ressaltada no além-mar pela comparação do que consideram sua própria polidez 'civilizada' e finesse como os aspectos 'rudes' que eles encontram na cultura estrangeira. Nós, como 'povo,' somos distintos 'deles' que são considerados 'primitivos' (*geshijin*) ou 'selvagens' (*yabanjin*)" (47–48).

28. Mirian Lie Hatanaka's 2001 chronicle collection *Olhar* is an extreme example.

29. "—Não temos de ser considerados iguais, mesmo porque não somos iguais a eles. Nós somos superiores, e é isso que teremos que mostrar!" (79).

30. "—Temos de mostrar que somos superiores. Somos os melhores em tudo. O segundo lugar não é mais do que uma derrota" (127).

31. "Os japoneses são quietos, submissos, pacíficos e extremamente bem-educados e respeitadores. E, sobretudo, são trabalhadores incansáveis. Muitas vezes eu os vi trabalhando à noite, à luz de lampiões" (68).

32. "No entanto, estupefato, viu aqueles japoneses simplesmente baixar a cabeça, juntar as mãos diante da testa e silenciar. Somente Yoshiro e sua mulher permitiram-se derramar algumas lágrimas, também em silêncio. (87).

33. "—Você *está* nervosa. Só que está se esforçando para não demonstrar . . . Está fazendo o papel de japonesa e escondendo ao máximo seus sentimentos" (284).

34. The concept of enryo is related to good manners. One can use self-restraint in language or actions to be considerate with others (abstaining from smoking or rejecting an invitation, for example). It can also refer to declining a request or refusing something in an indirect manner.

35. "Não destruímos; ao contrário, respeitamos a natureza. O que, na verdade, tem tudo a ver com o xintoísmo, a única religião genuinamente japonesa" (143).

36. "Militares de mente mais aberta" (218).

37. "Simplesmente não se incomodavam com a vitória ou derrota de seu país de origem, tendo efetivamente assumido o Brasil como pátria" (*Saga* 167).

38. "Criar nos países onde a colônia japonesa começava a ser significativa, tanto do ponto de vista demográfico como de econômico, núcleos de resistência à dominação política e cultural do Ocidente" (*Saga* 168).

# 3

# FEMALE AGENCY, NOSTALGIA, AND GENERATIONAL GAPS

This chapter focuses on cultural production that highlights generational gaps between Issei and Nisei, as well as the role and experiences of Nikkei women during the processes of immigration and integration into Brazilian society. Literature and film, therefore, contribute to offset the dearth of information about the role of women during the immigration process. The Issei historian, painter, and journalist Tomoo Handa, for instance, only mentions in passing "immigrant women—who, while doing the same work as men in the fields, still had to cook and do the laundry."[1] In this context, while ethnic communities often function as a defense mechanism or a safe refuge where individuals feel protected from outside dangers, these communities may also become a site of hierarchical control or a prison house where individual are repressed, particularly in the case of women. The Meiji construction of the concepts of Japaneseness and "the Japanese spirit," the empire of Japan's political propaganda, the family unit, patriarchal ethnic traditions, Japanese-language schools, and ethnic associations all became ideological and, on occasions, repressive apparatuses that impinged on the Nisei's individual liberty and will.

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## A MALE-MEDIATED VOICE FOR NIKKEI WOMEN IN *NIHONJIN*

Sansei Oscar Nakasato's (1963–) first novel, *Nihonjin* (Japanese, 2011), treats Japanese immigration to Brazil, cultural identity, female agency, and resistance to patriarchal attitudes among Nikkeijin.[2] Its cognitive standpoint is noteworthy: in an interview with Wilame Prado, Nakasato confesses that the inspiration for *Nihonjin* was his disappointment, at the time of his research for his doctoral dissertation, with the dearth of Nikkei characters in Brazilian literature.[3] Using information he collected on Japanese immigration to Brazil, he began to compose the novel. Initially, he set out to fill a lacuna in Brazilian literature that, by contrast, included a substantial body of works on, among other groups, Portuguese, Italian, German, and Jewish immigrations. This intervention reveals his awareness of the power of representation, that is, a visualization of Japanese immigration within the context of other immigrant experiences; it also reflects the Nikkeijin's hunger for increased visibility in the national imaginary. Perhaps, to Nakasato, representation is the enactment of a sociopolitical will to recognition and to power.

An unnamed narrator (later we find out that he is the grandson of one of the characters in the novel, named Hideo Inabata, and the son of another one, named Sumie) does not allow for suspension of disbelief, particularly at the beginning of the novel. In a metaliterary move, the narrative voice, speaking in the present, makes it clear that he is imagining how Kimie, his grandfather's first wife, must have been, since he knows little about her except what he gleaned from conversations with his grandfather and his uncle. The narrator even suggests plausible intertextualities by admitting to have found sources of inspiration for his characters in samurai films and Tomoo Handa's *Memórias de um Imigrante Japonês no Brasil*. There are, therefore, no claims to an accurate retelling of historical facts, even though the plot is based on the actual immigration process. Yet, to increase the plot's sense of authenticity, in *Nihonjin*—unlike *Saga* and other novels examined here—the narrator uses Japanese words (even an entire epigraph) without subordinating them to the intrusion of Portuguese translations or explanations. This type of untranslated code switching is another political act that inscribes alterity as well as cultural difference and (internal) colonial difference in the text, by suggesting metonymically that a particular Japanese experience or concept cannot easily be translated into the Portuguese language or explained within Brazilian culture.

The critical reception of *Nihonjin* reveals the expectations that readers and critics alike often have of Latin American writers of Asian descent.[4] For example, José Castello, in a review of the novel, strives to look for "Japanese" elements in the writings of Nakasato, a Sansei: "Nakasato's choice of a dry and balanced style evokes, in a way, the mystique attached to the Japanese temperament, always judicious ('zen'), without allowing itself to be shaken by extremes, and characterized by a cautious behavior in accordance with protocol."[5] Castello proceeds to describe Nakasato as "a discreet writer, who derives his style from his own shyness and caution."[6] These contrived assumptions reveal the essentialist outlook of this ethnic group that *Nihonjin* is trying to avoid.

## THE IMMIGRATION PROCESS

The initial chapters of *Nihonjin* address "push" factors that encouraged mass migration. We are reminded, for example, that to support Japanese industrialization and modernization, the government raised farmers' taxes to such an extent that fearing destitution, many decided to emigrate. According to Hideo Inabata, a protagonist in the novel, only large landowners made a profit from agriculture in Japan then; other migrants heading for Brazil also lament that their penury is the result of the U.S. decision to stop importing Japanese silk. Another push factor stated was the emperor's encouragement of "temporary" migration as a patriotic duty.

*Nihonjin*, like other texts, re-creates the early immigrants' dream of becoming wealthy in a period of four or five years before returning to Japan. It also notes that a peculiar historical phenomenon took place after migrants left their homeland to find work in a far less technologically advanced country. Thus, a migrant on the ship, a pessimistic artist, voices his doubts about the host country: "An underdeveloped country, where epidemics are possible. No one was told whether doctors would be available should someone fall sick."[7] The novel therefore reflects how, while working and living under extremely poor conditions, Japanese immigrants retained an undeniable pride in a history and culture (often in their race) they felt to be superior to that of Brazilians.[8]

Some of the conflicts among the characters arise as an outcome of the Brazilian government's decision to accept only families with a minimum of

three adults able to work in the coffee plantations. In this regard, Christopher Reichl indicates, "When Ie (household) ties were suspended or broken by immigration, they were frequently replaced in Brazil with fictive relationships created for both administrative and social purposes. The Brazilian authorities required that only families could migrate to Brazil, so many 'false' families were created on the immigrant ships en route to the port of Santos. Reichl further elaborates: 'Kin ties broken by immigration were replaced by fictive kin relations with those from the same prefecture . . . and those who worked together for the first year after immigration.'" (qtd. in Masterson and Funada-Classen 80)[9] *Nihonjin* reflects a phenomenon that was common during the first years of immigration. The couple, Hideo and Kimie, lives under the same roof with Hideo's friend, Jintaro, who feigns to be a relative. In spite of her few protestations to her husband, Kimie resigns herself to live with a stranger who will eventually become her occasional lover. Tomoo Handa recalls the suspicion that this type of family arrangement arose among Brazilians: "They were seen with contempt by the plantation clerks and other workers, who suspected that the Japanese were barbarous people with families structured around a woman and several husbands."[10]

In addition, a reason is given as to why some immigrants never returned to Japan, even though they saved enough money to purchase travel fares. The uncompromising Hideo, for example, feels that returning is a matter of both pride and shame: "Hideo would not subject himself to the humiliation of returning to Japan in the same condition as when he left," explains his second wife, Shizue.[11] This attitude reflects real-life official pressures: "Before leaving the port of Kobe, these Brazil-bound Japanese and Okinawan immigrants were addressed by a representative of the Japanese government, who warned them that they should 'not disgrace Japan' and that if they did not succeed they should not return to Japan, even in death" (Masterson and Funada-Classen 44).

## JAPANESE RESISTANCE

*Nihonjin* acquaints the reader with Japanese traditional customs, again highlighting strong work ethics as the signature trait of the national character. Japanese organization and politeness are also contrasted with those perceived to be inferior in other immigrant groups. These qualities, however, should

not be confused with submissiveness or docility, as Hideo, for example, demands fair prices at the plantation's only grocery store; he also leads his fellow Japanese laborers in their complaint that the Italian foreman is reserving the best trees for his countrymen. Reflecting historical tendencies among Japanese farmers in Brazil, Hideo's family, fed up with the ill treatment and exploitation, rents a small plot of land where they no longer have to take orders from foremen. Years later, while living in São Paulo, Hideo becomes a symbol of Japanese resistance, after confronting a white supremacist and nativist who is urging the Brazilian government to deport all Japanese; in the bigot's view, they are trying to take over the world. Moreover, this episode reflects how Japan's aggressive imperialism affected the image of the Nikkeijin, who were perceived as hostile and as potential internal enemies.

Tetsundo Tsukamoto emphasized, in 1958, the centrality of a Japanese education for Nikkei families in Brazil, which was part of their obsession with the Japanese spirit and their children's social mobility: "The Japanese school is where the Japanese spirit is acquired through the teaching of the Japanese language. Moreover, the acquisition of the Japanese spirit must primarily result, in accordance with the mentioned way of thinking, in maintaining a Japanese family system imbued with great respect for parents and the family head's authority."[12] In *Nihonjin*, after the Brazilian government forbids the existence of Japanese schools, Hideo, not accepting Japanese children growing up as *gaijin*, volunteers to teach Japanese, a decision that caused his brief imprisonment. After police officers close his clandestine school, the defiant Hideo congratulates one of his students who had protested the intrusion, telling him in Japanese that he had behaved as a true subject of the emperor. Hideo's demeanor echoes his social group's general attitude toward education. Daniela de Carvalho points out that "in the 1930s, the nationalistic orientation of education towards the promotion of yamato-damashii (the Japanese spirit) was strengthened. The *Nisei* were taught how to be 'good Japanese,' and the *Kyōiku Chokugo* (Imperial Rescript on Education), retained as a 'relic,' guided the education system" (14). The Brazilian government's order to close all Japanese schools was therefore perceived as an epistemicidal attempt by the Nikkeijin, as reflected in the novel.

These episodes of repression are contextualized in *Nihonjin* by, among others, a list of prohibitions to Japanese, Italian and German immigrants, arguments made by Nippophobic politicians and journalists, and accounts of

the imprisonment of Japanese immigrants. Through his grandfather's memories, the young narrator indicates how Vargas's nationalist government persecuted the Japanese. In several cases, measures taken to turn the Japanese into loyal Brazilian citizens backfired, as the alienated minority increased its nationalism and its ethnic solidarity. In the novel, this repression causes Hideo to join Shindō Renmei:

> The president, wanting the Japanese to become gaijin, wanted what is impossible: Japanese betrayal of their fatherland. But the more pressure the government exerted, the more they felt Nihonjin.
>
> —Those were tough times—ojiichan [grandfather] remembered.
>
> That's why he joined Shindō Renmei, the Subject Path League.[13]

This passage exemplifies how the narrator often opts for a neutral position, avoiding the temptation to judge his grandfather's numerous mistakes.

## FEMALE AGENCY AGAINST PATRIARCHY

Nikkei novels often include abnegated female characters who are victimized by the patriarchal attitudes of their fathers, husbands, and older brothers. In Laura Honda-Hasegawa's novel *Sonhos Bloqueados*, for example, we find Kimiko, the narrator and protagonist, whose father forces her to stay at home and take care of her younger siblings after her mother dies. He then sends Kimiko to the city of São Paulo to help her sister Teresa, who is in medical school. Finally, her father marries her to a Nikkeijin named Yukio, who has an illegitimate child and whom she will eventually divorce. Throughout the plot, the passive Kimiko submissively accepts her fate, as noticeable in the following passage: "Her studies consumed all of Teresa's time. She was confined all day in the classroom, in the lab, in the library. I compared her to Ms. Miyuki, always within the four walls of the small room, crocheting. Just thinking about the two made me feel suffocated; I couldn't wait to go out, run outdoors, feel the warmth of the sun and smell the dirt and the bushes . . . There was no way out, I had always been and would be a hick!"[14]

An even more conservative and submissive image of Nikkei women appears in the chronicle "Mulheres" (Women), included by Nikkei journalist Mirian Lie Hatanaka in her collection *Olhar* (Looking, 2001). After acrimoniously pointing out that more than 50 percent of marriages within the Nikkei

community are interethnic, the author stresses the good fortune of those gaijin who marry Nikkei women: "And even luckier are 'gaijin' husbands. My friend's husband, at naptime, did not even have to ask his Nikkei wife where the sheet was. My friend had already arranged the bed for her husband, and just in case he needed it, the bath towel was already at hand. Like our mothers do for our fathers. And like our daughters will do to their future husbands, regardless of their ancestry or nationality. Very naturally."[15] Not surprisingly, in another chronicle titled "Miai," included in the same collection, Lie Hatanaka defends this Japanese traditional custom (literally meaning "looking at each other") of matchmaking and arranged marriages.

By contrast, in what is perhaps the novel's most original approach, *Nihonjin* explores the subversion of patriarchal authority by four female characters: an Issei, a Nisei, an Afro-Brazilian, and a Euro-Brazilian. These characters question the deeply rooted nature of Nikkei gender inequality, as well as traditional gender roles, characterized by a strong patriarchal sense. Although the novel's author and narrator are male, the overall approach is openly antimasculinist. The new subject-position of these women and their challenge to their relatives' masculinism are often perceived of as a rejection of Japanese culture and traditions, as they ostensibly bypass filial duty, respect, and piety. For example, male characters in *Nihonjin* are shocked when initially having to confront progressive changes in the structured patterns of gender, such as the rejection of *miai*, the traditional arranged marriage, and *nakōdo* (marriage go-betweens). In spite of a Nikkei patriarchal mindset with entrenched social traditions, these modern female characters exhibit a stronger awareness of gender inequality, together with a disposition to rebel against male social privilege and socially constructed moral authority. These subversive steps that challenge oppressive male authority guide the movement toward achieving greater gender equality in their communities.

Rita Silva, in her review of *Nihonjin*, "Tradição e Transgressão," highlights the transgressions of Japanese traditions carried out by Kimie and Sumie. As mentioned, the first-person narrator tries to reconstruct the image of Kimie through his grandfather's and uncle's memories. An old photograph pictures her as a short, thin woman with frightened eyes. The narrator imagines her, in comparison to her husband's samurai-like attributes, as a sensitive, vulnerable, almost ethereal, too physically weak for farm labor. To her husband's consternation, Kimie's condition, resulting from her homesickness and

inability to adapt to the new reality, is symbolically represented by an incongruous obsession: "I thought of her as a character, as someone conceived while waiting for it to snow at a plantation in the interior of the state of São Paulo," clarifies the narrator.[16] Following patriarchal traditions, she always eats after the two men in the household finish; her seemingly submissive behavior, however, is disrupted by occasional moments of resistance that her husband dismisses: "she was very silly, Kimichan."[17]

Kimie's first act of rebellion against patriarchy is her friendship with Maria, an Afro-Brazilian healer who falls into the "magical negro" stock character category. When Hideo finds out, he scolds his wife, telling her that blacks are lesser people, but she dares to contradict him, insisting that they work as hard as the Japanese.[18] Strengthening this alliance between racialized women against patriarchy and gender subordination, Maria defies Hideo in his house and convinces him to allow her to heal a sick Kimie. Later, humiliated by his debt of gratitude (the Japanese concept of *on*) to someone he considers an inferior being, he gives Maria produce from his orchard, yet again forbids his wife to interact with Afro-Brazilians.

Kimie's second and riskier revolt against her husband is her adulterous relationship with Jintaro, Hideo's friend, who shares the house with the couple. A sensitive man who writes evocative poetry, Jintaro disapproves of Hideo's tyranny and treatment of Kimie. Whereas Hideo mocks Kimie's waiting for it to snow in Brazil, Jintaro compassionately explains to her that it does not snow in that part of the world. After four consecutive winters of waiting, Kimie begins to hallucinate, telling Jintaro that she sees her brothers playing in the snow; then one night, she meets a poetical death, running outside to enjoy the snow:

> Late that night, the fever worsened. She wanted to see the snow. Hideo was snoring alongside her. She rose, walked to the living room door and opened the door. The snow covered the ground. She went outside, ran until she reached the coffee plantation, then ran among the coffee trees, feeling the snow fall on her head, on her shoulders. She ran for a long time, now the star of the show, stretching her arms, she, who had always preferred to stay by the window. Eventually, feeling tired, she sat down on the cold ground. Death came slowly. How long did it take for her to die? Peaceful, frozen by the snow, frozen by the sun.[19]

This dramatic passage presents a case of an incapacitating nostalgia that prevents the character from surviving amid adverse circumstances. In the words of Slavic and comparative literature scholar Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgic time is that time-out-of-time of daydreaming and longing that jeopardizes one's timetables and work ethic" (xix). Kimie's scene is also reminiscent of another one in *Yawara!* where, after a delusional vision of Mount Fuji in Brazil, Kenhiti and Akemi jump off a cliff. The passage's lyricism in *Nihonjin* reveals the affection that both the unnamed narrator and the author feel for the character. While Kimie is an example of a character who fails to adapt to the host country's circumstances, she is not so weak and soft as Hideo claims; she defies his patriarchal attitude first by befriending a black woman against his will and then by being unfaithful to him. As Silva points out, "Even when Kimie betrays her husband with Jintaro, that transgression is presented in a positive way, because it takes place within the discourse of a personal need that Hideo, her husband, would never be able to understand. It is noteworthy that, although the character reiterates her honesty, never does she show remorse or to be undergoing a crisis of conscience."[20] Even her suicide could be interpreted as a third example of resistance against her husband's mistreatment and patriarchal attitude.

This use of memory and nostalgia, particularly when dealing with homesickness, is common in Nikkei cultural production. According to Katharina Niemeyer, the selective recalling of cherished moments or places in order to cope with the trauma of displacement may sometimes involve a simultaneous yearning for a different future, an "interlinking imagination of the future" (1). I argue that a collective yearning for an imagined future does exist in many Nikkei narrations of nostalgia: authors and characters may invoke a sometimes idealized past to enhance a sense of Nikkei commonality, one that may in turn be a way to increase access to sociopolitical agency, celebrate cultural difference and (internal) colonial difference, or even propose their ethnic group as a model to follow. This collective nostalgia, however, may involve fictional memories or strategic societal amnesia. In Niemeyer's words, nostalgia "involves two different directions in which the relation of memory and nostalgia might lead. It can be seen as being essential and useful to maintaining identities . . . and also as a factor of social amnesia" (5). She then adds another type of nostalgia, a "false" nostalgia: "a pleasure-seeking yearning for former times that we have not, in fact, lived" (9). In

Nikkei cultural production, this type of nostalgia explains the cases of Nikkei (often dekasegi) characters' yearning for their parents' or grandparents' country, even if they never visited it. Dennis Walder, in *Postcolonial Nostalgias*, addresses the uses of nostalgia in colonial and postcolonial writing as a means to recover the lost histories of colonized and colonizer: "When it becomes especially noticeable is during the rise of nationalist feeling in the colonized and decolonizing territories, as writers seek to transform their sense of cultural disinheritance and loss into new identities for themselves and their communities" (16). Nostalgia can therefore be translated into a source of creative discourses that reshape cultural identities or propose alternative sociopolitical futures for both the Nikkeijin and the remaining Brazilian nation. Walder explains that "not only is nostalgia deeply implicated in the political life of people, it is a part of the historical sense of themselves" (4). Indeed, it is often through these discourses of nostalgia and melancholy that Nikkei writers recreate or invent their ethnic past, present, and future.

Returning to *Nihonjin*, we find Sumie, an even more rebellious female character who is Hideo's daughter and the narrator's mother. Initially introduced as a typical Nisei daughter in São Paulo's Liberdade neighborhood, her demeanor changes after she realizes that there is no sign of love in her parents' marriage: "Yes, she [her mother] was happy: she had a good, hard-working husband who maintained his people's customs in the family; she had six healthy children who worked without complaining, who gave her grandchildren who ran throughout the house and went to the undōkai."[21] Some time later, Sumie falls in love with Fernando, a Euro-Brazilian man, and considers eloping, knowing that her xenophobic father, Hideo, would never approve their relationship. After her elder brother Hanashiro finds out, he warns her about the suffering her eloping would bring to the family and reminds her of Sanae, a Nikkei neighbor rumored to have become a prostitute, after eloping with a Euro-Brazilian man who ended up leaving her alone with their son. As a result, a temporarily submissive Sumie forfeits her love for Fernando, justifying the decision to him by explaining her ethnic group's cultural traditions: "She explained *on* to him. It was a duty, a commitment of loyalty. She was a daughter; a daughter has parents, and above all a father. She was a sister, a sister of an older brother. That's how it was."[22] Soon thereafter, Hideo marries Sumie to the patriarchal and traditional Ossamu Hidemitsu, an Issei (the narrator's father) whom she does not love and who does not allow her to work outside the home.

Ten years later, however, Sumie ends her submissiveness by leaving her husband and children for Fernando: "She wrote a short letter to her husband telling him that he was a good man and an exemplary husband, that the children were good but, nonetheless, she was unhappy; consequently, she was leaving to live with the man she loved, the man with whom she should have been for the last ten years, the man her father would not accept because he was gaijin."[23] Now, individual desire overcomes motherly instincts along with Nikkei collective orientation and social mandate. Sumie defies not only the hierarchical and patrilineal nature of her social group, but also the expected loyalty to one's family and ethnic group. She rebels against a prescribed female domesticity, refusing to abide by the gendered domains of the public and the private. To contextualize the daring nature of Sumie's decision, in 1967, the anthropologist Francisca Isabel Schurig Vieira defined Nikkei perception of miscegenation thus: "Mixed marriages are, therefore, not only a threat to traditional familial patterns, but also to group relations based on the familial model and to the ethnic group's order and permanence. This type of marriage alters the ethnic group, disaggregating it through the breakage of family and group solidarity."[24] Sumie's individualism is also introduced in the plot as a sign of her eventual Brazilianization.

Six years later, after Fernando dies, Sumie visits Ossamu and the children. When Ossamu criticizes her for acting like a gaijin, Sumie ratifies the loss of male control by calmly affirming her own Japaneseness and stressing that she never regretted her decision: "And had she given up the man she loved for her children, these would have been the cause of her unhappiness. It would have been unfair. Everyone judged her, put the blame on her, but she felt no guilt."[25] Later, Sumie tries to visit her parents, but her father does not let her in as his wife weeps in the living room. This is the price Sumie has to pay for defying her ethnic group's cultural norms; however, she will die free, proud, and true to herself. Therefore, Sumie defies *on* tradition (debt, obligation and, in this case, filial piety, the debt she owes her parents) and refuses to apologize for past behavior as well—she does, however, admit that leaving her children was a traumatic experience for her.

Through their behavior, the Issei Kimie and the Nisei Sumie challenge the stereotype of the docile Nikkei wife or daughter, often associated with the exotic and subservient geisha. Their transgressions, while perceived by other Nikkei characters as cultural and familial betrayal, do not make

them negative characters (the narrator, having grown up motherless, exhibits no resentment toward the behavior of his mother, Sumie); on the contrary, their agency makes them brave women who cast aside the oppressive ethnocultural structures that prevented them from feeling accomplished as human beings.

## GENERATIONAL GAPS

Another source of conflict found in Nikkei literature is the intergenerational cultural gap, mostly between Issei parents and their Nisei offspring but, sometimes, among other generations as well. This cultural production suggests that before World War II, some Issei saw Nisei as inferior, in part because these interacted with Brazilian neighbors and classmates, or had difficulties understanding the Japanese language and cultural norms (Japanese spirit). This literature also discusses the traumatic period of World War II, a turning point after which integration into Brazilian mainstream society gradually became a Nikkei collective goal, in particular in regard to the Nisei because higher education was understood to be the best path for social mobility. Thus, Tsugio Shindo claims: "From Japan's defeat came the decision of establishing permanent residence in Brazil—this radical 180° shift provided stability to the immigrants' lives and later boosted their economic prosperity."[26] Along these lines, the Brazilian anthropologist (and former first lady) Ruth Corrêa Leite Cardoso explains, in a 1950 article, that "the collapse of Imperial Japan, combatant and invincible, and the increased focus on Brazil, where immigrants were beginning to be successful, were the immediate factors that gave rise to an awareness of the Nisei's link with Brazil."[27] Eventually, as *Nihonjin* makes clear, Japanese immigrants came to terms with the fact that their children were Brazilians and not Japanese, though they were expected to respect parts of the Japanese value system.

In *Nihonjin*, Hideo expresses his frustration at seeing how two of his six children, Haruo and Sumie, become Brazilianized and increasingly alien to Japanese traditions. A stern disciplinarian and active member of Shindō Renmei, he does not tolerate dissent within his family and ethnic group.[28] As a result, he not only alienates two of his children, but also his wife Kimie, who dies at a young age. Whereas Kimie and Sumie embody female subversion, Nakasato turns Haruo (Sumie's brother and the narrator's uncle) into

the male representative of the generational conflict between Issei and Nisei, which becomes somewhat oedipal. Although his classmates insult him and mock his appearance, Haruo prefers to play with children of other ethnic groups. In fact, when his father expels him from the house for a week because of his misbehaving at the Japanese school (*kinshin*, a traditional punishment), Haruo enjoys staying at an Italian friend's house, where he learns about Italian culture, language, and cuisine. Incidentally, author Nakasato may have derived inspiration for this young character from his own adolescence, since, in an interview with Wilame Prado, he recalls: "My relationship with Japan or with Japanese culture was conflictive during my adolescence, a period when I underwent a denial phase of my roots. Then, I tried to make friends with those of non-Japanese descent and was interested in Western culture."[29]

Haruo's Brazilian teacher insists that he should feel proud of being Brazilian and reminds him that, born in Brazil, he is not Japanese. Haruo's elder brother, Hitoshi, unsuccessfully tries to disambiguate the situation by explaining that they are Japanese at home and Brazilian at school. Haruo, confused, decides to tell his father about the incident while reminding him that he is following his advice to learn all that is taught at school. When an indignant Hideo responds to his son that although he is indeed legally Brazilian, both his facial features and his heart are Japanese, the boy retorts: "What's important is what father is saying, the heart; I feel that my heart is Brazilian."[30] Finding his comment insolent and disrespectful, Hideo punishes him with *yaitō*,[31] while telling him to learn to be Japanese; the proud Haruo does not scream or cry. Subsequently, Hideo confronts Haruo's Brazilian teacher, the fourth strong female character to challenge his authority. Unyielding to his authoritarian tone, she insists that Haruo will continue to be excluded by his classmates until he realizes that he too is Brazilian. She reminds Hideo that at school she is the boss, which opens his eyes: "She reminded him that he was in a land not his own and that, in reality, he was the gaijin."[32] In this scene, despite the teacher's seemingly good intentions, we witness the role of the school as an ideological state apparatus that supersedes that of the patriarchal Japanese family unit. While an again humiliated Hideo considers sending Haruo to a Japanese school, he has a change of heart once he realizes that Brazil is his and his family's permanent country of residence. Therefore, two Brazilian female characters, Haruo's teacher and Maria, his Afro-Brazilian neighbor, also contribute to combat Japanese patriarchy.

The defiant Haruo continues to challenge his father's stultifying authority as well as his social group's patriarchal values by insisting on having his female relatives sit at the table with the males: "We cannot live in Brazil as if it were Japan, mom."[33] Incapable of convincing his parents to shed their traditional ways, Haruo still insists on his generation's need to live in the present and in harmony with the new circumstances, rather that in their parents' memories. His repeated declarations of loyalty to his native Brazil—a common and crucial message in much of Nikkei cultural production—ultimately damage his relationship with his father. He quotes, for example, a Nikkei newspaper article penned by his friend Cassio Kenro Shimomoto: "Brazilian descendants of Japanese have a great responsibility toward the Brazilian nation . . . How can we love our ancestors' land if we don't even know it? At best, we can have a feeling of respect for our parents' fatherland, but never feel patriotism about the land of chrysanthemums."[34] Incidentally, this passage is taken from the "chrysanthemum incident," a 1935 newspaper article published by the Nisei Shimomoto, which tried to rearticulate Nisei self-definition. Haruo, therefore, becomes the author's mouthpiece in the defense of sociocultural integration into Brazilian mainstream society.

Haruo's fearless attitude, however, eventually leads to his violent death. As an adult, he receives death threats after publicly challenging Shindō Renmei in an article that refutes the emperor's divine nature and criticizes the collective delirium of those who still believe that Japan won World War II. After reading the article, Hideo tells his son Haruo that he is no longer welcome in his house and scornfully asks him whether he can still sing the "Kimigayo" (the Japanese national anthem) or remember the basic principles of the yamato-damashii. The traditional father even urges the son to save his family's honor by committing *seppuku* (ritual suicide by disembowelment), but ends up advising him to flee; that very night, however, a group of Shindō Renmei assassins (*tokkotai*, soldiers in suicide missions) murder Haruo in front of his father.

Consequently, Hideo spends his remaining years overwhelmed by a sense of failure: he feels like an accomplice to his son's assassination; misses his first wife, Kimie, and his daughter, Sumie (who vanished from his life); and feels guilty about his mother's suffering before her death in Japan, always yearning for his return. Nonetheless, while emphasizing the undesirable consequences of refusing cultural integration in Brazil, *Nihonjin* ends in a positive

note: time, suffering, new circumstances, and acknowledging past mistakes have transformed Hideo into a more tolerant and open-minded man. This character's mental change and accommodation to new circumstances synecdochically reflect the transformations and the increased tolerance among Nikkeijin after World War II. In this context, the sociologist Morio Ono stated in 1966 that "with Japan's defeat, the prospect of being unable to find a job after returning home became decisive."[35] Likewise, Corrêa Leite Cardoso includes possible reasons for this adjustment in Japanese Brazilian social values: "*Issei* continue to think in terms of the 'Nipponic soul' that they wish to transmit to their children but, at the same time, the desire for economic success they brought as immigrants and their appreciation of liberal professions and intellectual activities turn them into vacillating educators who do not impose 'Nipponic virtues' rigidly as was once done at the onset of the immigration process."[36] Both personal and historical circumstances, therefore, force Hideo (and by extension, his ethnic group) to abandon the sojourner mentality still held by many immigrants in the mid-1940s.

*Nihonjin*, therefore, places the generational theme—the conflict between the traditional parent and the Westernized offspring—at the forefront of the narrative. This approach, however, runs the risk of falling into the reductionism of limiting Nikkei culture to familial and hierarchical conflicts. In this context, Lisa Lowe, referring to Asian American literature, has warned about the potential danger: "I argue that interpreting Asian American culture exclusively in terms of the master narratives of generational conflict and filial relation essentializes Asian American culture, obscuring the particularities and incommensurabilities of class, gender, and national diversities among Asians. The reduction of the cultural politics of racialized ethnic groups, places social differences into a privatized familial opposition. Such reductions contribute to aestheticizing commodification of Asian American *cultural* differences, while denying the immigrant histories of material exclusion and differentiation" (63; emphasis in the original). In spite of this risk, *Nihonjin* and other Nikkei texts reflect the key moment of the breaking of tradition and cultural practices among generations, of the failure of transmissions of cultural affect (conceived of as a tragic loss by the parents) between immigrant parents and more integrated children. Nisei characters' questioning of filial piety, age hierarchies, and gender roles in the host society becomes a major source of conflict and shame, as well as a leitmotif in Brazilian Nikkei

literature and film. It also exposes the family and the ethnic community as a prison house for new generations, as opposed to its traditional image as a refuge from affronts coming from the wider society.

As proof of Hideo's psychological evolution, toward the novel's end he tries to discourage his grandson, the narrator, from moving to Japan as a temporary worker, because he does not want him to experience the same painful uprootedness he suffered. The narrator, however, proceeds with his plans, and, though it will be his first trip to Japan, he envisions it as a return to the fatherland: "I will not convince them by saying that it is just one more dekasegi job, that being a factory worker is not an end but a means, that no other means exist, and that going to Japan is almost like a return, that, at first chance, I will take off my shoes, step on the white sand, and feel an old interaction, my feet reliving that touch . . . that I will get to the base of Mount Fuji."[37] This ending may be autobiographical because in an interview with Wilame Prado, Nakasato expresses a similar desire: "I hope that some day, like the narrator in *Nihonjin*, I can go to Japan and feel that 'going' as a 'return.'"[38] Nonetheless, when the narrator asks Hideo whether he wants him to send something from his homeland, he nostalgically answers: "Furusato [hometown, a place of birth or family origin remembered nostalgically] . . . My furusato exists no more."[39] This may be the novel's pessimistic message and warning to potential dekasegi: history repeats itself, as the denouement contrasts the narrator's hope for a better life in the idealized country of his ancestors with his grandfather's hopelessness, disappointment, and loss in Brazil.

Overall, *Nihonjin* provides an original representation of Japanese immigration to Brazil by transforming, thanks to the portrayals of Kimie and Sumie, the stereotypical image of Nikkei women as submissive and passive into that of subversive women who dare to challenge the patriarchal assumptions of their male relatives. Simultaneously, it provides a valuable insight into intergenerational friction throughout the years as a result of the inability to transmit cultural affect from one generation to the next.

## TIZUKA YAMASAKI'S FEMINIZATION OF NIKKEI HISTORY, THE GANBARE SPIRIT, AND THE *TELOS* OF SOCIOCULTURAL ADAPTATION

This subchapter turns to the cinematic imaging of the Nikkeijin in Brazil and the dekasegi in Japan. Film director Tizuka Yamasaki (1949–) was born to

Nikkei parents in Porto Alegre, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Her name, Tizuka, evokes cultural blending. Lesser indicates that "while understood in Brazil to be 'Japanese,' [it] is instead the Brazilianization of the female name Chizuko, with the final *o*, generally indicating a masculine word in Portuguese, changed to a feminine *a*" (63).[40] In *Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade* (*Gaijin, a Brazilian Odyssey*, 1980; henceforth, *Gaijin* I), her first feature film as a director, Yamasaki reenacts the struggles of Japanese immigrants in a coffee plantation in early twentieth-century São Paulo.[41] Elaborating on the place of Nikkeijin in the Brazilian national imaginary, Lesser points out how the Brazilian press considered it a foreign film: *Folha de S. Paulo* "illustrated an article on the Cannes prize awarded to Akira Kurosawa's *Kagemusha* with a photograph from *Gaijin*. Imagine how Yamasaki felt when Marcos Vinício, film critic of São Paulo's *Folha da Tarde*, tried to defend *Gaijin* against critics who rejected it as a Brazilian film by saying, 'It could be assimilated as a mestiço film, or binational'" (*Discontented* 70–72). This story, in contrast to several other Nikkei texts and films, is told from a woman's perspective, the film's narrator, thus bringing to the fore female subjectivity and the contribution of Issei women pioneers to the immigration process. Yamasaki's films represent a drastic change in speaking positions, switching enunciative power to female characters. Along with these female and feminist perspectives, the film's denunciation of the exploitation of rural workers, including those from Brazil's Northeastern region and immigrants of various nationalities, provides the film with documentary traits. Moreover, it was boldly released during the military dictatorship (1964–85). Another achievement is the film's emphasis on the role of immigration in (mestiço) nation building, as well as on ethnic difference, placing the Nikkeijin at the center of conversations about achieving, from an ethnocultural perspective, a more inclusive national identity.

The eventual migration of the protagonist, a Japanese immigrant woman named Titoe (played by the Japanese actor Kyoko Tsukamoto), from a coffee plantation to the city of São Paulo adds to the image of a Nikkei minority well on its way to a harmonious integration into the Brazilian national project.[42] Perhaps more important, toward the film's end, we witness a national allegory of the beginnings of a multicultural nation: Titoe falls in love with a Brazilian named Tonho (Antônio Fagundes), who was an accountant in the coffee plantation and now works as a labor activist. This scene symbolizes

the nascent racial harmony and hybridity of a multiethnic Brazil to which the Nikkeijin are progressively becoming socially integrated. The 1980s newspaper advertisements for the film highlighted this relationship by including a picture of the two smiling actors hugging. The same eulogy to the building of a modern, multicultural nation is advanced in a previous scene, where the Italian political agitator Enrico (Gianfrancesco Guarnieri) points out that Brazil "has it all," with its Japanese, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and German immigrants, besides its indigenous people and blacks.

Inspired by the biographies of Tizuka Yamasaki's mother and grandmother, *Gaijin I* explores Japanese immigrants' difficulties with cultural integration in Brazil through the cinematic microhistory of a family, particularly through Titoe, an increasingly strong woman determined to overcome marginalization and patriarchy. Keeping true to the literal meaning of its subtitle, "Pathways to Liberty," the film denounces the semislavery conditions under which the first Japanese immigrants lived and worked, as well as worker mistreatment by landowners, who moreover refuse to pay agreed-to salaries. The film also proposes an overt teleology of sociocultural adaptation and mestiçagem: the Japanese odyssey in Brazil is ultimately a successful process of integration and transculturation allegorically represented by Titoe's relationship with Tonho.

In Lesser's view, this film and its sequel, *Gaijin: Ama-me como Sou* (*Gaijin 2: Love Me As I Am*, 2005; henceforth, *Gaijin II*), also portray the Nikkeijin as an extension of Japan in Brazil: "[They] suggested that 'Japan' was in 'Brazil' and that sexual mixing would create a new Brazilian race that combined the imagined hard-working community of Japan with the imagined passionate community of Brazil. All played with the idea that ethnicity was biological and that Nikkei were really 'Japanese' in spite of where they were born, the language they spoke, and the cultural forums in which they interacted" (73). If one considers Lesser's analysis of *Gaijin I* film reception, the filmmaker's message may not have come across as she intended: this film did not affect the opinion of majority Brazilians, who perceived the Nikkeijin as being much closer to Japan and its culture than they truly were; the Nikkeijin continued to be viewed as a foreign element in the black-and-white body politics of the nation.

*Gaijin I* begins with images and sounds of a multiracial and noisy 1980 São Paulo, where spectators hear factory sirens and the cacophony produced by car horns in Avenida Paulista, Latin America's principal financial center.

They then see a subway train and a sign welcoming visitors to Liberdade, the *barrio oriental* and the main Japanese enclave in the megacity. These signs of Brazilian modernity are contrasted, through a flashback, to the bucolic, rural Japan of 1908, where children in traditional wear play outdoors in a world marked by a seemingly static, unchanging tradition. In the background, one hears the soothing music of the Japanese traditional flute, which resurfaces throughout the film. This idealized image of social harmony is disrupted by the Meiji government's recruitment of volunteers to migrate to Brazil. Titoe (Kyoko Tsukamoto), the sixteen-year-old protagonist, leaves her country unwillingly because her brother desperately wants to emigrate. To be migrant eligible, her brother must depart with her and a husband (she is later forced to marry an unknown man): the Brazilian government, in order to ensure that Japanese immigrants do not quit their jobs, only recruits families with a minimum of three adults capable of working in coffee plantations. These policies remap the Nikkei domestic space because "relatives" occasionally include fictive kinship. Titoe, feeling apprehension and fear upon leaving her village, travels to Brazil with her brother, her cousin Mitsuo, and Mitsuo's husband.

Titoe's Japanese-language voice-over at the film's beginning and end provides it with a female and "authentic Japanese" outlook. The director's search for cultural authenticity and verisimilitude leads her to archive the material history of the Nikkei diaspora by including scenes with the *furo* (Japanese traditional bath) and conversations about sake, as well as sumo wrestling and other Japanese cultural traditions. The film also emphasizes the global scale of the international division of labor in an English-language scene at the official Brazilian coffee stock exchange, where Brazilian and foreign financiers, concerned about the scarcity of available cheap labor, praise the discipline, cleanliness, and affable nature of Japanese immigrants. In another scene, a leader of the Meiji-backed immigration company assures a Brazilian landowner that the Japanese take pride in being peaceful and responsible. He then exhorts the Japanese immigrants to obey rules, meet their obligations, and, more important for the storyline, avoid political associations. In order to highlight their orderly behavior, Japanese immigrants are compared to rough and insubordinate Italians and Spaniards: in one scene, a rustic Spaniard refuses to work in rural areas any longer; in another, an Italian immigrant elicits laughter by including "singing" as a working skill.

Reality soon erodes Japanese expectations of fast savings and advancement in Brazil. Chico Santos (Alberto Freire), a plantation foreman with whip in hand, makes the migrants feel like slaves. Their exploitation is exacerbated by unfair fines, elevated food prices, unsanitary living conditions, and long working hours in physically challenging tasks. Yet these immigrants refuse to unite with other foreign workers. Enrico, the leader of the rebellious and politicized Italians (Lesser observes that by September 1894, "some Italian immigrants had already been deported on charges of 'anarchism'"),[43] warns the Japanese that the landowner will not meet their monthly wages and suggests that they join in their struggle for fair working conditions. Yet Yamada, Titoe's husband and the Japanese group's leader, refuses to comply. According to Lesser, Yamada's "refusal to engage in labor activism is portrayed as an inability to stop being 'Japanese'" (65). Whether this was the filmmaker's intention or not, Yamada's reaction is, in fact, consistent with the attitude of many Japanese immigrants. Tsukamoto observes that "those Japanese could hardly develop a spirit of cooperation with those belonging to the same social class, tending, on the other hand, to pursue their immediate interests and to often realize acts considered detrimental to the working class. This mindset provided fodder to the so-called anti-Japanese movements."[44] The scene therefore offers a faithful reenactment of international labor unrest in Brazilian coffee plantations.

Although the Japanese characters follow the immigration company's order to avoid political associations, the encounter with the Italian protesters makes them more aware of their exploitation. The film also portrays interethnic female solidarity—an Italian woman teaches Titoe to make coffee. At one point, Japanese and Italian immigrant workers mingle, drinking and dancing together. Meanwhile, Titoe nostalgically daydreams about an idealized Japan of refined folkloric dances and harmony that contrast with a rustic and unsophisticated rural Brazil. Later, a sense of solidarity with their Italian peers resurfaces when Enrico is beaten and deported for refusing to work, after a scene where an American, symbolizing foreign capitalist interests in Brazil, warns landowners of the dangers of worker agitation. Subsequently, immigrant workers at the Santa Rosa coffee plantation are forced to work under the supervision of gun-toting men on horseback, a scene eerily reminiscent of black African slavery. Appalled by the situation, Titoe's brother flees, a common act among the Issei in Brazilian coffee plantations.

Regarding the film's antipatriarchal approach, although initially Titoe does not oppose her arranged marriage, her unhappiness is later evidenced in a scene of marital rape. Moreover, her husband, Yamada, expresses disappointment when he learns that their newborn is a girl. Meanwhile, Tonho, the accountant of the Santa Rosa plantation, foreshadows the film's ending by trying to woo Titoe while teaching her to wash clothes in the river. As Zuzana M. Pick points out, "In *Gaijin* female desire is presented as struggling to break with the historical subjection of women as objects of the male gaze. If Tonho is incapable of seeing in Titoe more than an unreachable fantasy, [Titoe's husband] Ryuyi's forceful possession of her is also set within the husband's right to claim her body" (155). Indeed, even though the story is told from Titoe's perspective, her sexual desire is repressed, as she becomes an object of desire for men like her husband, Tonho, and a Brazilian man who grabs her arm at the train station.

After two long years of harsh work and no significant savings, the Japanese immigrants realize the deception and decide to flee the plantation at night, a scene that stresses the unfree nature of their labor. As in previous texts, we learn that a desperate Japanese woman, whose wearing a kimono in Brazil suggests her inability to adapt, committed suicide while hallucinating that she was seeing the sea of her beloved Japan. Later, in another melodramatic scene, Yamada humbly admits before dying (as a result of Chico Mendes's second refusal to call a doctor) that he did nothing for Titoe; he then asks her to return to Japan to find a proper father for their daughter. However, after her daughter, reflecting cultural and identitarian transformations in her generation, refuses to move to Japan, Titoe cannot fulfill Yamada's last wish.

Titoe's psychological evolution after her husband's death is apparent; she becomes the Japanese group's leader and the one who decides when to flee the coffee plantation. When Tonho warns her about the risks and pleads with her to return, Titoe assures him, in Portuguese, that she would rather die than stay in Santa Rosa and suggests that he leave the place as well. The protagonist, therefore, is no longer the stereotypically passive, submissive victim of patriarchy and the international division of labor; instead, she is now a strong female character through whom the filmmaker proposes an alternative, feminized history of Brazil. This sudden transformation synecdochically symbolizes the impressive journey ("pathways to freedom") of all Japanese women pioneers and their Nikkei descendants. The last scenes

offer signs of the protagonist's progressive Brazilianization. She approves of Tonho's social engagement and labor organizing, which run counter to her late husband's view of obeying the Japanese immigration company's orders of no political engagement.

The last minutes of the film suggest that Tonho and Titoe will pursue a relationship, showcasing miscegenation (frowned upon by most Issei) as a positive outcome for both the Nikkei and Brazilian society. However, the film does not show the couple kissing. This final scene of implied miscegenation was foreshadowed by another where Ueno, a Japanese immigrant, meets Angelica, his Italian lover in secret, before leaving the plantation. This implicit support of sociocultural integration and interethnic marriage was audacious in the 1980s, when many older Japanese rejected it. Surprisingly, in the sequel, *Gaijin II*, Titoe and Tonho are no longer together; for miscegenation to take hold, we must wait until Titoe's granddaughter, Maria (Tamlyn Tomita), marries a Euro-Brazilian man born to an Italian mother and a Spanish father.

Back to *Gaijin I*, in São Paulo, an independent Titoe works in a textile factory, lives away from her social group, in a multiethnic enclave, and appears to be fully adapted to life in Brazil. The film ends in a circular fashion with an image of Shinobu in Brazil reminiscent of the first scenes of Titoe as a child in Japan. Then, Titoe reminds viewers that the past (Japan) is now only part of her memories; her present is Brazil, where she was finally able to find her place.

## *OS LIVROS DE SAYURI*: A CHILD'S UNTAINTED PERSPECTIVE

Another work that reflects the impact of the war on the psyche of Brazilian Nikkeijin is the children's and young adults' 2008 novel *Os Livros de Sayuri* (Sayuri's Books; henceforth, *Os Livros*), by Lúcia Hiratsuka (1960–). Its publication coincided with the centennial of Japanese immigration to Brazil, and it won the 2009 Nikkei Literary Award. The author, born in Asahi, Duartina, in the state of São Paulo, has written numerous children's books.[45] In *Os Livros*, Hiratsuka resorts to the narrative perspective of a sensitive, confused, and frightened Nikkei girl, Sayuri Tanaka, whose innocence is set, along with the author's children illustrations, in a World War II Brazil and its rampant anti-Japanese hysteria.

Though *Os Livros* re-creates the daily life of a Japanese Brazilian family, Hiratsuka, in a 2013 interview with Marilia Kubota, does not identify herself as a Nikkei writer; she proceeds to claim that her early observation of the *caipira* (country folk) world in the state of São Paulo is more relevant to her writing than her ethnic background:

> In literature, some identify me as an author who retells Japanese legends. But what I had in my head was to tell a story, with words and images, or with images alone, or with words alone. It didn't matter if I was Nikkei or not. And I did not want to be known for retelling Japanese legends. The person who best sums up my work is the illustrator Odilon Moraes, who states that I re-create the culture of countryfolk (caipira) in a contemplative manner. Once, the illustrator Graça Lima said that my characters are always admiring something. It's just that, I begin my narrations with my characters' astonishment about something.[46]

In *Os Livros*, Hiratsuka nostalgically recalls her childhood memories of daily life in rural São Paulo, when her mother read stories to her, just as Sayuri's mother does. As a child, Hiratsuka learned to read and write Japanese with her grandfather, writing on the dirt floor, a habit displayed by her character Sayuri. But, according to the author, the protagonist is based on her mother, whose Japanese school was closed during World War II, right before she was about to enroll. Like Sayuri in the novel, Hiratsuka's mother had to study in an underground school in rural São Paulo, which she attended at night, using a flashlight to walk there.[47] Her mother also saw her parents and other families burying Japanese-language books because they had been recently made illegal in Brazil; some of these books, the author learned, remained buried after the ban was lifted.

The novel's protagonist cannot understand why such a distant war is affecting her family in Brazil. Dismayed by the closing of the Japanese school, where she hoped to learn to read and write, Sayuri prays to Shinto gods for the opportunity to attend school soon, even if it is the Portuguese-language school in the Fazenda São Pedro. This unexpected event, together with the traumatic image of her parents burying Japanese-language books in the backyard, puts an end to Sayuri's dreams. As a small gesture of resistance, however, she hides one of the to-be-buried books. The shadow of World War II thus looms large over the daily life of this innocent but brave young

girl. Fearful, Sayuri hears adults whispering about the war, but, because they could not read Portuguese-language newspapers, all are unsure as to what group is winning or whether the war is over: "One of my father's acquaintances swore to having heard the Emperor's voice on the radio. By the way he spoke, he was saying that Japan lost the war. It had to be a lie, the gods would not allow it; most people did not believe it. But they were not sure either. And time went by as usual."[48] Although Sayuri continues to hear rumors about Japan's defeat and devastation, many refuse to believe them.

Fortunately for Sayuri, she is be able to study in an underground school with young volunteers who teach two nights a week, moving the school from house to house to be less conspicuous. One of her new teachers tells students that no one knows definitely who has won the war and then asks them to avoid talking about it, even with their parents. Meanwhile, the protagonist still cannot understand why her father has not dug up the books or why they still have to study in hiding. One day, however, the neighbors receive letters from Japan confirming Japan's defeat. Like many other Nikkeijin, Sayuri's father, Mr. Tanaka, feels devastated upon realizing that they will not return to Japan and will have to stay in Brazil indefinitely. Sayuri, feeling confused and sorry for her father, asks him: "—And our place? Isn't our place here?"[49] Reflecting the generational gap that is so central to many Nikkei narratives, the protagonist sees Brazil, not Japan, as home. Along with the girl's anxiety about the war, *Os Livros* re-creates the persecution suffered by Nikkeijin: they are not allowed to travel without government authorization, and their houses are searched for weapons and Japanese-language books. The protagonist also notices how her parents often whisper while conversing and how scared they seem of visitors or soldiers. Hearing that some Nikkeijin have been imprisoned just for having a group conversation, Sayuri fears being left alone if her parents are arrested.

Beyond war and persecution, Hiratsuka emphasizes and celebrates, through her young protagonist's thoughts, books and education among Nikkeijin. In the novel's first pages, Sayuri compares the burying of books to a funeral at first, then to burying treasure. This scene overwhelms her with uncertainty and anxiety; she, however, derives joy and pride from the book hidden under her mattress, as several lyrical passages convey: "What of the pleasure of having a hidden book? Like the taste of a ripe guava? Perhaps. Sweet and mouth-puckering. When I'm afraid of being discovered, it is a strange pleasure."[50] To her, books represent not only the chance to fulfill her

dream of learning to read and write, but also a compendium of her ancestors' culture, that beloved, ancient heritage that the Estado Novo is trying to erase: "Ancestors are like roots; we are like branches, but can't grow without those roots. It's what mom always says."[51] The book is also a treasure to her because it possesses a powerful matrilineal symbolism, as it has been bequeathed from mother to daughter for generations. Daydreaming about reading this book that once belonged to her late grandmother, Sayuri tries to guess the possible meaning of the ideograms in its title, *Concha-cerejeira* (Shell-cherry tree), which suggest that hidden inside the shell (the book) the Japanese culture of her ancestors is found, represented here by the cherry tree, an iconic Japanese symbol.

The recently closed Japanese school, on the other hand, is also a major site for the social and cultural life of the community: "Father told me that nothing would happen there [the school] again. No New Year celebrations, movies, musical performances, theater . . . nothing."[52] These passages echo the Nikkeijin's fear of a potential epistemicide caused by the Brazilian government's anti-Japanese hysteria. In order to appease Sayuri, her father promises to teach her to read and write if the school remains closed; in reality, he wants to ensure that his children know Japanese when they return to Japan, as he promised his parents. Consequently, Mr. Tanaka is not entirely satisfied with sending Sayuri to the Portuguese-language school in the Fazenda São Pedro, as his wife suggests. In the end, though she does not understand Portuguese and fears being treated as an enemy, Sayuri attends that school and discovers a different world.[53] Cultural integration into the mainstream has begun.

This moving story about a young Nikkei girl who overcomes obstacles, motivated by her love for learning (symbolized by the hidden book), is ultimately another tribute to the resiliency of a persecuted population that managed to resist stoically an epistemicidal attempt to erase their language and culture. The author also teaches her readers about Brazilian Nikkei history, values, and traditions during the first half of the twentieth century. As is common in her work, Hiratsuka blends history and childhood daily life memories in rural São Paulo into an evocative narrative that manages to re-create the imagination, dreams, fears, and anxieties of a besieged ethnic group during a crisis. The nostalgic recollection shared by many Nikkei texts is enhanced in *Os Livros* by the added twist of a child's delicate and untainted first-person narrative.

Yamasaki's film, together with Nakasato's novel *Nihonjin* and Lúcia Hiratsuka's *Os Livros de Sayuri*, feminize Nikkei history in Brazil and in Japan by providing women's perspectives as well as a window to antipatriarchal agency, as opposed to relegating female characters to mere objects of desire or passive shadows of male protagonists. Different generations of women, influenced by their personal and sociohistorical circumstances, complicate assumptions about what it means to be a Japanese or Nikkei woman, spouse, or daughter. These works often resort to nostalgia as a tool for communication, proposing a telos of miscegenation and sociocultural adaptation to mainstream Brazilian society.

From the exploration of female agency, self-definition, and antipatriarchal struggle, in the next chapter we continue with the study of the traumatic effects of World War II in the Japanese Brazilian psyche and the representations of the violent Shindō Renmei episode—a source of shame among many Nikkeijin—in a novel, an essay, and a film.

## NOTES

1. "As mulheres imigrantes—que, fazendo o mesmo trabalho de roça dos homens, tinham ainda que cozinhar e lavar roupa" (116).

2. Oscar Fussato Nakasato was born in Maringá, in the southern state of Paraná, and is professor of literature and language at the Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná at Apucarana. In 1999, he received the Festival Universitário de Literatura award for his short stories "Alô!" and "Olhos de Peri"; in 2003, his short story "Menino na árvore" won the Prêmio Especial Paraná. *Nihonjin* shared the prestigious 2012 Jabuti Literary Contest award for "best novel" with André Kondo's *Contos do Sol Nascente* and Marília Kubota's *Retratos Japoneses no Brasil* and the Prêmio Benvirá de Literatura.

3. In other interviews, Nakasato has explained that, while his characters are fictitious, part of the plot is based on his personal experiences.

4. Writing about Eico Suzuki's *Desafio ao Imortal*, an anonymous critic states: "Within a style that strives for poetic power, the author presents a personal work, affiliated to the Brazilian literary tradition, but imbued with a deeply Nipponese sensitivity" ("Dentro de um estilo que prima pelo poder poético, a autora nos apresenta uma obra pessoal, filiada à tradição literária brasileira, mas impregnada de uma sensibilidade profundamente nipônica" [Back cover of the Editôra do Escritor edition of Eico Suzuki's *Desafio ao Imortal*]). Yet the critic never specifies how or where in the text one can notice this Japanese sensitivity. Along these lines, I have

elsewhere included the case of the two Peruvian critics from the newspapers *El Observador* and *La Prensa* who questioned Siu Kam Wen's Chinese origins, assuming that it was simply a Chinese pseudonym.

5. "A opção de Nakasato pelo estilo seco e pelo equilíbrio evoca, de certa forma, a mística a respeito do temperamento japonês, que seria sempre criterioso ('zen'), sem se deixar abalar pelos extremos, e que se caracteriza por um comportamento comedido e protocolar" (n.p.).

6. "Um escritor discreto, que faz da timidez e da cautela o seu estilo" (n.p.).

7. "Um país subdesenvolvido, onde podia haver epidemias. Não lhes haviam dito se haveria médico quando alguém ficasse doente" (13).

8. This sentiment is reflected by the comments of real-life settlers, such as this one by an Issei from Tietê: "'It has been thirty years since our countrymen landed in this country. Since then 20,000, young and old, men and women have been sacrificed. It is not the way for us to leave our ancestors, leaving their cemeteries . . . Our immigration will mean something only if our blood purifies the Brazilian impurity with our superior tradition" (Masterson and Funada-Classen 84–85).

9. Masterson and Funada-Classen add that "almost one in six Issei during the pre-World War II years were classified as *kosei-kazoku* (incorporated family members)" (82).

10. "Foram objeto de forte desprezo por parte dos funcionários da fazenda e dos demais trabalhadores, os quais suspeitaram fossem os japoneses gente bárbara, de famílias estruturadas em torno de uma mulher e vários maridos" (60).

11. "Hideo não se submeteria à humilhação de voltar ao Japão na mesma condição em que saíra de lá" (110–11).

12. "A escola japonesa não é senão o lugar em que se adquire o espírito japonês pelo ensino da língua japonesa. Ademais, a aquisição do espírito japonês deve resultar, de acordo com a referida maneira de pensar, primeiramente, na continuidade do sistema familial japonês imbuído de grande respeito aos pais e à autoridade do chefe de família" (27–28).

13. "O presidente queria que nihonjin virasse gaijin, queria o impossível, queria obrigar os japoneses a traírem a sua pátria. Mas quanto mais o governo pressionava, mais nihonjin se sentia nihonjin.

—Eram tempos difíceis—lembrou ojiichan.

Por isso se associara à Shindo Renmei, a Liga do Caminho dos Súditos" (90).

14. "Os estudos tomavam o tempo todo de Teresa. O dia inteiro confinada na sala de aula, no laboratório, na biblioteca. Comparava-a à dona Miyuki, eternamente entre as quatro paredes do quartinho, fazendo crochê. Só de pensar nas duas, eu ficava sufocada, ansiava sair, correr ao ar livre, sentir o calor do sol e o cheiro de terra e mato! . . . Não tinha jeito, eu sempre fora e haveria de ser uma caipira!" (101).

15. "E mais sorte ainda para o marido 'gaijin.' O da mina amiga, na hora da sesta, nem precisou perguntar para a mulher nikkei onde estava o lençol. A minha amiga já tinha arrumado a cama para o marido, e se ele quisesse, a toalha de banho já estava à mão. Como a mãe da gente faz para os nosso pais. E como as nossa filhas farão para os seus futuros maridos, sejam eles de que descendência ou nacionalidade for. Com muita naturalidade" (64). These chronicles were originally published in the journal *São Paulo Shimbum* between 1999 and 2000.

16. "Pensei nela como personagem, alguém que nasceu da espera pela neve numa fazenda, no interior de São Paulo" (11).

17. "—Era muito boba, a Kimichan" (39).

18. Tomoo Handa's *Memórias de um Imigrante Japonês no Brasil* also addresses antiblack racism within the Nikkei community: "I danced with João's daughter, a barefoot girl with round eyes. Her father came to say 'thank you' to me very seriously. I found it strange to hear a father say thank you, just because I danced with his daughter, a black, yet distinct girl. Perhaps because of João's attitude, whenever the children of the community cursed saying 'black,' I would scold them, no matter the occasion. Because of these and other circumstances, I am certain that still today I was popular among the locals. Perhaps for this reason I was invited to a fandango by my friend João." ("Dancei com a filha do João, uma garota descalça de olhos redondos. O pai veio me dizer 'obrigado,' com muita seriedade. Estranhei ouvir um agradecimento do pai, só porque dancei com a filha, preta, porém moça distinta. Talvez por causa da atitude do João, quando crianças da Colônia xingavam 'negro,' eu costumava repreendê-las, onde quer que fosse. Por causa dessas e outras circunstancias, ainda hoje tenho certeza de que eu gozava de popularidade entre os camaradas locais. Talvez por isso, fui convidado, pelo amigo João, para um fandango" [24–25].) The phrase "his daughter, a black, yet distinguished girl," however, denotes the author's unconscious racism.

19. "De madrugada aumentou a febre. Quis ver a neve. Hideo roncava ao seu lado. Levantou-se, caminhou até a porta da sala a abriu. A neve cobria a terra. Saiu, correu até o cafezal, correu entre os pés de café, sentindo a neve cair sobre a sua cabeça, sobre os seus ombros. Correu durante muito tempo, estrela do espetáculo, abrindo os braços, ela, que sempre preferia ficar na janela. Finalmente, quando se cansou, sentou-se na terra fria. A morte chegou lentamente. Há quanto tempo morria? Tranquila, congelada pela neve, congelada pelo sol" (43).

20. "Mesmo quando Kimie trai o marido com Jintaro, essa transgressão é posta de um modo positivo porque acontece no discurso de uma necessidade que Hideo, o marido, jamais seria capaz de compreender. Nota-se que, apesar de a personagem reiterar que era uma mulher honesta, em nenhum momento mostra-se arrependida ou em crise de consciência" (n.p.).

21. "Sim, era feliz: tinha um marido bom, trabalhador, que preservava na família os costumes de sua gente; tinha seis filhos saudáveis, que trabalhavam sem reclamar, que lhe dariam netos, que correriam pela casa e que iriam ao undōkai" (108). The undōkai is a traditional Japanese school athletic festival.

22. "Lhe explicou sobre o *on*. Era um dever, um compromisso de lealdade. Era filha, e uma filha tem pais, sobretudo pai. Era irmã, e irmã de um irmão mais velho. Era assim" (114).

23. "Escreveu ao marido uma carta de poucas linhas: que era um bom homem e um marido exemplar, que os filhos eram bons, mas que isso não era suficiente para fazê-la feliz, e por isso os deixaria para viver com o homem que amava, o homem com quem deveria ter partido dez anos antes, um homem que o pai não aceitaria, pois era gaijin" (120–21).

24. "O casamento misto é, pois, não só uma ameaça para os padrões tradicionais da família, mas também para as relações grupais plasmadas no modelo familial, e, portanto, para a ordem e permanência de todo o grupo étnico. O casamento vem alterar o grupo étnico, desagregando-o através de uma ruptura de solidariedade familial e grupal" (315).

25. "E se renunciasse ao homem que amava para ficar com os filhos, eles, inversamente àquilo que acontecera, seriam responsáveis pela sua infelicidade. Não seria justo. Todos a julgavam, punham sobre os seus ombros o peso da culpa, mas ela se recusava a carregá-la" (125).

26. "Da derrota do Japão à decisão de fixar residência permanente no Brasil—essa mudança radical de 180° deu estabilidade à vida do imigrante e mais tarde impulsionou a sua prosperidade econômica" (226).

27. "O desmoronamento do Japão Imperial, guerreiro e invencível, e a fixação cada vez maior no Brasil, onde os imigrantes conseguiam algum sucesso, foram os fatores imediatos que obrigaram a uma consciencialização da ligação do *nissei* com o Brasil" (323).

28. In the third chapter, Hideo has a physical confrontation with Satosan, another Japanese man who has befriended Italian immigrants and Afro-Brazilians, thus proving, in his view, that Satosan was turning into a gaijin. When the inebriated Satosan dares to question the emperor's integrity, Hideo reacts aggressively by calling him a traitor and pushing a table against him: "Those gaijin told him that the Emperor of Japan deceived poor peasants and the urban unemployed by telling them to emigrate because they would quickly earn money in Brazil. But, in fact, it was a plan to expel the impoverished population." ("Esses gaijins lhe tinham dito que o imperador do Japão enganara os agricultores pobres e os desempregados da cidade, dizendo que deveriam emigrar porque poderiam ganhar dinheiro rapidamente no Brasil. Mas que, na verdade, era um projeto para expulsar a população pobre" [72].)

29. "A minha relação com o Japão ou com a cultura japonesa foi conflituosa na adolescência, quando passei por uma fase de negação das minhas origens. Nesse período procurava fazer amizade com quem não tinha ascendência japonesa e me interessava pela cultura ocidental" (n.p.).

30. "O que importa é o que otōchan está dizendo: o coração. E eu sinto que meu coração é brasileiro" (67).

31. *Yaitō* is a Japanese-style medical treatment that resorts to the burning of fibrous wads of a dried herb (*yamogi*, yellowish, crushed wormwood leaves) on the skin normally to cure illnesses by stimulating, through heat, blood circulation and the nervous system. In this case, however, it is used to "cure" misbehavior and disobedience.

32. "Lembrava-lhe que estava em terra estrangeira e que gaijin, na verdade, era ele" (70).

33. "—Não podemos viver no Brasil como se estivéssemos no Japão, mamãe" (93).

34. "Os brasileiros descendentes de japoneses têm uma grande responsabilidade perante a nação brasileira . . . Como podemos amar a terra de nossos antepassados? Se nem a conhecemos? Podemos ter quando muito um sentimento de respeito pela pátria de nossos pais, mas nunca a ideia de patriotismo pela terra dos crisântemos" (95).

35. "Com a derrota do Japão, se tornou decisiva a perspectiva de que não poderia encontrar qualquer trabalho em regressando a seu país" (140).

36. "Continuam os *isseis* a pensar em termos da 'alma nipônica' que querem transmitir aos seus filhos, mas ao mesmo tempo a ambição de êxito econômico que trouxeram como imigrantes e a valorização das profissões liberais e das atividades intelectuais fazem deles educadores vacilantes e não rígidos impostores das 'virtudes nipônicas' como nos primórdios da imigração" (326).

37. "Não os convencerei dizendo que é mais um trabalho de dekassegi, que trabalhar como operário não é um objetivo, mas um meio, que outro não existe, e que ir ao Japão é quase um retorno, que na primeira oportunidade me desvencilharei dos sapatos, pisarei a areia branca e sentirei um contato antigo, os pés revivendo o toque . . . que irei aos pés do monte Fuji" (162).

38. "Espero, um dia, como o narrador de 'Nihonjin,' ir ao Japão e sentir essa 'ida' como um 'retorno'" (Prado n.p.).

39. "—Furusato . . . O meu furusato não existe mais" (169).

40. In Peru, we find a similar case with Japanese Peruvian writer Carlos Yushimito del Valle, whose surname is a Peruvianization of the Japanese surname Yoshimitsu.

41. *Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade* received the Silver Daisy trophy at the 1980 Brazilian Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brazil, and a special mention at the

1980 Cannes Festival and the Honolulu Festival, as well as the best film award at the 1980 Gramado Festival, the 1980 Havana Festival, and the New Delhi Festival. Yamasaki has directed other films that echo similar concerns with social injustice, such as *Pátriamada* (1984), as well as commercial cinema and television soap operas and series. Among other films, she has directed *Parahyba Mulher Macho* (1983), *Lua de Cristal* (1990), *O Noviço Rebelde* (1997), *Fica Comigo* (1998), *Xuxa Requebra* (1999), *Xuxa Popstar* (2000), *Xuxa em O Mistério de Feiurinha* (2009), *Amazônia Caruana* (2010), and *Aparecida–O Milagre* (2010). Before directing *Gaijin I*, Yamasaki had collaborated with several Brazilian filmmakers, including Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Glauber Rocha, Lael Rodrigues, and Paulo Thiago.

42. As Masterson and Funada-Classen explain, "A stickler for authenticity, Yamasaki was compelled to hire native Japanese actors for a number of the parts in the film because she found, to her dismay, that the Brazilian Nikkei-jin were far too demonstrative and expansive in their acting style" (255).

43. "Alguns imigrantes italianos já haviam sido deportados sob a acusação de 'anarquismo'" ("Nascimento" 78).

44. "Esses japoneses dificilmente puderam desenvolver espírito de cooperação entre os elementos pertencentes à mesma situação de classe, tendendo, ao contrário, a perseguir interesses imediatos individualistas e, em não poucas vezes, a praticar atos considerados nocivos à própria classe de trabalhadores, fatos esses que, muitas vezes, contribuíam para fomentar os chamados movimentos antijaponeses" (20).

45. Among writing other children's books, Lúcia Hiratsuka is also the author of *Contos da Montanha* (2005), *Corrida dos Caracóis* (2010), *Festa no Céu / Festa no Mar* (2008), *Histórias de Mukashi* (2007), *Histórias Tecidas em Seda* (2007), *Lin e o Outro Lado do Bambuzal* (2004), *Muli* (2010), *Um Rio de Muitas Cores* (1999), and *Urashima Taro* (2001). She has also won numerous literary awards, including the APCA'95 for *Tanabata, Momotaro e Hatikazuki* (Estação Liberdade, 1995), Jabuti 2006 illustration award for *Contos da Montanha*, and Best Narrative Book FNLIJ 2007 for *Histórias Tecidas em Seda*, as well as several Altamente Recomendável FNLIJ recognitions. In 1995, her books *Hatikazuki Hime*, *Momotaro* and *Tanabata* won the award of the Best Editorial Production, given by São Paulo's Critics Association. In 2006, she won the Jabuti Award with *Contos da Montanha*.

46. "Na literatura, alguns me identificam como autora de reconto de lendas japonesas. Mas o que estava na minha cabeça era contar uma história, com palavras e imagens, ou só com imagens, ou só com palavras. Não importava se era japonesa ou não. E eu nem queria ser conhecida como autora de recontos japoneses. Quem resume o meu trabalho é o ilustrador Odilon Moraes, que diz que eu recrio a cultura caipira de modo contemplativo. Uma vez, a ilustradora Graça Lima disse

que meus personagens estão sempre admirando alguma coisa. E é isso mesmo, eu parto do espanto dos meus personagens por alguma coisa" (n.p).

47. Maria Cecília Missako Ikeoka, in her *Banzai Brasil! Banzai Japão!: Histórias de Seis Gerações* (2008), also recalls the racial discrimination she felt as a child in school, when a superintendent sent her home allegedly because the school was overcrowded: "I looked at the teacher and she, feeling disoriented, asked me to go home, saying that she would later talk to my parents. I got up, took my stuff, and went home crying. After many years, I realized that I had suffered racial discrimination. At that time, even four years after the Vargas dictatorship and the end of World War II, the Japanese were still discriminated against. And the Shindō Renmei episode was still present in people's memory" (170). ("Olhei para a professora e ela, sentindo-se desorientada, pediu-me que fosse para casa, dizendo que depois falaria com meus pais. Levantei-me, recolhi meu material e fui para casa chorando. Após muitos anos, compreendera que havia sofrido uma discriminação racial. Naquele tempo, mesmo após quatro anos da ditadura de Vargas e do término da Segunda Guerra Mundial, os japoneses ainda eram discriminados. E o episódio Shindo Renmei ainda estava presente na memoria do povo" [170]).

48. "Um dos conhecidos do meu pai jurava ter ouvido no rádio. Era a voz do imperador. Pelo jeito, dizia que o Japão tinha perdido a guerra. Devia ser algum engano, os deuses não permitiriam, a maioria não acreditava. Certeza, certeza mesmo, ninguém tinha. E o tempo foi passando, na correria de sempre" (130).

49. "—E o nosso sítio? Aqui não é o nosso lugar?" (134).

50. "E o gosto de ter um livro escondido? Gosto de goiaba madura? Pode ser. Doce e amarrando um pouco na boca. Quando fico com medo de alguém descobrir, é um gosto esquisito" (27–28).

51. "Os antepassados são como as raízes. E nós somos como os galhos, não crescemos sem as raízes. É o que mãe vive dizendo" (44).

52. "O pai contou que nada mais aconteceria lá. Nem as comemorações do ano-novo, nem cinema, nem apresentações musicais, nem teatro, nada" (39).

53. Like her protagonist, Hiratsuka did not learn Portuguese until she entered grade school.

# 4

# THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II ON THE NIKKEIJIN

Although this study focuses, for the most part, on Nikkei self-definition, it also analyzes complementary texts and films written or directed by non-Nikkeijin, such as the homonymous essay and film *Corações Sujos* (Dirty Hearts) included in this chapter. Of course, many other texts about Brazilian Nikkeijin could have been incorporated, including renowned Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa's (1910–98) *Ikemono no Kiroku* (*I Live In Fear*, 1955), non-Nikkei Brazilian Glauco Mirko Laurelli's *Meu Japão Brasileiro* (1965), Japanese American Karen Tei Yamashita's (1951–) *Brazil-Maru* (1992), Japanese Sugako Hashida's (1925–) *Haru to Natsu, Todokanakatta Tegami* (Haru and Natsu, the Letters that Wouldn't Arrive, 2005), and non-Nikkei Brazilian Bernardo Carvalho's (1960–) *O Sol se Põe em São Paulo* (The Sun Sets in São Paulo, 2007), among many others.

The analysis of Júlio Miyazawa's texts in the first chapter of this study emphasized the power of collective forgetting in the process of nation building. Likewise, in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Michel-Rolf Trouillot argues that in "vernacular use, history means both the facts

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of the matter and a narrative of those facts, both 'what happened' and 'that which is said to have happened.' The first meaning places the emphasis on the sociohistorical process, the second on our knowledge of that process or on a story about that process" (2). This chapter analyzes how the Nikkei and non-Nikkei Brazilian communities chose to either remember or strategically forget the nefarious episode of the Shindō Renmei movement. Societal amnesia, taboos, and imposed silences of historical forgetting are as telling as how historical episodes are narrated. It is noteworthy, for example, how Issei Tomekiti Goto's (1908–) autobiography *Como uma Erva Silvestre* (Like a Wild Herb, 1995; originally published in Japanese in 1981), which dwells on the trials of the Nikkeijin during World War II and its aftermath—including the displacement of numerous Nikkei families from coastal areas, the prohibition of speaking Japanese in public, the freezing of Japanese assets, and the closing of Japanese-language newspapers—never once mentions the Shindō Renmei episode.

Likewise, in the preface to his *Passos da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil*, Tsugio Shindo reveals his motivation to write his historical study *Brasil e Japão: Os 100 Anos de Tratado de Amizade* (Brazil and Japan: Centenary of the Friendship Treaty, 1999): "Two mothers, who work as translators and interpreters, and whose children are studying in elementary school, told me: 'Our children have to write a paper on the conflict between the Kachigumi and the Makegumi, which took place in Brazil after the war, but we do not know anything about it.' In other words, their parents did not teach them anything nor was there any available Portuguese-language literature for research."[1] Yet, Shindo discloses, thirty-tree years after the tragic events, many Nikkeijin in the city of Registro are still resentful against the Kachigumi for having taken innocent lives (232). The author, therefore, felt the need to fill the lacuna about this episode of Japanese Brazilian history.

This chapter provides a contrast between the 2011 film *Corações Sujos*, directed by the non-Nikkei filmmaker Vicente Amorim (1966), and the also non-Nikkei author, journalist, and politician Fernando Morais's *Corações Sujos: A História da Shindo Renmei* (1946; Dirty Hearts: The History of Shindō Renmei, 2000), the essay on which the film is based. By recognizing the information excluded from the film, one can notice what historians, writers, and filmmakers choose to exclude when retelling historical stories. The chapter also analyzes the Nikkei journalist and author Jorge J. Okubaro's *O*

*Súdito (Banzai, Massateru!)* (The Subject [Banzai, Massateru!], 2008), a work that revisits the adverse impact of World War II and Shindō Renmei on the Nikkeijin psyche.

Japanese sociologist Takashi T. Maeyama explains how two external factors radically transformed internal relationships within the Nikkei community and its exchanges with majority Brazilian society: "One was Brazilian nationalism, the other Japan's involvement in World War II. Brazilian nationalism was responsible for radical change within the Japanese group structure because of its political power over the minority group, and World War II because of the group's social and symbolic attachment to Japan" (597). Similarly, Brazilian historian Rogério Dezem points out how anti-Japanese sentiments were exacerbated even before World War II. By 1938, the Brazilian government had become suspicious of this ethnic group: "It was said that the Japanese, besides being fanatic, treacherous and inassimilable, wanted to overrun Brazil, initiating their conquest in the State of São Paulo with the objective of building here the 'Empire of the Setting Sun.'"[2] These rumors are often reenacted in Nikkei cultural production. For instance, the Nikkei journalist specialized in Japanese culture Francisco Noriyuki Sato (1956–) and the Nikkei comic illustrator Julio Shimamoto's (1939–) graphic novel *Banzai! História da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil* (Banzai! History of Japanese Immigration to Brazil, 2008)—published, like several other graphic novels, to commemorate the centenary of the inception of Japanese immigration to Brazil—recalls how whereas the physician Xavier de Oliveira "went as far as to affirm that the Japanese-owned plantations and towns were the base for the Japanese conquest of Brazil!," the politician Oliveira Botelho defended Japanese immigrants in his book *Imigração Japonesa* (Japanese Immigration, 1925), praised their work ethic, and blamed American political propaganda for the anti-Japanese movement in Brazil (*Banzai! História* 74).[3] This manga also claims that the Brazilian police framed the Nikkeijin: "Sometimes photographs of people considered fifth column (spies) would appear. Some photos were forged by the police to accuse the Japanese of organizing rebellions."[4]

After patriotic Japanese immigrants in Brazil, whose self-esteem had been damaged by years of discrimination and frustration, found a positive self-image in the Asian territorial annexations won by Japan, the Brazilian government forbade their public displays of pride, giving rise to fanatical, ultranationalistic secret societies such as Shindō Renmei and, consequently, to new

developments in the evolution of Nikkei identities. World War II still represents an inflection point for Brazilian Nikkeijin because, in many cases, it obliterated their hopes of returning to Japan and transformed their worldview, self-identification, and national affiliation. Maeyama argues that "Japan's defeat brought to the immigrants not only the stigma of destruction in their home country but also the sudden loss of their own social and symbolic structures. They actually lost a way of thinking and were at a loss to know how to define themselves, how to organize their lives and to interact with others. They no longer knew 'where and how to live or where to return'" (599). The impossibility of returning to their devastated homeland at war's end, along with the forced assimilation campaign undertaken by Vargas's Estado Novo and the gradual, organic process of cultural integration, particularly among younger generations of Nikkeijin, opened a new path for the their eventual Brazilianization; these racialized minority subjects abandoned their sojourner mentality and reluctantly accepted permanent residence in Brazil. As a result, many became Catholic (often as a social-promotion mechanism) and naturalized citizens, and began to identify as Brazilians. It is also telling that even though Japanese was still widely spoken among Nikkeijin and, as stated, Portuguese-writing among the Nikkeijin already existed since the late 1930s and 1940s, Nikkei literature published after the war was increasingly written in Portuguese, rather than in Japanese. Of course, I am aware that linguistic competence alone does not necessarily reflect national identity and that among second-generation writers, it is the norm to use the language of their birth country.

As mentioned previously, one of the saddest consequences of the negative attitudes toward Japanese Brazilians during the war and the concomitant governmental repression was the creation of the first modern terrorist organization in the Americas: the ultra-nationalist Shindō Renmei, Japanese for the "Subject Path League."[5] British scholar of Lusophone Studies Edward King has underscored the importance of this historical episode for the perpetuation of the stereotypical image of Nikkei immigrants as fanatics or a colonizing force: "The events surrounding the Shindo Renmei movement have become the focus of many representations of the Japanese presence in Brazil since they seem to crystallize anxieties concerning Japanese immigration dating back to the end of the nineteenth century. Shindo Renmei's fierce nationalism seemed to embody the stereotype of Japanese incompatibility with Brazilian nationhood" (8).

Nikkeijin were particularly targeted during the war, though Brazil's German population was more than four times larger: "By early spring 1942, it had become clear that special attention was being given to the Japanese. In March, suspected Japanese military spies were arrested in the states of São Paulo and Paraná, and special police units were created in São Paulo to handle 'the Japanese problem'" (D. de Carvalho 19). The Vargas administration's repression and isolation of the Nikkeijin led some of them to form illegal secret associations that were devoted to the preservation of Japanese spiritual and cultural values (*yamato-damashii*), so that after Japan's victory, the Nikkeijin could return home not having forsaken their customs. Dezem thus argues: "The [Nikkei] tendency, in spite of the repressive and nationalizing measures taken by the government, was not to assimilate or to break with the homeland, but rather to turn 'inward' and to unite ideologically and spiritually in an attempt to perpetuate their cultural links. The disappearance, during the war, of distinctions among them (Issei/Nisei; Naichijin/Okinawan), and the adherence, for the first time, to the notion of "Community" are examples of this attitude."[6]

Undoubtedly, Shindō Renmei is a recurrent topic in Nikkei cultural production. Besides the texts and films here analyzed that include this group's history, it becomes more central in works such as Jorge J. Okubaro's novel *O Súdito (Banzai, Massateru)* (The Subject [Banzai, Massateru], 2008) and the film *Corações Sujos*; these works recall how this secret Nikkei organization killed some twenty-three compatriots purportedly for refuting its belief that Japan had won World War II.[7] This violence damaged the image of the Nikkeijin and induced physical attacks against them by Brazilians in Tupã, Osvaldo Cruz, and other cities.

World War II divided the Nikkeijin into two opposing factions: on the one hand, the majority Kachigumi ("Patriots" or "Victorists"), convinced of Japan's victory in the war, supported the collective return to the homeland and were determined to wipe out "traitors" among their compatriots; on the other, the minority Makegumi ("The enlightened faction") acknowledged Japan's defeat.[8] The Makegumi, better educated and wealthier, had adapted to Brazilian society and spoke Portuguese, facts that led some scholars to argue that this was, in essence, a class conflict. D. de Carvalho, for example, ratifies that "conflicts existed long before the war. In the 1920s and 1930s, there were many conflicts between the wealthiest Japanese residents in São Paulo,

who formed a group called *ue machi* (upper city) and the less prosperous, the *shita machi* (lower city)" (59). Along these lines, Seiichi Izumu explains that whereas among the fanatic Kachigumi, who adhered more to traditional Japanese cultural standards and were less adapted to the host country, 42 percent intended to return to Japan, no Makegumi shared that plan (364). However, he adds, Brazilian Nikkeijin were divided into three categories or subgroups: "The 'enlightened'—those who admitted Japan's defeat a week after it took place . . . ; the 'hardliners'—those who, though not believing in Japan's 'victory,' did not openly admit to its defeat . . . ; the 'fanatics—those who rejected any sort of insinuation about the defeat, fanatically believing in Japan's invincibility."[9] The second group also included naive immigrants who allowed the Kachigumi to take advantage of them.

The army and the Departamento de Ordem Política e Social (Department of Political and Social Order) arrested the Shindō Renmei leadership and most of its young hitmen (known as Tokkotai)—155 Japanese immigrants were to be deported in 1946 but were later allowed to remain in Brazil. In the end, only fourteen Tokkotai were convicted of homicide. Between 1946 and 1947, Shindō Renmei killed at least twenty-three persons and wounded an additional 147 who opposed their views. Taking advantage of the immigrants' ignorance of Portuguese, which prevented the victims from following the Brazilian press (Japanese-language media was forbidden), Shindō Renmei presented them with phony Japanese publications that confirmed Japan's victory and announced that its emperor's surrender was mere American propaganda. Some gullible immigrants, believing the spurious news, went bankrupt by purchasing, from Shindō Renmei, nearly worthless Japanese currency and fictitious real estate in "conquered" territories. Once the killings stopped, the Kachigumi became marginalized. Of the Nikkei community 10 percent then decided to collect funds to aid Japanese war victims (5,000 families out of the 50,000 Nikkei families in Brazil, according to Tsugio Shindo [254]). After mentioning that Shindō Renmei survived from 1942 until 1950, Lesser explains: "The last gasp came in early 1950 when the Japanese Olympic swimming champions arrived in Brazil. An exhibition match at a major soccer arena was a sell-out and included the presence of the Governor of São Paulo. During an interview the teenage swimmers expressed shock when presented with the idea that Japan had won the war. As a result the remaining Shindo Renmei activists began a poster campaign claiming that the swimmers were

Koreans masquerading as Japanese. The suggestion was ludicrous and public support for the secret societies quickly eroded" ("Ethnic Myths" 73).

Nikkei final reconciliation took place four years later, when they joined efforts, with the financial support of the Japanese government, to contribute to the fourth centennial celebrations of the city of São Paulo's foundation. The study *Uma Epopeia Moderna: 80 Anos da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil* (A Modern Epic: 80 Years since the Inception of Japanese Immigration to Brazil), written by a drafting committee with several authors, stresses the importance of these efforts in the eventual reconciliation of the Nikkeijin: "The participation in the festivities of the Fourth Centenary of the City of São Paulo constituted the most important collective and unified action in the history of Brazil's Nikkei community . . . It was, moreover, a transcendental event for the Japanese, as it helped them recover their self-confidence and to overcome the differences between the enlightened ones and the *vitoristas*, thus opening the way for reunification."[10] This study, like Tsugio Shindo's (*Passos* 256), marks the event as a turning point for the Nikkeijin. As verified in the following passage, sudden nomenclature changes reflect the end of the Nikkeijin's sojourner mentality: "The Fourth Centenary also changed the label used among the immigrants from *Zaihaku Hojin Shakai* (Community of Fellow Countrymen Residing in Brazil, i.e., Japanese Community of Brazil) to *Burajiru Nikkei Koronia* (Nikkei Community of Brazil) or simply *Nikkei Koronia*" (*Comissão de elaboração* 399).[11]

Some works considered in this chapter revisit the Shindō Renmei chapter as a sort of collective catharsis that should have the effect of relieving, once and for all, the weight of the Brazilian Nikkeijin's shadiest period. Nikkei authors and filmmakers admit that, in their ancestors' past, not only dignity, pride and glory can be found, but also shameful episodes and humiliating wounds. This conflict, lasting until 1954, may be interpreted as an outcome of the colonized mind and as an irrational response to the oppression fomented by mainstream society. Thus in *The Wretched of the Earth*, albeit in the historical context of European colonialism in Africa, Frantz Fanon states:

> While the settler or the policeman has the right the livelong day to strike the native, to insult him and to make him crawl to them, you will see the native reaching for his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive glance cast on him by another native; for the last resort of the native is to define his personality

> vis-à-vis his brother . . . By throwing himself with all his force into the vendetta, the native tries to persuade himself that colonialism does not exist . . . Thus collective autodestruction in a very concrete form is one of the ways in which the native's muscular tension is set free. (54)

While the circumstances are quite different, this violent conflict within the Japanese Brazilian community was also a sublimation of its feeling of powerlessness, of the dehumanizing persecution of the war years. Some Issei, frustrated because of their repression by mainstream society, directed their aggression at their compatriots instead of at the nationalist Brazilian government, which metonymically had passed the Japanese Empire's aggressive militarism and colonialism on to them. Internal colonialism eventually led this group into its internecine conflict.

The appearance of Shindō Renmei was perhaps a by-product of the backfire effect or confirmation bias, by which most Nikkeijin chose to interpret information so as to confirm their entrenched beliefs about Japan's millenary invincibility and their emperor's divine nature, as they ignored contradicting news of Japan's defeat. In fact, it seems that the refuting evidence that they eventually received only backfired and contributed to strengthen their beliefs. This type of cognitive bias and erroneous interpretation is stronger when dealing with emotionally charged topics and deep-seated beliefs. Many Nikkeijin held on to their biases, even when confronted with the truth.

Shindō Renmei was founded by Junji Kikawa, a former army officer who, among other Japanese, brought to the Americas a fervor for aggressive nationalism, patriotism, pride, and a Prussian-like militarism that the Meiji government exhibited from 1868 through 1912. Kikawa formed this organization in 1942, after a violent confrontation between Japanese immigrants and Brazilians in Marília, a town in the state of São Paulo. Because, as mentioned, the Brazilian government forbade Japanese-language publications and most Nikkeijin could not read Portuguese or had no access to Brazilian publications, they relied on interpersonal communications or on Shindō Renmei's distorted information about the war. Another source available to them was "Radio Tokyo" (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai [NHK], or Japan Broadcasting Corporation), Japan's national public radio, which they accessed on shortwave radios, but whose information was as subjective as that of Shindō Renmei. Consequently, the campaign launched by the much smaller "enlightened" group failed and, in most cases, only contributed to

increase both antagonism within the ethnic group and Shindō Renmei's violence against them.

Tsugio Shindo ventures to proclaim the reasons behind these fraternal conflict: "I believe that the violent post-war conflict between the Kachigumi (Victorists) and Makegumi (Enlightened, Defeatists) took place because of the isolation produced by the lack of newspapers or other media."[12] On the other hand, Maeyama and Reichl provide additional potential causes behind these strange events, such as the dramatic changes in religious practices propitiated by the Brazilian planters and the government's decision to only accept Japanese families (not individuals), who they felt would result in a more stable workforce. The measure that forced Japanese immigrants to create putative families with coworkers or people from their same prefecture inadvertently weakened ancestor worship and strengthened emperor worship:

> Once the immigrants left Japan their religious expression underwent a profound change in Brazil. Having broken ties with the Ie [household], the Issei had little reason to actively practice their Shinto traditions, which were primarily based upon ancestor worship. The social construct of religious expression in Japan involved the household, the village, and the nation. In a tangible sense, all that was left for the new immigrants when they arrived in Brazil was the symbol of national unity, the emperor . . . Emperor worship thus replaced ancestor worship and became the single most important mode of ethnic and religious behavior. As the Japanese nation grew in military strength and international prestige, this was naturally reflected in increased nationalism among the Issei in Brazil and elsewhere. (qtd. in Masterson and Funada-Classen 80–81)

The Brazilian government, therefore, indirectly contributed to the creation of a culture medium for nationalist fanaticism.

## *CORAÇÕES SUJOS*: ISOLATION, MISINFORMATION, AND GOVERNMENTAL REPRESSION

Vicente Amorim's film *Corações Sujos* addresses the conflict that divided Japanese Brazilians during the postwar period. It begins with a hint: "In Brazil, the war did not end."[13] Among the largest Nikkei community in the world, we are told, few believed that Japan had lost the war or, at least, few

acknowledged it in public for fear of being considered a traitor or a "defeatist." In a tense atmosphere fueled by the misinformation that governmental repression caused, we witness Shindō Renmei's birth and ensuing violence.

Amorim's film adds female characters to the story that Morais narrates in *Corações Sujos: A História da Shindo Renmei*. Thus, the opening and closing scenes allow the viewer to hear, in the first person, Miyuki Takahashi's narrating voice, telling us that she lost the love of her life to this internecine war. Interestingly, following Morais's lead, the sympathetic filmmaker does not focus on Yellow Peril stereotypes (Asian inadaptability, nation-within-a-nation building), but on the causes of the protagonist's radicalization and, by extension, of his social group's sudden turn to fanaticism.

The film reveals this explosive combination of repressive governmental measures and Nikkei existential anxieties as the root cause of the formerly peaceful Nikkeijin's sudden turn to extremism and intraethnic violence. King reaches a similar conclusion about the film's ultimate message: "Narratives such as Vicente Amorim's film *Corações Sujos* (2011) use the movement as a way of questioning the Brazilian nationalism of the Estado Novo. Shindō Renmei's attempts to overcome the fragmentations of modernity through a fascist aesthetic of violence mirrors the violence inherent in the consolidation of national identity under Vargas. The orientalist fears of Japanese nationalism in Brazil, exposed by the film, become a way of questioning the formation of a national modernity at this crucial moment of consolidation and drawing attention to the legacy of racial discrimination left by this consolidation" (9).

In Amorim's film and Morais's essay, these intolerant nationalisms seem to share the blame for the tragic outcome of Shindō Renmei's violence. We thus learn through the film that after World War II, the Brazilian government did not allow Japanese immigrants to meet or to have their own newspapers, radio stations, or schools. It is evident that they were seen as a metonym for or extension of Japan that had dangerously infiltrated Brazilian territory. In turn, Morais's essay unveils the reason the closing of Japanese-language schools was unacceptable to the Nikkeijin: "The worst problem was that, without the little Japanese school, children would be prevented from learning the yamato-damashii—the doctrine of 'Nipponese Spirit' and of the 'Japanese way of life.'"[14] Likewise, Seiichi Izumu explains, in a 1973 article, Japanese immigrants' beliefs: "the acquisition of the Japanese language was

**FIGURES 4.1–4.4.** Scene from *Corações Sujos* (courtesy of Vicente Amorim, director of the 2011 Brazilian film *Corações Sujos*).

equivalent to the ipso facto acquisition of the 'Japanese spirit,' that is, the moral precepts of Japanese culture."[15] Their greatest fear, therefore, was that a governmental policy of epistemicide would deethnicize an entire generation of Nikkeijin.

Citing Agostinho Rodrigues Filho, who followed, in his own words, this remarkable and "exotic" group of people, Morais examines the unexpected and shocking transformation of a social group that until then had managed to keep a low profile: "I attended the depositions of members of the famous Shindō Renmei. I saw undaunted criminals, unaware of their crimes and indifferent to the consequences of their attitudes, taking full responsibility for those cruel acts that were being coldly narrated. Men of good will, leading clean lives, with twenty or thirty years of honest work in rural or urban areas, who respect the law and were respected because of their ethics, abruptly declaring themselves to be merciless murderers."[16] Morais's book also lists the Kachigumi's arguments against the allegation that Japan had lost the war: "Devoted to the most rigid Japanese military traditions, blind followers of the Emperor, they defended the false claims of Japan's victory with arguments they considered indisputable: in 2600 years, Japan had not lost a war; in the extremely remote possibility that the homeland was defeated, the world would then witness the 'terrible deaths of one hundred million people,' by collective suicide, following the Emperor's lead."[17]

Amorim's film explains the Shindō Renmei phenomenon through the progressive transformation of Takahashi, a Japanese photographer and family man, into a Shindō Renmei hitman. A former Japanese army officer, Noboru Watanabe (plausibly representing Junji Kikkawa, the real-life founder of the terrorist organization), brainwashes Takahashi by means of his fanatical talks on the Samurai way of life, which the photographer is to teach to young Nikkei men. Yet we also see certain Nikkei resistance to terrorism when three men at a bar ignore the photographer's propaganda, telling him that there is no excuse for killing honorable people.

Caught between intolerant nationalisms, Takahashi's individual case is emblematic of the collective transformation of many Nikkeijin in the state of São Paulo during those years. His refusal to learn Portuguese in the opening scenes exposes the sojourner mentality of a minority group that hopes to return to Japan soon. The protagonist has become a puppet of the unscrupulous Colonel Watanabe, who manipulates him, along with other Nikkeijin,

for his own economic benefit. Takahashi's victimization thus reveals that, behind the ultranationalist outlook of Shindō Renmei, there were also selfish and corrupt leaders who took advantage of their countrymen's gullibility and isolation. Colonel Watanabe, for instance, becomes rich by swindling men like Matsuda, who sold him his house for a very low price and also bought nearly worthless yens from him to return to Japan.

Another rhetorical device used in Amorim's film (shared in Lúcia Hiratsuka's novel *Os Livros de Sayuri*) is the presentation of the drama through the innocent eyes of children. We first notice the perplexity of a girl named Akemi at Takahashi's refusal to speak Portuguese; then, her distress when she sees Japanese adults listening to Japanese radio and talking about the emperor's surrender. Akemi's innocence builds up the tragedy, particularly when Colonel Watanabe visits her house to give her father a life-threatening note. Later, Akemi finds her father dead, lying on the cotton bales of the land cooperative, after he publicly dared to expose Shindō Renmei's political lies. Another scene re-creates the children's befuddlement when a schoolgirl asks her *sensei* (teacher), Miyuki (Takahashi's wife), the reason they have to hide to learn Japanese. Then, after Akemi asks her teacher what the meaning is of two Japanese ideograms, Miyuki is shocked to read the words "Dirty Heart," which Shindō Renmei uses when accusing Nikkeijin of treason. The situation only worsens as Brazilian soldiers, representatives of a repressive state apparatus that imposes compulsory patriotism, storm into the school and, to the children's dismay, take down the Japanese flag and burn the Japanese-language books. This passage epitomizes forced assimilation, as well as the attempted epistemicide and erasure of Japanese culture undertaken by the Estado Novo.

In the film's last scene, an adult Akemi enters Takahashi's shop and, seeing a photograph of herself as a child on the wall, realizes that she is in the presence of her father's murderer. He simultaneously recognizes her and asks about his former wife, Miyuki. She answers that Miyuki remarried years ago and had returned to Japan. Akemi, before leaving, seems to have forgiven the old man; time cures all.

The film *Corações Sujos* also exposes rampant Brazilian racism as a major factor in the conflict. In another scene, a racist military policeman becomes upset when seven Japanese, accused of trying to kill a Brazilian corporal for desecrating the Japanese flag, are appointed a black lawyer.[18] He finds it difficult to accept that whereas in Japan the seven would have been summarily

executed, in Brazil a black attorney defends "yellow" defendants for allegedly trying to kill a white soldier. Some scenes also illustrate the cognitive dissonance that affected the Nikkeijin during those years. Even when presented with evidence that contradicted their strong core beliefs, they refuse to accept it, and instead rationalize their arguments for denying it. Japan's war defeat meant the end of their hopes of homecoming, an unacceptable fact. Thus, when Takahashi, following Colonel Watanabe's orders, goes to his former friend Sasaki's home to kill him and the latter insists on Japan's defeat, it becomes apparent that he too is aware of this reality. He nonetheless refuses to accept it because, according to Colonel Watanabe's teachings, for the Japanese there is only one truth: the honor of the Japanese spirit. Takahashi and Sasaki fight inside the cotton cooperative until the photographer kills his former friend. For the second time in the film, the viewer notices a circular blood stain on the cotton pile that recalls the Japanese flag, thus depicting fraternal violence as a consequence of ultranationalism.

Another scene exposes Takahashi's shock upon his realization that Shindō Renmei has doctored the actual photograph of the emperor surrendering to American General Douglas MacArthur at war's end. Once Colonel Watanabe realizes that Takahashi is beginning to question Shindō Renmei's motives and truthfulness, he orders a Tokkotai to murder the photographer. A fight in the rain ensues, and Takahashi comes out victorious. He then kills Colonel Watanabe and turns himself in to the police. When asked why he did not commit suicide after killing the colonel, the photographer answers that he deserves to live with the dishonor of having killed two innocent men whom he thought traitors.

Focusing on the violent sequence in which a Brazilian soldier shines his books with the Japanese flag, King correctly points out that Amorim's film goes beyond the treatment of Japanese Brazilian history and identity, to address Brazilian identity itself: "The ferocity with which the soldier delivers his parting words is clearly indicative of the instability of national identity during the Estado Novo period. Corações sujos can be viewed as part of a wider tendency in Brazilian cinema to return to the period of the Estado Novo in search for causes of the present crisis of identity and representation" (154). Indeed, these scenes depicting the aggressive, ultranationalist measures that tried to force the assimilation of ethnic groups disrupt the myth of racial democracy and raise questions about the strained relationship between race and national identity.

**FIGURE 4.5.** Vicente Amorim, director of the 2011 Brazilian film *Corações Sujos* (courtesy of Vicente Amorim, director of the 2011 Brazilian film *Corações Sujos*).

Amorim's film is based on Fernando Morais's *Corações Sujos; A História da Shindo Renmei* (2000), a hybrid of historical essay, novel, testimonial, and biography. Curiously, even though Morais is not of Japanese ancestry, his denunciation, in this detailed and well-researched study, is overall more vehement and explicit than that of Nikkei authors and filmmakers. He lists, for instance, numerous provocations Nikkeijin had to face from the onset of the immigration process: "Their habits, such as taking sitting baths in the *ofuro*, the Japanese circular wooden tub, were ridiculed by Brazilians. Their wives were called 'monkeys' by the neighbors because they carried their babies on their backs. A man who went out on the street wearing his *jikatab*—Japanese shoes in which the big toe is separated from the other toes, similar in appearance to animal hooves—was immediately nicknamed 'cow toe.'"[19] During World War II and afterward, the situation worsened: "The confiscation of their property, the prohibition of their meeting in groups of no more than three persons, the closing of Japanese publications, the ban on traveling, carrying weapons and even speaking, all that seemed to be the 'unbearable' that the emperor had asked his subjects to withstand."[20]

Morais also denounces the forced evictions of Nikkei families from the coast to the interior, after repeatedly being accused of sabotage. Being

interned for some time in São Paulo's Brás train station, Nikkeijin felt targeted as scapegoats: "Convinced that the laws and restrictions imposed on 'subjects from the Axis Powers' were exclusively observed with them, the Japanese saw Brazilian prejudice everywhere."[21] The government accused them of being a fifth column in the country and of serving as Nazi spies in German attacks on Brazilian ships as German and Italian nationals received better treatment: "'Evacuating' almost ten thousand immigrants residing in Baixada Santista to the countryside, almost 9000 of whom were Japanese and the rest, Germans and Italians . . . Fearing that some could escape the raid, one of the officials in charge of the operation ordered all hotelkeepers, owners of boarding houses or tenements on the coast be notified that it was 'strictly forbidden to take in any German or Japanese national (Italians had been inexplicably excluded from the ban).'"[22] Morais, employing the same exalted tone, calls Luiz Berardo de Godoy e Vasconcelos, chief of police in the city of Bastos, "Racist, prejudiced, and reckless,"[23] after he decided to segregate 70 percent of the local Nikkeijin in a ghetto.

Morais's *Corações Sujos* delivers the same level of praise for Nikkei achievements as the Nikkei authors included in this study: "Half a century later, now named Tomé-Açi, Acará would become a universal model for agricultural productivity, thanks to the Japanese community that arose there as a result of forced relocations."[24] He then adds a photograph of Japanese immigrants who volunteered on the side of Paulista forces during the 1932 Revolution and denounces the lynching of innocent Nikkeijin in Osvaldo Cruz and Tupã after confrontations between Nikkei and non-Nikkei Brazilians.

In contrast with the admiration Morais has for the Nikkeijin, his book mocks the unsophisticated nature of Shindō Renmei, which he considers a sect with infantile, mentally disturbed leaders and a lack of military skills. For example, in spite of the Brazilian media's claim that this group was using diabolic modern techniques, "in their gatherings, the amateurism exhibited recalls children playing at being killers."[25] A former Tokkotai depicts his group as "eleven Japanese hayseeds" lost in an unnamed city during a raid to kill a "defeatist."[26] Morais also describes an assassination attempt in which all seventeen shots fired by Tokkotai at a five-meter distance missed the target, even though one of the henchmen was "Antônio" Ikeda, considered the best Nikkei marksman (165). Likewise, the author mocks the fact that so many Nikkeijin were fooled by Shindō Renmei's doctored photographs: "Though

they were artless alterations that any child could detect, the community eagerly sought these publications."[27]

Unlike the film, Morais's *Corações Sujos* reveals how Brazilian law enforcement agencies tortured suspected Shindō Renmei members, resorting to waterboarding and other methods. Because Japan no longer had diplomatic relations with Brazil, the police unhesitantly arrested and humiliated Nikkei immigrants. One debasing method employed was the seventeenth-century Samurai practice of *fumie* (forcing crypto-Christians to step on Christ's image), which they transformed to force the Nikkeijin to spit or step on the Japanese flag or a portrait of the emperor. Morais also lists examples of psychological torture and concludes that "Shindō Renmei followers' fanaticism, however, seemed to be proportional to the police's provocations."[28] The Department of Political and Social Order imprisoned and created files for 31,380 immigrants. The Ministério Público (Public Prosecutor's Office) indicted another 1,423, but only 381 went to trial. Fourteen Tokkotai were convicted of murder and the president of Brazil ordered the deportation of eighty Japanese. However, the Shindō Renmei court case, the largest in the history of Brazil's judiciary, took so long (1946–58) that most of those prosecuted were granted amnesty. The allure of political violence thus overcame the typically pacifist Japanese. Fernando Morais's essay *Corações Sujos* (2000) and its 2012 homonymous filmic rendition directed by Amorim explain the divisions among Nikkei in Brazil and, more important, the process of fanatic radicalization undergone by many of its 200,000 members.

## INTERSECTIONALITY AND THE RADICALIZATION OF AN ULTRANATIONALIST IN *O SÚDITO*

Another key work dealing with the Shindō Renmei chapter is Jorge J. Okubaro's (1937–) *O Súdito (Banzai, Massateru!)* (The Subject [Banzai, Massateru], 2008; henceforth, *O Súdito*).[29] This 542-page hybrid—made up of novel, historical study (includes a bibliography), sociological study, and journalism—focuses on the biography of a real-life Japanese immigrant Massateru Hokubaru, the author's Okinawan father. *O Súdito*, which functions again as a historical synecdoche of the Brazilian Nikkeijin, is based on facts and real people; it includes photographs of the protagonist's official records and actual documents. As Antonio Luciano de Andrade Tosta explains, the author "decided

to write the book after reading Fernando Morais's *Corações Sujos*, which tells the story of Shindō Renmei. Okubaro says, "The book is excellent, very well-written. But it did not answer questions that had intrigued me since that day I learned that my father had been sent to jail for belonging in *Shindō Renmei* . . . *O Súdito*, therefore, was a reaction to historical omissions. It was inspired by the author's personal desire to fill in the gaps of historical discourse" (245)

Massateru is a thirteen-year-old Okinawan immigrant to Brazil, a decade after the establishment of the immigration process. Dreaming, like most of his peers, about quickly becoming wealthy in the coffee plantations and then returning to his homeland, he is soon frustrated with the Brazilian experience. Toward the end of his life, the protagonist nostalgically questions whether his sacrifice of leaving home to try his luck in a strange land was worth it. Once again, nostalgia takes center stage in works by and about Brazilian Nikkeijin. And as Boym suggests, "Un-reflected nostalgia breeds monsters. Yet the sentiment itself, the mourning of displacement and temporal irreversibility, is at the very core of the modern condition" (xvi). Incidentally, as is also the case with texts by Peruvians of Okinawan ancestry, Brazilian texts dealing with Okinawan characters tend to suggest that the type of nostalgia they express is unique and untranslatable (like Brazilian or Portuguese *saudade*). This is often portrayed in scenes where the Okinawan protagonist plays the traditional *shamisen* (a three-stringed, Japanese musical instrument) and sings folkloric songs.

*O Súdito* opens with the narration of Massateru's difficult childhood in Okinawa, an archipelago that was an independent kingdom with its own language and customs, before being annexed by Japan. We learn about his eighty-four-day voyage in the *Wakasa Maru*, a ship in which fifty-three Japanese immigrants died of meningitis. Then, reflecting a common occurrence of the time, Massateru flees the São Martinho plantation in the state of São Paulo, unable to endure the slave-like working conditions. The protagonist's frustration continues after he fails to land a job that can resolve his financial difficulties; his projects (leasing a plot of land, investing in a dry-cleaning business, selling garlic) fail because of his refusal to adapt to Brazilian life, of his abuse of alcohol, and of his obsession with politics. Making matters worse, like the real-life Issei, Massateru is arrested on account of his collaboration with Shindō Renmei and is brought to trial. As a result, he falls into a deep depression. He dies from colon cancer in 1966, at sixty-one.

No other work considered in this study focuses more on Okinawan (or Uchinaachu) history, cultural difference, and identity than *O Súdito*.[30] Interestingly, *O Súdito* associates the process of radicalization that ultimately turns Massateru into a Shindō Renmei ultranationalist fanatic with the double marginalization of an Okinawan nation first colonized by the Meiji government, then deemed inferior by other Nikkeijin in Brazil. The Japanese government's hegemonic relationship with Okinawa therefore provides a historical background to the protagonist's transformation. It is in grade school where Massateru turns "into a real subject of the Japanese Empire, though, deep inside, he remained an Okinawan."[31] Central among these imperial values imposed by the Meiji government are the cult of the emperor and the eighth-century legends that established the divine origin of Japan and its emperor. Every morning, young Massateru and his classmates in Aragusuku, Okinawa, pay homage and vow obedience to the Meiji emperor, a ritual that strengthens their patriotism, setting the foundation for the protagonist's political radicalization in his later life. He learns the value of perseverance and resilience, as well as the importance of respecting authority and hierarchy. Although the indoctrination was sufficient to make most Okinawans respect the emperor, *O Súdito* claims that many still identify first as Okinawan and then as Japanese. Thus, despite his fanatical Japanese patriotism, Massateru continued to speak Uchinaaguchi at home and to follow Okinawan religious traditions, praying to his ancestors at the domestic altar and regularly consulting a *yuta* (Okinawan spiritual advisor). Okubaro underscores and even celebrates Japan's failure to "civilize that barbaric people"[32] by erasing Okinawan national identity, culture, language (Uchinaaguchi or Okinawan), and religion (ancestor cult worship). However, we learn that some Okinawan customs, like communal land ownership, were forever transformed by Japanese imperialism.

*O Súdito* thereby emphasizes the intersectionality suffered by the protagonist, suggesting that it plausibly accelerated his political radicalization. The external narrator claims that ethnocultural animosity between Okinawans and Naichijin (or *Yamatonchu*, as Okinawans call "mainland" Japanese) was particularly problematic in the city of Osvaldo Cruz: "Along with the struggle to adapt and integrate into Brazilian society, Massateru, like other Okinawans, faced another difficulty: being accepted by *the other Japanese*. The Uchinaanchu, that is, immigrants classified by their native provinces, were a minority compared to the Naichijin, Japanese from the main islands. They represented

between 10 and 15 percent of the immigrants who had come to Brazil. No other province sent as many immigrants here. But *the Japanese*, the Naichi, as the Okinawans call them, were by far the majority" (my emphasis).[33] It is interesting to note how in the previous passage, as well as in others throughout the plot, the narrator sometimes leaves Okinawans outside the concept of Japaneseness, while elsewhere in the text they are considered Japanese.

Massateru suffers this type of discrimination firsthand each time Naichijin address him with the derogative "Mr. Okinawa,"[34] which he despises. In other passages, however, he appears unfazed by it; for example, he is unaware that only Okinawans visit his home regularly, in spite of his extreme Japanese patriotism that led him to become a *Kachigumi*. We also learn that intermarriage between Okinawans and Naichijin was extremely rare in the plantations. The protagonist yet claims that during his childhood in Okinawa, and sometimes in the plantation, cultural differences between Okinawans and Naichijin became diffused or disappeared altogether: "There, in Aragusuku, they were all *shimanchu*, fellow countrymen. But the meaning of this word for *Uchinaan-chu*, that is, for Okinawans was much stronger than what was suggested by the translation of 'fellow countrymen' . . . Taru had the feeling that all the Japanese in the plantation had become *shimanchu*. And that included non-Okinawans."[35] Therefore, the false consciousness caused by the nationalist education that Massateru received in Okinawa may have blinded him enough to prevent the recognition of the discrimination he is suffering.

Surprisingly, the otherwise sympathetic narrator appears to share Naichijin's view of Okinawans as backward people, depicting Okinawans, throughout the novel, as more rustic and unrefined than other Japanese. Furthermore, Massateru's constant professional failure is, for the narrator, symptomatic of Okinawan incompetence in business or in risky economic activities. He also describes Okinawans as the most subversive Japanese group in the plantations, the reason why the state government of São Paulo once banned their entry. At the same time, Okubaro praises some Okinawan social values, such as their spirit of solidarity, and brings up the disproportionate destruction of Okinawa during World War II in comparison with the rest of Japan: "The number of victims in Okinawa was greater than that caused by the atomic bombs" (266).[36]

Tsugio Shindo affirms that "The Kachigumi case was a kind of outside expression of the damage caused by the madness and obscurantism of the

militaristic education."[37] *O Súdito* comes to the same conclusion, suggesting that Massateru was a pawn and victim of the Meiji government's imperial designs by first stressing the nationalistic education he received as a child and then associating emigration to Brazil with imperial conquest and the development of Japanese influence abroad: "Japanese emigration policy in the period before World War II had clearly become a means for Japanese territorial expansion."[38] Another factor in the origin and development of Shindō Renmei fanaticism, according to *O Súdito*, was Issei sojourner mentality: "They gave a temporary character to their Brazilian life that allowed them to imagine that it would soon be over. For this reason, they were able to endure. They well knew a Japanese word often used by fellow immigrants: *zairyumin* ('temporary residents')."[39] For this reason, Massateru and his peers did not attempt, at first, to become fluent in Portuguese, a choice that inevitably prevented their integration into the host society and their communication with other immigrant groups.

Another vehicle for radicalization recorded in *O Súdito* is a work of Japanese nationalist literature, *Kokutai no Hongi* (Principles of National Policy), which influenced the protagonist and his peers in Araraquara, Brazil. Eager to accept the imperial government's expansionist propaganda, Nikkei nationalist and militarist groups interpreted these fascist texts in their own peculiar way. Thus we learn that the key concepts in Massateru's worldview came from the 1890 didactic text *Kyōiku Chokugo,* also known as "The Imperial Rescript on Education": the emperor's divine nature, the indestructibility of the Japanese Empire, and the importance of loyalty, filial piety, patriotism, respect for one's superiors, and willingness to offer oneself to the fatherland and the emperor in times of crisis. In Brazil, according to Okubaro, the cult of the emperor would eventually replace ancestor worship as a result of the peculiar circumstances that affected Brazilian Nikkeijin: "It seemed to be a psychological mechanism of compensation. As the feeling of nostalgia increased with the realization that the dream of returning wealthy to the homeland was inevitably evaporating, immigrants sought refuge in the nationalist and imperialist ideological apparatus that became increasingly vigorous and was further strengthened by the rites of Japanese school or society."[40] Therefore, Massateru and his friends, having plenty of access to Japanese imperialist propaganda, celebrate Japan's impressive territorial conquests, which they perceive as proof of their country's indestructibility and

of their emperor's wisdom. In line with this propaganda, they hope that the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (the riddance of Western imperialism in Asia through a Japan-led nation bloc) becomes a reality. This cultural and political evolution would bring tragic consequences for Brazilian Nikkeijin.

In his attempt to evoke the perceived essence of the yamato-damashii, Okubaro introduces the aforementioned concept of *ganbare*, which, in his view, epitomizes both the Nikkeijin's resiliency in times of adversity and the Confucian mandate of living in harmony with the universe: "'*Ganbare*,' is what the Japanese heard when they seemed to falter. It was a stimulating word often used by the public in sporting events to encourage competitors in times of trouble. It was a sort of cry used to encourage anyone through difficult times, giving him strength to overcome obstacles. It was also meant to convey endurance through adversity, without complaints, or to remind one to face destiny with abnegation."[41] Certain paragraphs in the book border on self-essentialism when they evince this spirit of sacrifice, seen as a tool to achieve ultimate goals and an essential component of Nikkei nationalist pride.

*O Súdito* also provides numerous arguments supporting the thesis that the Japanese experience in Brazil was quite different from those of other immigrant groups in Brazil. It argues, for instance, that the adaptation of Japanese people was more challenging because of their tendency to isolate themselves in ethnic communities and because their phenotype, customs, and language were much different from those of European immigrant groups. In an obvious effort to sanitize the history of his own ethnic group, the author tries to contextualize, if not justify, group members' actions during and immediately after World War II. Consequently, the protagonist does not come across as a despicable character (after all, he is based on the author's father), in spite of his racist, intolerant and ultranationalist views, noticeable in passages such as this one: "'This ball business is a thing of *ketoo* who do not want to work,' said Massateru of soccer, making a point of referring to ball players with the highly derogatory and racist term that Japanese nationalists used for non-Japanese."[42] For the same reason, his forbidding his daughter to date a gaijin and not speaking to his son after his marriage with a gaijin are contextualized within the harsh, nationalist indoctrination he received in grade school.

Throughout the plot, we are repeatedly told (repetition characterizes the novel) that isolation, homesickness, lack of economic opportunity, and the

inability to communicate with non-Japanese add to the increasing frustration of many Nikkeijin. According to the narrator, self-segregation responded to a fear of their children's potential miscegenation with non-Japanese. The departure of the Japanese embassy after Brazil broke diplomatic relations with Japan in 1942 made Brazilian Nikkeijin feel more forsaken and helpless, leading to their creation of nationalist associations. Okubaro records several other factors that contributed to the increased malaise among this minority group that for years felt imprisoned in their host country: the displacement of Japanese families from coastal areas, the Vargas administration's passing of anti-Japanese immigration legislation, the closing of Japanese-language newspapers, and the ban on speaking Japanese in public or traveling without a safe conduct. The constant mockery of the Nikkeijin's accent in Portuguese, together with the frequent insults aggravated an already tense situation.[43] The outcome, according to *O Súdito*, was a collective need to strengthen their ethnic solidarity as they took pride in the nationalistic notion of the yamato-damashii: "From a psychological perspective, while seeking support from fellow countrymen, immigrants became increasingly susceptible to false news items, for these helped in raising their morale."[44] *O Súdito*'s extensive account of these adverse circumstances provides a narrative context for Massateru's and his social group's ultranationalist turn and its obdurate refusal to acknowledge Japan's defeat in World War II.

Whereas the first part is devoted to relating Massateru's progressive radicalization, the second part focuses on the opposite process: his voluntary Brazilianization after World War II, mirroring that of his ethnic group. Well into his forties, the protagonist finally acknowledges the unfeasibility of his return to a Japan now devastated by the war. Furthermore, since his son is interred in Brazil, forsaking his grave would violate Okinawan religious principles. Once the myths of Japanese invincibility and of the emperor's divine nature have been debunked, Massateru becomes more adaptable, starting anew in the host country where his children will grow. He decides, after thirty years in Brazil, to adopt the Portuguese language, even at home; to become Catholic and have his children baptized; and to support their cultural integration into mainstream society. Although he is unable to give up his lifelong passion for politics, the protagonist now redirects his attention to local Brazilian politics, supporting a non-Nikkei Brazilian populist. He also takes pride in his son's becoming an officer in the Brazilian Army.

Yet Massateru still opposes interracial marriage and remains a Japanese patriot who teaches his children old nationalist songs and considers his friend's intention to create an Okinawan association unpatriotic. Overall, as Antonio Luciano de Andrade Tosta points out, this account demonstrates "how larger historical events affect the lives of ordinary people, suggesting that our understanding of these historical moments is incomplete if not supplemented with more personal tales that are tangential to public battlegrounds, bringing history into the homes of those who experienced these events privately" (206).

Along with Massateru's processes of ultranationalist radicalization and subsequent Brazilianization, the third and most important thematic pillar of *O Súdito* treats the history of Shindō Renmei. In fact, the reason behind narrating Massateru's biography in detail is to contextualize the birth, growth, and eventual demise of the terrorist organization. The narrator first lists the ultranationalist associations that preceded Shindō Renmei;[45] then, when Japanese diplomats left Brazil, Shindō Renmei filled the void: "The establishment of such a group, which began to widely share information and plans with an ethnic group who felt lost and abandoned by its native country's government, gave encouragement to thousands of Japanese. This group reached enormous prestige and respectability overnight within the Japanese community."[46] It is said that almost three quarters of the Nikkei community supported Shindō Renmei, not counting those who, unaffiliated, still supported its concepts. Led by Junji Kikkawa, Shindō Renmei went from trying to organize Nikkeijin around the idea that Japan had won the war to evolving into a terrorist group obsessed with eliminating those in their social group, particularly prominent men, who publicly acknowledged Japan's defeat.

In several passages, the subjective narrator, Okubaro's alter ego, disparagingly condemns the immaturity of Shindō Renmei threats: "They were childish texts, their threats notwithstanding" (289).[47] He also explains that, at one point, the violence went beyond the limits of the Nikkei minority. For example, *O Súdito* retells how, on the night of 30 July and the dawn of 31 July 1946, after a Shindō Renmei member provoked a group of Brazilians, nearly three thousand majority Brazilians decided to "hunt" Japanese and to destroy their property in Osvaldo Cruz, not discriminating between "Victorists" and "Defeatists." In the end, fifty Japanese nationals were injured, ten of them

defeatists. Soon afterward, talks about the Yellow Peril and Japan's alleged objective of conquering Brazil began, which concluded with the suggestion of concentration camps for the Japanese.

Rather than being a true psychological account, *O Súdito* depicts the political and cultural transformation of its protagonist as a narrative device to invite the reader into the inner workings of an ethnic population that has remained as part of a mysterious and exotic phase of Brazilian history in the national imaginary. As stated, Okubaro, a Nikkeijin himself, never hides his empathy for the plight of his ethnic group at that time, which is, overall, presented in a positive light, despite the violence and intolerance of many. *O Súdito* portrays their victimization, first by the Meiji government's imperialism that, according to the narrator's risky assumption, encouraged migration to Brazil as a useful tool for potential colonial conquest, and then by the intolerance of Vargas's Estado Novo, which unfairly projected Japan's aggressive expansion to Brazilian Nikkeijin.[48] Massateru's initial radicalization and his decision to adapt to Brazilian society reflect the dramatic psychological evolution of this diasporic community, with World War II as a turning point.

Altogether, the texts analyzed in this chapter reflect the progressive end of a sojourner mentality and the ensuing arduous and conflictive construction of an ethnic Nikkei identity—which had tenuously begun before the war—separate from that of the Japanese in Japan. As exhibited in this literature, many Nikkeijin, whose process of cultural integration had its reluctant roots even before World War II, eventually began to switch loyalties from Japan to Brazil during the postwar period. In contrast with the prewar situation, they were able to create their own ethnic, social organizations, independent of the Japanese government. But, as will be examined in the next two chapters, this process was further complicated by the dekasegi boom that began in the late 1980s and that has added new deterritorializations, transnational nuances, and identitarian uncertainties to Nikkei ethnicity and national affiliation. This new clash between two contested modernities, those of Brazil and Japan, will suddenly take Nikkei cultural production from the representation of the expected Brazilianization of the Nikkei into a not-so-subtle call, in dekasegi self-representation in chronicles and novels, for the salvational Nipponization of Brazil, proposing either the Japanese in Japan or the Nikkeijin in Brazil as a model to be emulated.

## NOTES

1. "Duas mães, que trabalham como tradutoras e intérpretes, com filhos estudando no ensino fundamental, me disseram: 'As crianças precisam fazer um trabalho sobre o conflito de *kachigumi e makegumi*, que aconteceu no Brasil após a Guerra, mas não sabemos nada sobre isso.' Ou seja, os pais não lhes ensinaram nada, nem havia literatura para pesquisa em idioma português" (*Passos* 3).

2. "Propagava-se que o japonês além de ser *fanático*, *traiçoeiro* e *inassimilável*, queria dominar o Brasil, iniciando sua conquista pelo Estado de São Paulo com o objetivo de construir aqui o 'Império do Sol Poente'" (39).

3. "Chegou a afirmar que os núcleos de colonização dos japoneses eram a base para o Japão conquistar o Brasil!" (75).

King has studied the use of graphic novels and manga in the celebration of the centenary, focusing on Ricardo Giassetti and Bruno D'Angelo's *O Catador de Batatas e o Filho da Costureira* (2008) and André Uesato and Renata Corrêa's et al.'s *O Vento do Oriente: Uma Viagem através da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil* (2008). Another graphic novel, besides the aforementioned *Banzai! História da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil*, is Claudio Seto's *Flores Manchadas de Sangue* (2009).

4. "As vezes apareciam fotos de pessoas consideradas quinta coluna (espiões). Algumas fotos eram forjadas por policiais para acusar os japoneses de organizarem rebeliões" (*Banzai! História* 76). The Nisei Cláudio Seto, born Chuji Seto Takeguma (1944–2008), introduced manga style in Brazilian comics in 1967. A descendant of samurai, his manga often dealt with samurai characters, as is the case in the collection of five stories *Flores Manchadas de Sangue* (2009).

5. Shindo Renmei predated the Front de Libération du Québec in Canada (FLQ; Quebec Liberation Front; founded in 1963); the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN; National Liberation Army, founded in 1964), Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo (FARC; Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People's Army, founded in 1964), and Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC; United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, founded in 1997) in Colombia; the Jewish Defense League (JDL; founded in 1969) and the Weather Underground (founded in 1969) in the United States; and the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN, Armed Forces of National Liberation; founded in 1974) in Puerto Rico.

The Portuguese spelling is Shindô-Renmei, and the transcription into Roman characters of the Japanese term is Shindō Renmei.

6. "A tendência, apesar das medidas repressivas e de nacionalização adotadas pelo governo, não foi de assimilação e ruptura com a pátria-mãe, ao contrário, os japoneses se voltaram 'para dentro' e se uniram ideologicamente e espiritualmente na tentativa de perpetuar seus laços culturais. Um exemplo disso foi o

desaparecimento, durante a guerra, das distinções entre os japoneses (issei/nissei; naichi jin/okinawano), colocando em prática, pela primeira vez , a noção de 'Colônia'" (50).

7. By contrast, as I explored in my *The Affinity of the Eye: Writing Nikkei in Peru* (2013), there is, in Japanese Peruvian literature, only an embryonic cultural nationalism and pride in being Japanese or Okinawan. It is noticeable, for example, in Doris Moromisato's works, as well as in the testimonials *Okinawa: El reino de la cortesía, y testimonio de un peruano okinawense* (2008), by Ricardo Ganaja, and *Okinawa: Un siglo en el Perú* (2006), by Doris Moromisato and Juan Shimabukuro Inami.

8. Makegumi were called "defeatists" or "dirty hearts" by their enemies, hence the homonymous title of Morais's essay and its filmic rendition by Vicente Amorim.

9. "a) Os 'esclarecidos'—aqueles que admitiram a derrota dentro de uma semana . . . ; b) os 'duros'—são os que, embora não acreditassem piamente na propalada 'vitória' do Japão, também não queriam admitir abertamente a derrota . . . ; c) os 'fanáticos'—os que repeliam qualquer insinuação sobre a derrota, acreditando fanaticamente na invencibilidade do Japão" (362).

10. "A participação nos festejos do IV Centenário da Cidade de São Paulo constituiu a maior atuação coletiva e unificada da colônia *nikkei* do Brasil em toda a sua história até então . . . Foi, além disso, um acontecimento transcendental para os japoneses, pois serviu para recuperar sua autoconfiança e superar a crise criada pela divisão entre esclarecidos e derrotistas [*sic*], abrindo caminho para sua reunificação" (Comissão de Elaboração da História dos 80 Anos da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil 398).

11. "O IV Centenário marcou também a mudança da denominação até então usada pelos nipônicos de *Zaihaku Hojin Shakai* (Comunidade de Compatriotas Residentes no Brasil, ou seja, Comunidade Japonesa do Brasil) para *Burajiru Nikkei Koronia* (Colônia Nikkei do Brasil) ou simplesmente *Nikkei Koronia*" (*Uma Epopéia* 399).

12. "Acredito que o violento conflito que instalou entre os *kachi-gumi* (vitoristas) e os *make-gumi* (esclarecidos, derrotistas) no pós-guerra se deu por causa desse isolamento sem jornais e outros meios de comunicação" (*Passos* 223).

13. "No Brasil a guerra não acabou."

14. "O problema é que, sem a escolinha japonesa, as crianças estariam privadas do aprendizado do *Yamatodamashii*—a doutrina do 'espírito nipônico' e do 'modo de vida japonês'" (49).

15. "A aquisição da língua japonesa equivale *ipso facto* à aquisição do 'espírito japonês', ou seja, os preceitos morais peculiares à cultura japonesa" (Izumu 376).

16. "Assisti aos depoimentos de membros da famosa Shindo Renmei. Vi criminosos impávidos, inconscientes do próprio delito, indiferentes às consequências de

sua atitude, assumirem plena responsabilidade de atos cruéis friamente narrados. Homens de bem, com vidas impolutas, vinte ou trinta anos de trabalho honesto no campo ou na cidade, respeitadores das leis e respeitados pelos seus costumes, bruscamente se manifestavam implacáveis assassinos" (151).

17. "Devotos das mais rígidas tradições militaristas japonesas, seguidores cegos do imperador, sustentavam a teoria da vitória do Japão com argumentos que consideravam indiscutíveis: em 2600 anos o Japão jamais perderá uma guerra; na remotíssima hipótese de que a pátria tivesse sido derrotada, o mundo teria testemunhado a 'morte honrosa de 100 milhões de japoneses,' que se suicidariam coletivamente, acompanhando o mesmo gesto do imperador" (89). It also quotes a Japanese man named Koketsu, who is later tortured by the military police, arguing that there is evidence of Japan's victory: "If Japan had lost the war, all the Japanese would be dead." ("Se Japão tivesse perdido a guerra, todos os japoneses estariam mortos" [12].)

18. Morais's book mentions that soon after their assassination attempt, the seven Japanese men became local heroes for the Nikkei community, whose members purchased the photograph taken by Masashige Onishi on their way out of prison, which appears in the cover of the Companhia Das Letras edition. According to Morais, Masashige Onishi was the Nikkeijin who manipulated for Shindō Renmei the *Life Magazine* photographs of the emperor's surrender, along with other photographs (269).

19. "Seus hábitos, como tomar banho sentados no ofurô, a banheira circular de madeira, eram ridiculizados pelos brasileiros. Suas mulheres eram chamadas de 'macacas' pelas vizinhas, porque carregavam os bebês presos às costas. Homem que saísse na rua calçando o *jikatabi*—o sapato japonês em que o dedão do pé fica separado dos demais, semelhante ao casco de um animal—era imediatamente apelidado 'unha de vaca'" (25).

20. "O confisco das economias, a proibição de se reunir em grupos de mais de três pessoas, o fechamento dos jornais japoneses, a proibição de viajar, de andar armado e até de falar, tudo isso parecia ser o 'insuportável' que o imperador havia pedido a seus súditos que suportassem" (48)

21. "Convencidos de que as leis e restrições impostas aos 'súditos do Eixo' acabavam se voltando exclusivamente contra eles, os japoneses viam o preconceito dos brasileiros em todos os cantos" (53).

22. "'Evacuar' para o interior do estado os cerca de 10 mil imigrantes residentes na Baixada Santista, dos quais quase 9 mil eram japoneses e os demais, alemães e italianos . . . Temendo que alguém pudesse escapar da razia, um dos oficiais encarregados da operação mandou notificar todos os hoteleiros, donos de pensões e casas de cómodos do litoral de que estava 'expressamente proibido dar hospedagem

a qualquer cidadão de nacionalidade alemã ou japonesa' (os italianos tinham sido inexplicavelmente excluídos da proibição)" (58).

23. "Racista, preconceituoso e imprudente" (134).

24. "Meio século depois, já com o nome de Tomé-Açi, Acará se transformaria num modelo mundial de produtividade agrícola, graças à colônia japonesa que se formou no local a partir da mudança forçada" (62).

25. "Em suas reuniões o amadorismo lembrava um grupo de crianças brincando de matar" (161)

26. "Onze caipiras japoneses" (164).

27. "Embora fossem adulterações grosseiras, capazes de ser identificadas por qualquer criança, as revistas eram disputadas pela colônia" (185).

28. "O fanatismo dos seguidores da Shindo Renmei, porém, parecia ser proporcional às provocações da polícia" (176).

29. Jorge J. Okubaro is a journalist and, since 1989, editor of Grupo Estado, which publishes the newspapers *O Estado de S. Pauho* and *Jornal da Tarde*.

30. Another novel that emphasizes Okinawan history, culture, and identity is Ana Suzuki's *Jônetsu: A Terceira Cor da Paixão* (1988).

31. "Tornaria um verdadeiro súdito do império japonês, mesmo que, na essência, continuasse sendo um okinawano" (54).

32. "Civilizar esse povo bárbaro" (48).

33. "Além da dificuldade de adaptação e integração à sociedade brasileira, Massateru, como outros okinawanos, enfrentava outra: a de aceitação até mesmo por outros japoneses. Os *Uchinaan-chu*, isto é, os imigrantes se classificados por província de origem, eram minoritários quando comparados com os *naichi-jin*, os japoneses das ilhas principais do Japão. Representavam entre 10 e 15% dos imigrantes que tinham vindo para o Brasil. Nenhuma outra província enviara tantos emigrantes para cá. Mas os japoneses, os *naichi*, como diziam os okinawanos, eram a maioria esmagadora" (367).

34. "Okinawa-san (368).

35. "Ali em Aragusuku eram todos *shimanchu*, conterrâneos. Mas esta é uma palavra cujo sentido para os *Uchinaan-chu*, isto é, okinawanos era muito mais forte do que poderia sugerir sua tradução: 'conterrâneos' . . . Taru teve a sensação de que todos os japoneses da fazenda haviam se tornado *shimanchu*. E isso incluía os não-okinawanos" (94–95).

36. "O número de vítimas em Okinawa tenha sido maior do que o causado pelas bombas atômicas" (266).

37. "O caso *Kachi-gumi* foi uma espécie de balanço no exterior dos danos causados pela loucura e obscurantismo da educação militarista" (*Passos* 232).

38. "A política emigratória japonesa na época anterior à Segunda Guerra Mundial tornou-se claramente um dos meios de expansão territorial japonesa" (124).

The creation in 1923 of the empire of Japan's Takumushō (Ministry of Colonial Affairs) was a key instrument in this process.

39. "Deram à vida no Brasil um caráter de provisoriedade que lhes permitia imaginar que aquilo tudo passaria logo. Por isso suportavam a situação. Conheciam bem uma palavra em japonês que era citada com muita frequência pelos demais imigrantes: *zairyumin*, que significa 'residentes temporários.'" (91).

40. "Parecia um mecanismo psicológico de compensação. À medida que crescia a nostalgia, com a percepção de que o sonho de retornar rico ao país natal escorria pelos dedos sem que fosse possível deter o processo, os imigrantes buscavam amparo no aparato ideológico de cunho nacionalista e imperialista que se tornava cada vez mais vigoroso, e que os ritos a que compareciam na escola de japonês ou na sociedade japonesa fortaleciam ainda mais" (100).

41. "'*Gambaree*,' ouviam os japoneses, quando pareciam fraquejar. Era uma palavra de estimulo muito empregada pelo público de competições esportivas individuais para encorajar o competidor em momentos de dificuldade. Era como um grito para impulsionar quem encontrasse uma dificuldade em seu trajeto, dar-lhe força para superar o obstáculo. Significava também suportar as adversidades sem reclamar, aceitar resignadamente o destino" (100–101).

42. "'Esse negócio de bola é coisa de *ketoo* que não quer trabalhar,' dizia Massateru sobre o futebol, fazendo questão de, ao se referir aos que jogavam bola, usar o termo altamente pejorativo e racista que os nacionalistas japoneses utilizavam para falar de não-japoneses" (446). Ketō is a disparaging term used to refer to foreigners: "*Ketō* or *ketōjin* was made by adding *ke* (hair or hairy) to *tōjin* to mean outlandish hairy foreigner. Western men, with their profuse (compared to the Japanese) facial hair and custom of wearing beards, appeared truly outrageous to the Japanese who first saw them" (Kasschau and Ssumu 61).

43. Brazilians derogatively called them *japôn* (japan) or *japôn traiçoeiro* (traitor japan).

44. "Do ponto de vista psicológico, ao mesmo tempo em que procuravam apoio junto a outros conterrâneos, os imigrantes tornavam-se cada vez mais permeáveis a noticias falsas, desde que estas contribuíssem para elevar seu moral" (254).

45. On 7 September 1945, the Zaigaku Zaigo Gunji-kai (Association of Japanese Former Military Personnel in Brazil) was founded. It was followed by the Shindo-Jissen Renmei (League for the Practice of the Emperor's Guidelines); Aikoku Nipponjin-kai (Patriotic Association by the United Japanese); Aikoku Doshi-kai (Patriotic Association for the Unity of Thought); Chudo-kai (Association of the Emperor's Paths for Happiness); Kokusui Seinen-dan (Youth Nationalist Group); Kyoei Kyokai (Union and Progress Guild); and Aikoku Sieka Fujin-kai (Association for the Purification of Japanese Ladies in Brazil); and Sekisei-dan (Group of Sincere

Servants of the Emperor), which was replaced by Koodoosha (founded in February 1944 and supported by Colonel Junji Kikkawa), a society that is considered the embryo of Shindō Renmei, led by Kikkawa and the Okinawan Sei'ichi Tomari.

46. "A constituição de uma sociedade como essa, que passou a distribuir de maneira ampla informes e instruções a um grupo étnico que se sentia perdido e abandonado pelo governo de seu país, deu ânimo a milhares de japoneses. E a sociedade alcançou, com rapidez quase inacreditável, enorme prestígio e grande respeitabilidade dentro da comunidade nipônica" (278).

47. "Eram textos com um certo tom infantil, a pesar da ameaça que continham" (289).

48. In a forthcoming essay, however, Seth Jacobowitz challenges "the idea that Brazil and South America were *not* part of Japanese imperial expansionist discourse. For too long, immigration has been relegated to the margins of national space and the national imaginary—when you leave its borders and enter another nation, you become their problem, take on their identity, history, etc. But in reality things weren't so simple" (n.p.; emphasis in the original).

# 5

# CONTESTED MODERNITIES

## *Dekasegi (Self-)Representations and the Nipponization of Brazil*

> Once we accept the actual configuration of literary experiences overlapping with one another and interdependent, despite national boundaries and coercively legislated national autonomies, history and geography are transfigured in new maps, in new and far less stable entities, in new types of connections.
>
> *(Said,* Culture and Imperialism *317)*

The dekasegi phenomenon is the most recent major historical landmark for Japanese Brazilians, as they have formed a new minority in Japan that, for the most part, remains segregated from Japanese society. Indeed, since the early 1990s, one in five Brazilian Nikkeijin (it has been estimated that there are 1.5 million Brazilian Nikkeijin) has moved to Japan at least once, thus creating the third-largest community in Japan, after the Korean and Chinese ones. According to Daniela de Carvalho, by 1998, the number of Nikkeijin in Japan was "approximately 274,691, of whom 81 per cent are of Brazilian origin" (xiii). Lesser adds that by 2005, Brazilians made up "about eighty

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percent of the more than three hundred thousand Latin Americans in Japan" (*Immigration* 192).

Economic trends in recent years, however, have contributed to the decrease in numbers of Nikkeijin moving to Japan: "As Brazil's economy grew stronger in the 2000s, and Japan's economy weakened, the migratory trends reversed slightly. In 2006, remittances from Japan to Brazil dropped to US$2.2 billion . . . and the amounts have continued to fall. In 2009, only fifteen thousand new Brazilian Nikkei officially registered to work in Japan, down from the 2005 high or more than forty-six thousand" (Lesser, *Immigration* 193). The number of Brazilian dekasegi has been significantly reduced from 312,582 in 2008 to 177,953 in 2014, due to the economic crisis in Japan, but the recent recession in Brazil may turn the tide again. Although Brazil has been included as one of the leading developing countries—of the so-called BRICS (along with Russia, India, China, and South Africa), whose economy was predicted to dominate the twenty-first century—institutional weakness and adverse economic conditions over the last five years, with less demand and lower prices for oil and commodities, have had negative repercussions on their economies.[1] The Brazilian government's economic mismanagement, amid accusations of widespread corruption, has led some experts to assert that the BRICS bubble has burst; like Russia, Brazil has fallen into recession.

In any case, the remigration or second diaspora has made Brazilian Nikkeijin more transnational than ever before. The Japanese American writer and scholar Karen Tei Yamashita, in her *Circle K Cycles* (2001)—a compilation of personal experiences, observations, and fiction—notes that by the first decade after the inception of the dekasegi exodus, many Japanese Brazilians had settled and created a vibrant community in Japan: "one marvels at the resourcefulness and energy of these people. They have rapidly built small businesses: services such as educational programs, child care facilities, documentation and legal services, and associations and networks of every kind including soccer teams, internet cafes, and samba schools" (14). Consequently, as determined in previous chapters, Nikkei cultural production (Nakasato's *Nihonjin*, for example) often suggests that history repeats itself through this reverse migration. This is precisely the premise of the Nikkei anthropologist Simone Toji's short story "Dois tempos" (Two Times), included in the collection *Retratos Japoneses no Brasil. Literatura Mestiça* (Japanese Portraits in Brazil. Mestizo Literature, 2010). Two different time periods intersect until they

become conflated at story's end. In the first one, we have the Issei pioneer Ishiro, who suffers an accident in the coffee plantation. Frustrated after his family incurs a large debt in the plantation store, he decides to flee with his family at night. The second intersecting story takes place in late twentieth-century Japan, where the Brazilian dekasegi Érika, who works at a Japanese factory, is missing work because she keeps fainting. She later finds out that she is pregnant and decides to have an abortion. Eventually, the two stories fuse into one when both Ishiro and Érika receive the same gift: a piece of paper with the word "Ganbarê" written on it; that is, they are both encouraged to "persevere in the face of difficulty."[2] This premise of the circular repetition of Nikkei experiences resurfaces in Silvio Sam's *Sonhos que de Cá Segui*, as will be seen. Like Brazilian authors, historians conceive the second Nikkei diaspora as a reflection of the first:

> Like their nineteenth-century European counterparts, Brazilian-Japanese immigrants believed that they were migrating temporarily in order to become wealthy and return home. Yet over time, the immigrants established new lives, had families, and remained. They often saw the old homeland as foreign and became comfortable in the new one . . . Brazilian migration to Japan in the 1990s was not unlike that of Europe to Brazil a century earlier. Brazilian banks opened branches that would facilitate remittances. Emigration brokers sold a vision of Japan that was often untrue, and scams were common. Upon arrival, Brazilian immigrants were often treated poorly both in work and social spaces. (Lesser *Immigration* 193–95)

Yet French political scientist Pauline Cherrier warns about the dangers of taking for granted that the Brazilian dekasegi diaspora in Japan will necessarily follow in the footsteps of their Issei ancestors in Brazil and will undergo similar experiences. In particular, Cherrier focuses on how Brazilian ethnic media in Japan recurrently uses this imaginary of cyclical repetition in its discourse: "The constant association of dekasseguis' fate and success with their ancestors' may lure migrants into thinking, even if it remains unconscious, that their working period in Japan guarantees this success they are running after. Deluded by the illusion that they are in total control of their fate, migrants may also feel guilty, in case they do not manage to reach their goal. While ethnic media represents migrants' collective conscience, it could also foster the gap existing between their imaginary and reality" ("Japanese

**FIGURE 5.1.** {to come}

immigrants" 42). The ethnic media's explicit rhetoric of success assumes the common fate of these two diasporas separated only by time. In Cherrier's view, however, the artificial convergence of a common imaginary dangerously blurs the very different sociopolitical and economic circumstances surrounding both migrations. I would add that the fact that 40 percent of the Brazilian dekasegi who moved to Japan have returned to Brazil, together with the shuttling back and forth between Japan and Brazil that has marked the experience of many of these transmigrants, further differentiates the two diasporas. Ironically, Cherrier herself inadvertently resorts to a similar mirroring approach in a different article: "Japanese politics has always been informed by a utilitarian logic that treats migrants as if they were objects: sending Brazilian Nikkeijin, who have become undesirable, back to their country followed their sending, a century earlier, their impoverished and unwanted Japanese ancestors abroad."[3]

The reverse migration forebodes a grim future for Latin American Nikkei communities (the larger ones in Brazil and Peru as well as the smaller ones

in Argentina and Bolivia), as it aggravates the situation of a population that was already declining due to an aging population, decreased birth rate, intermarriage, and the dilution of Nikkei ethnic identity. This negative side of the dekasegi boom is stressed in the following passage from the 1992 study by Comissão de Elaboração da História dos 80 Anos da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil, *Uma Epopeia Moderna: 80 Anos da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil*: "With the departure of many of its active members, there are only elderly members left in local Japanese associations, which has a negative influence in its operations."[4]

Although emigration was forbidden during the Tokugawa period (1603–1868), temporary internal migration was common. Jerry García explains: "Internal migration had been well established under the concept of *dekasegi*, the practice of leaving one's home place for temporary work long before the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Yet even by the early twentieth century, the Japanese populace did not look favorably upon the *imin* (immigrants). In fact, many Japanese emigrants were viewed by their own country as uneducated or lacking a 'national consciousness and were often criticized for abandoning the nation'" (22). This historical background may reveal the reasons Brazilian dekasegi in Japan are occasionally not well received by Japanese relatives, though both the emperor and the Meiji government encouraged emigration to South America to reduce surplus labor. Indeed, Japanese American anthropologist Joshua Hotaka Roth indicates that the few Brazilian dekasegi he knew who "visited their relatives commented that they were cold and that they seemed embarrassed to see them . . . Brazil's status as a Third World country in the eyes of many Japanese may have made them embarrassed to admit to having Japanese Brazilian relatives" (4). As could be expected, these widespread and antagonistic attitudes have transformed the dekasegi's image of Japan.

According to Yoshioka, among the Nikkeijin in Brazil the term *dekassegui* (Portuguese spelling) also used to have a negative connotation. Certain conservative Nikkei neighbors, for example, initially tried to avoid the dekasegi. Thus, whenever some Nikkeijin decided to leave for Japan, they would do it secretly to spare their families the stigma of being related to dekasegi. After some time, however, the term loses its negative connotation in Brazil, because many dekasegi hold college degrees and because "there are very few families without a relative working in Japan."[5] It has nowadays become

**FIGURE 5.2.** {to come}

simply an aspect of globalization and a term that refers to anyone working abroad.

Whereas World War II was the main inflexion point between the first period marked by the Nikkeijin's sojourner mentality and the second one, characterized by a desire to integrate into Brazilian wider society, the third important phase in Brazilian Nikkei history begins with the dekasegi phenomenon. Sasaki points to several phases during the dekasegi exodus. The first wave of Japanese Brazilians who "returned" (some Nisei had never visited the country) was quite different from subsequent immigrant groups. The first immigrants, who arrived in Japan during the second half of the 1980s, were mostly Issei and Nisei: "In general, they did not have any major bureaucratic problems for entering Japan, as they were of Japanese origin . . . many had Japanese nationality or double nationality . . . they were men of advanced age; heads of family; married; they could speak Japanese and had planned a temporary stay in Japan."[6] Some of the first Issei who moved to Japan in the late 1980s later became intermediaries in recruiting workers from Brazil, Peru, and other Latin American countries.

Toward the end of the 1980s, the second phase began with the recruitment of Nisei, who needed visas and were occasionally unfamiliar with the

Japanese language. Since they traveled with tourist visas, they were undocumented workers. In June 1990, the Japanese government decided to issue three-year visas for Nisei and one-year visas for Sansei. This change in immigration law opened the floodgates to Nikkei migration. Salaries remained high, and workers had the option of overtime work. Most of the Sansei immigrants who arrived in Japan were unable to speak Japanese and were unfamiliar with the culture. Many were either single (some married Japanese citizens in Japan) or recently married (often to non–Japanese Brazilians); there were as many women as men among them. Typically, their stay in Japan was longer than that of the first wave of Japanese Brazilians (Sasaki 109). The third and last phases began near the end of 1991, when, on account of Japan's unexpected economic recession, less overtime work was available—some dekasegi altogether lost their jobs (Yoshioka and Sam, *Dekassegui* 40). The première of Kimihiro Tsumura and Mayu Nakamura's documentary *Kodoku na Tsubame-tachi* (*Lonely Swallows*; 2011) took place when unemployment was seriously affecting dekasegi workers.

This increase was in response to the "push factor" during the Latin American economic crisis of the late 1980s and to the "pull factor" created by an unskilled labor shortage in Japan. Another pull factor was the "amendment to Japan's Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law in 1990 that allowed Japanese descendants (called *nikkeijin* in Japan) up to the third generation and their spouses to have work visas. Government officials believed that encouraging the entry of those of Japanese descent would end illegal immigration (notably from the Middle East) and provide workers for factories facing a labor shortage" (Lesser, *Immigration* 191). This law, therefore, privileged foreigners of Japanese ancestry with the veiled intention of replacing unskilled (often unauthorized) labor from China, Korea, Pakistan, the Middle East, and other countries. Daniela de Carvalho argues that the policy was "consistent with the image that the Japanese have formed of themselves as a racially and culturally homogeneous people. Underlying this image is the assumption that cultural traits are closely bound up with genetic traits and, therefore, Japanese 'blood' and culture are seen to be associated criteria" (xiii). Indeed, Japanese politicians, unashamedly proud of Japan's purported "ethnic purity," assumed that, after several generations, Latin American Nikkeijin had managed to preserve their Japanese cultural characteristics; this expectation was often unfounded, even though many

**FIGURE 5.3.** {to come}

immigrants were still familiar with Japanese culture and self-identified as ethnic Japanese in Brazil.

After Japanese immigration laws changed and working visas were provided to people of Japanese ancestry up to the third generation, many Brazilian Nikkeijin opted to leave the country where they were born to relocate, often with their Brazilian families, to the land of their ancestors. Most dekasegi were recruited to work in small or medium manufacturing firms and in the construction sector; Japanese youth refused these jobs, popularly known as the *san k* or 3ks (*kitsui*, *kiken*, *kitanai*, meaning "difficult, dangerous, and dirty"). Soon, feeling disappointed, exploited, and discriminated in Japan, a considerable number of them switched alliances from an idealized, ancestral Japan to their native Brazil and even developed a performance of "Brazilianness" unknown to the Nikkeijin living in Brazil, at times exaggerating their interest in soccer and samba, for example. As it turned out, the lived, inhabited space of Japan, its "representational space" (Henri Lefebvre's term), was quite different from that enchanting space described by their ancestors. Tellingly, revisiting tired clichés about the Japanese, in his poem "Gueixa" (Geisha), Nisei Khaorin (Fernando Tamura's pen name, 1955–) fantasizes

**FIGURE 5.4.** {to come}

about beautiful geishas with kimonos of the Edo period, only to realize that Ginza is now a commercial area; likewise, in "As rãs" (The Frogs), he daydreams about encountering heroic samurai with *katanas* (swords) in the Chūbu region.[7] The two poems, included in his collection *Poema para Você* (Poem for You, 1996), underscore the contrast between an idealized ancestral Japan and his contemporary Japan. Although these negative feelings toward the host country may eventually improve, such an evolution is not generally mentioned in dekasegi cultural production.

Dekasegi experiences of displacement are described in testimonials, films, novels, poetry collections, chronicles, and films. In the testimonial *Japón no da dos oportunidades* (Japan Does Not Provide a Second Chance, 1994), Peruvian Augusto Higa denounces the abuses that he, along with other Latin American dekasegi, endured. He lists the different processes of deethnification and reethnification experienced in their homeland and in Japan.[8] Interestingly, the sociologist Ayumi Takenaka demonstrates that there are significant differences among the experiences of dekasegi from different Latin American countries: "Brazilians maintained, and were considered to

maintain, more Japanese cultural and racial features than Peruvians on average, and were subsequently ranked higher than Peruvians in the ethnic hierarchy in Japan. And this was reinforced by the higher status of Brazil in the global hierarchy of nations compared to Peru" (328–29). For this reason, adds Takenaka, "In contrast to Brazilian return migrants who often resorted to Brazil to restore self-esteem in response to the ethnic rejection they experienced in Japan, therefore, Japanese Peruvians faced more problems in using the idiom of the nation" (324). As could be expected, Higa's testimonial is more critical of the Japanese treatment of the dekasegi than are the Brazilian dekasegi texts included here.

American scholars Daniel Linger and Karen Tei Yamashita have also contributed to the exploration of Brazilian dekasegi's experience in *No One Home: Brazilian Selves Remade in Japan* (2001) and *Circle K. Cycles* (2001) respectively. In addition, several Brazilian works shed light on the dekasegi experience, including Yamasaki's film *Gaijin II*, Reimei Yoshioka and Silvio Sam's testimonial *Dekassegui: Com os Pés no Chão . . . no Japão* (Dekasegi: With My Feet on the Ground . . . in Japan, 1999) and his novel *Sonhos que de Cá Segui* (1997), and Kakazu's *Crônicas de um Garoto que Também Amava os Beatles e os Rolling Stones* (1988).

## *GAIJIN: AMA-ME COMO SOU* AND THE SECOND DIASPORA

While both Gaijin films by Yamasaki nostalgically (again the key presence of nostalgia in Nikkei cultural production) recall the history of Japanese immigration and pay homage to the sacrifices made by the pioneers, the sequel, *Gaijin II* also addresses the infamous episode of Shindō Renmei and looks forward to the uncertain future of a minority severely weakened in Brazil and in the rest of Latin America by the dekasegi phenomenon that caused, timidly in the late 1980s and massively in the early 1990s, a quarter of a million Brazilian Nikkeijin to relocate to Japan to work in factories.[9] They also coincide in their celebration of sociocultural integration, transculturation, and miscegenation.

The protagonists are now the four women in the saga, instead of just Titoe Yamada: Titoe, her daughter Shinobu Yamashita, her granddaughter Maria Yamashita, married to a Euro-Brazilian, and her great-granddaughter Yoko Salinas, who falls in love with a Japanese youngster in Japan. These women

are symbolically united by the beautiful kimono that they pass on as each comes of age. Although she is no longer the sole protagonist, Titoe (played first by Kyoko Tsukamoto and later by Aya Ono, when she becomes the charming elderly *Batyan*) still has an important role in the sequel. In contrast with the earlier part of *Gaijin I*, she is now a strong and determined woman who allows no one to manipulate her, thus again accentuating the central role of Nikkei women in the emigration and remigration processes. Building on the several flashbacks in *Gaijin I*, in which, reflecting her anxiety about the vanishing of a beloved past, Titoe daydreamed about her former life in a romanticized, premodern Japan, the sequel adds a more extraordinary nuance: in what is perhaps a nod to Magical Realism, Titoe now has a premonition that a wildfire will consume her Japanese hometown; she later learns that her parents died in the fire and feels guilty for failing to return to Japan and warn them about the danger.

With her doubts and uncertainties resolved, she is now fully in charge of her family and her destiny. For instance, in a jungle scene, Titoe, having just shot a wild beast, proudly tells her daughter in Japanese: "Shinobu, this land . . . is ours!"[10] Later, already able to communicate in Portuguese, Titoe helps a recently arrived German immigrant to give birth at home and then uses this experience to teach her daughter, on her twentieth birthday, an empowering life lesson, telling her in Japanese: "Shinobu, here, in this land, women have to be strong. Otherwise, they won't endure it. Do you understand? And we have to survive." The narrative voice underscores Titoe's determination by explaining that she built her house encouraged by her "*gambarê* spirit" (or "ganbare," in the English spelling; roughly meaning "hang in there," "try/do your best," "do not give up," often said to encourage people to succeed or to wish them good luck).[11] According to the perhaps essentialist outlook of the film, this concept encapsulates the essence of the Japanese spirit and functions as a sort of litmus test for true Japaneseness with the four female protagonists. This purported collective virtue serves as a not-so-veiled explanation for Nikkei socioeconomic success in Brazil. Yet Daniela de Carvalho, Tomoko Makabe, and other critics have pointed out other important factors for this success, including "the economic growth of Brazil and the industrialization of São Paulo," the "lack of competition from indigenous workers and other immigrant groups," and "material support and inceptives from Japan" (Daniela de Carvalho 45).

The appearance of the Japanese word *ganbare* in several of the texts and films studied here reflects a key concept in Japan's worldview brought by many of its emigrants: withstanding adversity with resignation, resilience, and determination until achieving a goal, a trait that is proudly highlighted to the point of self-essentializing and homogenizing. This is the case of Tsugio Shindo, who, after praising numerous times in his *Passos da Imigração no Brasil* Issei dedication and passion for work, brings his writing close to the hypernationalistic Nihonjinron genre: "Japanese people are unique, because they all have the same blood, traditions and culture, speak the same language, and have their own story within a small territory. The rural Japanese village's characteristic solidarity and mutual assistance to address difficulties has remained alive in Brazil."[12] While this idea of Japanese exceptionalism permeates much of Nikkei cultural production, it is particularly noticeable in Shindo's work, where he proclaims, bordering on a racialist discourse, the indisputable superiority of Issei agricultural workers: "For these types of mechanized agriculture, skilled labor was needed . . . with high level knowledge and techniques. At the time, there was consensus in Brazil about the fact that only Japanese Issei could fulfill these requirements. The reason was that . . . most laborers were *nordestinos* [coming from Brazil's north east], who had muscular strength, but were illiterate and had little knowledge . . . It was well known that there was great difference in the result, when compared to Japanese labor."[13]

Going back to *Gaijin II*, the narrator for most of the film (at times Yoko takes her place) is Titoe's grandson and the son of Shinobu and Toshiu Yamashita, the Japanese teacher she marries in rural São Paulo. A flashback, at the beginning of the film, takes us to Titoe's childhood in 1900 rural Fukuoka Prefecture, the lost time of the family idyll in a premodern, bucolic world. In this context, Boym argues that while, at first sight, nostalgia is a longing for a place, "actually it is a yearning for a different time—the time of our childhood, the slower rhythm of our dreams. In a broader sense, nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress" (xv). Indeed, each flashback in the film emphasizes the crippling power that nostalgia may have on the characters.

Perhaps to emphasize even more her personal agency, in *Gaijin II* Titoe is the one who chooses to migrate to help her family, as opposed to being unwillingly brought along by her brother, as happened in the first film.

Moreover, in *Gaijin II*, she did not oppose her arranged marriage because, according to the narrator, she believed what she was taught: a marriage based on love destabilizes the family's harmony. Soon, however, Titoe's adventures give way to those of her female descendants and the Shindō Renmei episode. Another scene reveals how assertive Titoe has become: she lies to Brazilian policemen, who are investigating the existence of an underground Japanese school, when she tells them that they are preparing her daughter's wedding to Toshiu, the Japanese teacher (it is apparent that the improvised wedding plans fit rather well into Titoe's plans for her daughter). Later, after Toshiu asks his Nikkei peers to help survivors of the war Japan has just lost, Shindō Renmei terrorists, considering him a Makegumi for accepting Japan's defeat, shoot him dead. His son, the film's narrator, is also shot in the legs, leaving him disabled for life.

Many years later, Titoe's granddaughter, Maria, marries Gabriel Bravo Salinas (played by Cuban actor Jorge Perugorría) after becoming pregnant. Whereas Shinobu refuses to attend her daughter's wedding because Gabriel is a gaijin, Titoe accepts the *zakkon*, or mixed marriage, without hesitation. After Maria and Gabriel separate, Gabriel joins Shinobu as a dekasegi in Japan (how a non-Nikkei Brazilian becomes a dekasegi without his wife living in Japan goes unexplained) to relieve the family's economic problems, but, like some dekasegi who "disappear" in Japan and abandon their families, he loses contact with his relatives. A scene in a Japanese factory illustrates the hardships endured by Brazilian dekasegi, when Gabriel threatens a manager who is verbally abusing his mother-in-law. In this sense, Traci Roberts-Camps points out: "The current scene in *Gaijin II* ends with Gabriel defending his mother-in-law and exclaiming that the manager cannot yell at a Brazilian woman in such a way in his presence. Thus, identity is crucial in this scene: Shinobu has returned to Japan in search of her roots and she is labeled a Brazilian and not worthy of being in Japan. Gabriel himself also identifies her as Brazilian, whereas before, in Brazil, he had considered himself to be very different from Shinobu. Their shared hardship in Japan unites them in terms of their Brazilian identity" (136).

In *Gaijin II*, Gabriel and Maria's daughter, the fourth-generation Nikkeijin (or Yonsei) Yoko Salinas (Lissa Diniz), inherits the ganbare spirit from her Japanese female ancestors, her proud self-identification as a Brazilian in Japan notwithstanding. According to the film's narrator, this is shown once Yoko

decides to cross the ocean in search of her father, fearing that he may have perished in a Kobe earthquake. The family happily reunites in Japan after Maria and her daughter Yoko find Gabriel alive, but Yoko struggles with her cultural identity, as her classmates call her gaijin and ask her to "go home." Proudly, the irreverent girl informs them that just the Brazilian state of Paraná is larger than the entire Japanese archipelago.

After Maria and Yoko purchase a plane ticket for Batyan (Titoe) in Shibakaki, Japan, the elderly lady feels guilty for not having fulfilled her promise made to her parents of returning to the place where seventeen generations of her ancestors are buried. She realizes, however, that Japan is no longer her country. As the narrator explains, Batyan understood that "our land is where our house is, and our house is where our soul lives." In Boym's words, "Nostalgia, like progress, is dependent on the modern conception of unrepeatable and irreversible time" (13). Having finally overcome the trauma of displacement, Batyan's satisfaction with the place where she lives, Brazil, affirmatively answers the narrator's question at the beginning of the film: "Does Batyan think that crossing the ocean was worth it?"[14] The circle has been closed.

## JAPAN AS A ROLE MODEL IN *CRÔNICAS DE UM GAROTO*

As mentioned in the introduction, part of Japanese Brazilian cultural production, rather than proposing integration into mainstream Brazilian national culture in order to eliminate social problems affecting an ethnic minority, instead suggests that non-Nikkei Brazilians should emulate Nikkei work ethics and value systems. An alternative version to this message is Brazilian dekasegi Agenor Kakazu's *Crônicas de um Garoto que Também Amava os Beatles e os Rolling Stones* (henceforth, *Crônicas*),[15] where he recommends the Nipponization of his native Brazil, not by letting Nikkeijin take the lead (as Alberto Fujimori suggested in Peru), but rather by learning from Japan itself. I hesitate to call this text a testimonial in the strict sense of the word, since it neither denounces a situation of oppression nor demands urgent action from readers. John Beverley explains that "the situation of narration in *testimonio* has involved an urgency to communicate, a problem of repression, poverty, subalternity, imprisonment, struggle for survival, and so on" (12–13). While it would be far-fetched to assign these labels to Kakazu's chronicles, some testimonial traits may be found: this is the author's first book; here he presents

the facts as historical truths that he witnessed and narrates his personal experience while claiming to represent the voice of an entire social group (dekasegi in Japan). In fact, the author records not only his impressions and memories, but also those of other dekasegi, thus adding to the sense of a collective voice: "In the name of all dekasegi, I extend, in the closing of this chronicle, my sincere gratitude to all my sources," states Kakazu.[16] And as it is typical of testimonials, Kakazu had also written about the events narrated soon after they transpired; he previously published twenty of the sixty chronicles included in *Crônicas* in *Tudo Bem*, a journal aimed at Japanese Brazilians residing in Tokyo.[17]

Even though any claim to truth found in an autobiographical text (and by extension, in most first-person narratives) can often be problematized, here there is no apparent ulterior motif to exaggerate or invent the information provided. Yet, as in other dekasegi texts, there is a clear intention to prove the author's patriotism (occasionally falling into the "more-Brazilian-than-thou" mode) and to present the dekasegi as Brazilian patriots who actively contribute to improve the national image overseas.[18] On the other hand, rather than denouncing a situation of oppression or persecution, Kakazu claims to provide a voice for a social group whose adaptation experience has been at times so traumatic that some of its members became suicidal or suffered serious mental disorders: "2 to 3 percent of them suffer from psychological problems, which is notably higher than the rate of mental illness among the general Nikkeijin population in Brazil. Such individuals usually show minor psychological symptoms such as mild neurosis, persecutory delusions, slight paranoia, auditory hallucinations, anorexia, and insomnia" (Lesser, *Searching* 135). The book's original subtitle, "Que Não Precisou Lutar no Vietnã, mas Se Viu Obrigado a Batalhar no Japão" (Who Did Not Have to Fight in Vietnam, but Forced to Do So in Japan), which makes reference to the song on which the title is based and which was later omitted by Kakazu, together with his frequent references to his workplace as "the battlefield," suggests the harsh nature of the dekasegi experience.[19]

The chronicles of Kakazu's stay in Japan begin in 1991, that is, soon after the start of the dekasegi phenomenon. The author explains that his first impulse after witnessing other Nikkeijin move to Japan was to stay in Brazil at all costs; he even compared himself to Dom Pedro (Pedro I of Brazil [1798–1834], Brazil's first ruler), who, in a speech titled "Fico" (I Stay), refused to return to

Portugal even though the Cortes required him to do so after the 1807 French invasion. Later, however, Kakazu exchanged his "fico" for "eu vou!" (I'm going!), explaining that his reversal was out of concern for his family's well-being and economic security. In reality, these lighthearted passages function as a veiled caveat through which the author, perhaps feeling remorse or guilt, shifts responsibility for his decision to leave the country to the government, whose economic failures forced him to migrate.[20] However, though most dekasegi texts cite the economic crisis as the main push factor, Roth provides another: "Although economic conditions underlay this dramatic migration, many Nikkeijin, even those who had never been to Japan before, framed it as a return to homeland that offered the possibility of self-understanding" (3). If this was, in reality, Kakazu's original incentive, he never acknowledges it in the text. Initially, no signs of cultural motivation or ethnic nostalgia are found in his decision to "return" to the ancestral homeland.

Without abandoning his modest and conciliatory tone, Kakazu proceeds to narrate his minor epic. According to him, it is the severe economic crisis that causes him to emigrate to Japan, where he is to work at a transportation company. Yet, the chronicler claims that with time his curiosity about Japanese culture, unlike that of most dekasegi, increases; when he returns to Brazil, he is convinced that his arduous experience receives validation from his augmented knowledge of Japanese culture, more than from economic gains. Again, these passages distance the dekasegi experience from an exclusively economic pursuit (potentially perceived as selfish or unpatriotic), bringing it closer to an idealistic voyage of self-exploration and self-improvement.

Throughout the narrative, Kakazu proudly manifests his love for Brazil, one that geographical distance only intensifies: "We are all a great family and we are all brothers. We feel this bond to be stronger when we are far away."[21] His patriotism allows him to see the Brazilian flag's colors in Japan's fall landscapes: "Nothing is prettier than a Japanese garden in the fall. The green and yellow are mixed on the top of great trees that make us, Brazilians far away from home, remember the colors of our flag."[22] Paradoxically, the worldwide interdependence in economic and cultural activities generated by globalization processes, which besides producing a global exchange of worldviews are supposed to be undermining the powers and importance of the nation-state, have increased Brazilian patriotism among dekasegi. As Boym points out, "Globalization encouraged stronger local attachments. In counterpoint to

our fascination with cyberspace and the virtual global village, there is no less global epidemic of nostalgia, an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world. Nostalgia inevitably reappears as a defense mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals" (xiv). Kakazu's declared patriotism is then nuanced with an avowed sense of guilt for leaving his country in the midst of a historic economic crisis: "I felt like one who abandons ship as it is sinking, abandoning my loved ones who are sinking along with a large cargo ship named Brazil. My beloved homeland was sinking because of the worst recession of its history. Still, in my heart, I felt the strong conviction that, upon returning, I would find the situation stabilized and back to normal."[23]

Kakazu claims that it is his patriotic love that moves him to describe the benefits of Nipponizing Brazil, a country that could learn invaluable lessons from Japan's post–World War II economic miracle. A didactic approach is apparent in the author's willingness to advise those Brazilians who may have plans to become dekasegi. It is also noted when he compares the pristine waters of Tokyo's Sumida River with the environmental degradation of São Paulo's Tietê River: "Because it is long, clean, and very busy, it reminded me, with certain sadness, of our poor and polluted Tietê River, full of domestic and industrial trash, transformed into a large open-air sewer . . . If Tokyo managed to clean up the Sumida River's waters, polluted to the point of being considered 'practically dead,' São Paulo can well do likewise with the Tietê River."[24] Therefore, while Kakazu takes advantage of his sojourn in Japan to familiarize himself with the local culture, his experience there also opens his eyes to potential solutions to his own country's problems through its Nipponization.

The same formula for national recovery is revisited further on in the book. Although the author begins a passage complaining about the discrimination suffered by his dekasegi predecessors, who were not allowed to speak Japanese in the factory and were forced to use interpreters, among his cold and indifferent Japanese coworkers, he befriends Shioya, who eventually opens up to other Brazilian coworkers. Shioya turns out to be the exemplary embodiment of selfless sacrifice for the collective, national good. He and others like him, who rebuilt a country left in ashes after the World War II, become, in Kakazu's eyes, models of dedication and patriotism and the key to Japan's economic success:

> Moved by responsibility, seriousness, and a strong determination to overcome difficulties, they devoted themselves to transforming rubbish into wealth, dire poverty into affluence, ruins into buildings and, after a few years, the great Japanese economic miracle took place.
>
> Certainly, none of this would exist if, instead of working, they had folded their arms and complained about bad luck, pains, hunger, and weather.
>
> I would like to extend my deep-felt gratitude to my friend Shioya-san for teaching me to value and believe in the force of work.[25]

Convinced of the benefits of discipline and hard work, Kakazu goes on to vehemently exhort his countrymen to adopt Japanese behavioral patterns for the betterment of Brazil: "BRAZILIAN is our surname. Once we decide to work, I believe that we must try our best to fulfill our obligations, trying not to denigrate the positive image that was built, with so much effort, by our country's famous and consecrated heroes."[26]

I contend here that the occasional uncritical idealization of Japanese patriotism and work ethics in dekasegi cultural production forms part of an indirect, ongoing celebration of the Nikkeijin's potential for leadership in Brazil: just as the abnegated Japanese workers are selflessly sacrificing themselves for their country's economic progress, so will Nikkeijin sacrifice for that of Brazil. This approach is also evident in Khaorin's poem "Japão" (Japan), where the poetic voice pays homage to Japanese patriotism and culture: "No other people love their homeland so much / or created such a just society / inspired by simple honesty / and extensive efficiency."[27] This discourse, therefore, presents Nikkei behavior as a model for Brazil, particularly considering that this country often considers them to be identical to Japanese in Japan. Incidentally, this type of rhetoric is not exclusive to Brazil and Peru. David Palumbo-Liu studied the conservative rearticulation of Yellow Perilism and the model minority myth in the United States (which claims that "traditional Asian values," Confucian values, and post-Confucian entrepreneurship make Asians well suited for success in the US economy) used by Caucasians as testimony that they are not racists because, while Latinxs and blacks are marked by their purported social pathologies and failures, Asians are successfully different, though of the yellow race: "Conservatives needed a weapon to use against liberals who were pushing civil rights legislation—they found it in Japanese Americans, whose reputed success showed that urban poverty and

violence were not the outcomes of institutional racism, but of constitutional weaknesses in minorities that were only exacerbated by the welfare state. In short, the model minority myth provided the opportunity for conservatives to situate the causes of these problems *outside* a consideration of institutional racism and economic violence: the success of the Japanese Americans was used to dispute a structural critique of the U.S. political economy" (172; emphasis in original).

When Kakazu returns to Brazil, his initial exaltation suddenly turns into bitter disappointment, for he is robbed at the airport and fined for excessive luggage and not declaring goods purchased abroad. Indeed, Daniela de Carvalho observes that "there are often gangs waiting for the *Dekasegui* at São Paulo airport, and many are robbed on their arrival. Others are robbed shortly after their return" (110). The chronicler confesses that he finds Brazil's poor image abroad embarrassing and then argues that Brazilian politicians are not solely to blame: "In reality, each of us is also partially guilty."[28] In my view, he includes this observation to laud the patriotism of Brazilian dekasegi, whose honesty and hard work continue to improve Brazil's image in Japan:[29] "Today, there are thousands of Brazilian brethren abroad, struggling to make a small contribution to help those illustrious personalities [Pelé, Ayrton Senna, Oscar Niemeyer] in solidifying an image of an honest Brazil.

Consciously or not, every Brazilian worker abroad carries with him the Brazilian flag, we are all representatives of our country."[30]

This is, however, a questionable argument because, as is well known, Latin American dekasegi have often been associated with crime in Japan. Daniela de Carvalho, for instance, states:

> The number of crimes involving Brazilians has been on the increase in recent years. In 1994, there were 587 reported cases, an increase of 17 percent on the previous year (*Noticias do Japão*, 8–14 March 1996). The number of adolescents committing crimes is also on the increase, although the figure for arrests is uncertain. However, in 1997, in the Kurihama reform school in Kanagawa, there were ten Brazilian teenagers and in Nagoya two (*International Press*, 6 December 1997). In January 1996, about 30 Brazilians were awaiting trial and two years later, 27 cases were receiving support from the Brazilian Consulate.
>
> Crimes include shoplifting, car theft, robberies of pharmacies, pachinko parlours and job contractors, burglaries, sexual assaults and rapes, forgery

> of documents (driving licences, passports, etc.), violent acts, drug dealing, infringement of labour laws, and the daubing of graffiti in Portuguese. Car accidents involving Brazilians also occur very frequently. (106)

In any case, dekasegi criminality, in my view, is intimately related to the fact that, in contrast with Nikkei social status in Brazil, dekasegi have become a lower class in Japan, and, in some cases, their offspring, as will be analyzed in the following chapter, have become an underclass.

In spite of the ethnically charged nature of certain Kakazu's claims and of the solemn patriotism of his message, he consciously avoids sounding overly dramatic in his description of dekasegi sufferings in Japan. In fact, in contrast with the abovementioned testimonial by Augusto Higa, a Japanese Peruvian, the general tone of Kakazu's book is optimistic, often resorting to humor. Yet he does criticize the dekasegi's poor work and living conditions along with the discrimination they suffer; he wonders, for example, why some Japanese shop clerks refuse to sell goods to them. Indeed, Daniela de Carvalho notes that "in July 1998, it was reported that some shops in Hamamatsu were reluctant to accept Brazilian and Peruvian customers, apparently because of their behavior in the shops" (131). The chronicler also disparages his boss at the factory, "whose answers were always dry, cold, and full of scorn."[31]

Brazilian Nikkeijin arrive in Japan with a Brazilian notion of time that is radically different from that of the Japanese. The breakneck pace followed at Japanese factories and the meticulous assignment of time often shock the often easygoing dekasegi. Thus, the chronicler lists workplace accidents caused by the rapid pace at his factory and by various cases of dekasegi victimization in others: "Stories of workers who developed diseases resulting from toxic, unhealthy workplaces abound . . . There are also cases of people injured while working in poor work conditions made worse by dishonest companies, exploitative, irresponsible bosses, bad-intentioned colleagues, etc.

There are also workers who simply disappear without leaving a trace. Their relatives in Brazil, lacking information, are stricken with despair while finding themselves in dire straits."[32]

Kakazu, therefore, offers Japan as a model that Brazil should follow, while concomitantly denouncing abuses against dekasegi workers and expressing his disappointment with certain aspects of Japanese life.[33] But his strongest criticism is directed at the automatization of life and what he sees as the

Japanese obsession with manufacturing productivity: "For the sake of productivity, the surrounding area turns into a battlefield where automatized machines are constantly tweaked to increase their speed in order to meet daily quotas."[34] The chronicler dislikes the repetitiveness of his job, as well as the long working hours (fifteen occasionally), which he describes as "a year of slavery, subjected to quotas and time clocks."[35] By contrast, he identifies with Okinawan lifestyle when he attends the "Ryukyu Festival 96," which provided a valued opportunity to reconnect with his ancestors' culture.

In consonance with the overall didactic and philosophical tone of the chronicles, some can be read as a useful guide for potential future dekasegi. Thus Kakazu warns his readers about the temptation of consumerism and about the need to adapt to strange customs and culinary habits. He also provides advice on how to avoid accidents at work. But perhaps the most important recommendation is to undergo an appropriate psychological preparation before leaving for Japan in order to overcome the feeling of saudade. Yoshioka and Sam provide the same warning about the cultural shock future dekasegi will probably experience in Japan: "One of the causes of the emotional traumas suffered by dekasegi in Japan is, undoubtedly, the lack psychological preparation to confront a completely different culture."[36]

Overall, as stated, behind Kakazu's testimony of the way he managed to overcome hardships in Japan, there is a declaration of patriotism aimed at offsetting his ostensible feeling of guilt for having abandoned his native country at a time of critical economic crisis. One may wonder why dekasegi feel this need to justify their mass departure from Brazil. Perhaps, beyond the expression of Brazilian patriotism that one may also find among other Brazilian expatriates around the world, it is a symptom of insecurity regarding their national belonging. More important, *Crônicas* suggests that Brazil needs to follow the path to success traced by Japan, based on principles of honesty, hard work, patriotism, and selfless collective work for the national good. He ends his testimony in a hopeful, patriotic, and cheerful tone: "I have unlimited confidence in the future of our young and beloved Brazil!"[37]

## SONHOS QUE DE CÁ SEGUI'S DIDACTIC FICTION

Within the same subgenre, another book published with the goal of helping potential dekasegi improve their living and working conditions in Japan

is Reimei Yoshioka and Silvio Sam's (pen name of the architect and author Silvio Kazushi Sano) collection of chronicles, essays, and articles *Dekassegui: Com os Pés no Chão . . . no Japão* (Keeping Your Feet on the Ground . . . in Japan, 1999; henceforth, *Dekassegui*).[38] Two years before its publication, Silvio Sam had already delivered similar advice for dekasegi, but in a more enticing way, in his novel *Sonhos que de Cá Segui* (Dreams that I Followed from Here, 1997; henceforth, *Sonhos*).[39] The novel, which is based on autobiographical experiences and on real people, includes epigraphs taken from interviews with real-life dekasegi, interviews that further add to the sense of verisimilitude. The book cover by Ysayama publishing house includes Silvio Sam's drawing of a shaky and insecure dekasegi on his way to Japan for the first time ("na ida . . . [on the way there]), alongside another one with the same dekasegi on his way back, who is now full of confidence, sports sunglasses, and boasts of his purchasing power. Tellingly, however, there is a question mark after the words "na volta . . . ?" (upon return) placed under the second drawing in order to open the readers' eyes to potential dangers and false expectations. The messages scattered throughout the plot are openly didactic, as several characters in the novel provide useful advice on how to prepare oneself for the cultural shock of life and work in Japan, as well as for the also potentially traumatic eventual return to Brazil.

As a former migrant worker in Japan who returned to Brazil, Sam contrasts the dekasegi dreams mentioned in the title with the harsh reality that disappointed dekasegi usually find in Japanese factories. *Sonhos* tells the story of a fictional Brazilian family that, reacting to the economic crisis and lack of professional opportunities in their homeland, joins the dekasegi exodus. As is common in dekasegi literature, protagonist Pedro Tanaka compares their experience and that of all Latin American dekasegi to the adventures of Issei pioneers in Brazil during the first years of the twentieth century. He also describes the dekasegi phenomenon as an outcome of social injustice: young Brazilians were given the false hope of earning a college degree that would lead to financial security. Most of all, *Sonhos* reflects the author's anxiety about Japanese Brazilians' national loyalty. Readers thus again find a patriotic claim to place, one that cements an unquestionable loyalty to the Brazilian nation.

Whereas the most symbolically charged space of the Issei pioneer experience was the coffee plantation (with perhaps the *Kasato Maru* ship), the

undisputed dekasegi chronotope is the Japanese midsized factory that functions as a trigger for reidentification, namely, the simultaneous collective rejection of Japanese social conventions (dekasegi often perceive Japanese society as overregulated) and the embrace of Brazilian individualism. It is in the workplace where dekasegi have a more fluid contact with Japanese and where their frustrations become exacerbated by the work pace. Eventually, if dekasegi workers want to abandon their sojourner mentality—as the Japanese did in Brazil—and adapt to Japanese culture, efforts to create a Brazilian social subject throughout generations must be undone. The true frontier has become cultural rather than racial.

Through a process of voluntary, societal amnesia, the same subjects who identified as Japanese in Brazil now reidentify as unmarked Brazilians because of their rejection by Japanese society and their inability or unwillingness to negotiate Japanese life. Roth explains that "some Japanese Brazilians who have gone to Japan to study, and many who have gone there to work, have come to feel less a sense of belonging than they may have expected in their ancestral homeland. Some have come to think of themselves as Brazilians who happen to have Japanese parents or grandparents" (2). Therefore, new identities are emerging from this palimpsest of identifications owing to the effects of economic globalization, the subject's personal relationship with spatiality, and a reconfigured notion of belonging. In this context, Boym, discussing nostalgia, postulates that "it is not surprising that national awareness comes from outside the community rather than from within. It is the romantic traveler who sees from a distance the wholeness of the vanishing world. The journey gives him perspective. The vantage point of a stranger informs the native idyll. The nostalgic is never a native but a displaced person who mediates between the local and the universal" (12). Indeed, spatial and temporal perspectives provide Brazilian dekasegi with new views of their South American birthplace as well as of their ancestors' phantom homeland.

Whereas certain authors previously discussed acquiesce to the assimilation discourse, which rejected the stereotype of the unassimilable Asian immigrant and tried to prove the viability of the Nikkei social subject as Brazilian, the second diaspora seems to evince the author's need to show evidence of their Brazilian patriotism. A common tactic used is the explicit representation of the dekasegi's refusal to assimilate to Japanese culture, a sort of litmus test of true Brazilianness. Another tactic is the author's framing of the

displacement of Japanese Brazilians as forced (economic exile) rather than voluntary. In other words, these texts turn the dekasegi from a social subject into an object of sympathy. This approach is part of a rhetorical justification of the massive departure of Nikkeijin since the early 1990s. It also contributes to a redefinition of ethnic identities and to a reconfiguration of the production of a transnational Nikkei space in the context of late capitalism. By extension, we witness a symbolic remapping of the transnational Brazilian space. The reterritorialization produced by the circulation of transnational dekasegi bodies, shuttling back and forth between Japan and Brazil, makes national borders more porous. It also elicits Nikkei cultural production's reclaiming of space through a conscious collective effort to represent the dekasegi phenomenon as part of Brazilian national history, rather than as just a chapter of Nikkei ethnic history. This symbolic broadening of Brazilian national borders is even propitiated by those dekasegi who choose to settle in Japan permanently, but who identify with all things Brazilian more so than before.

The dedication of *Sonhos* introduces the protest to be elaborated in the plot: "To the dekasegi, former dekasegi, and all Brazilians who one day pursued their dreams out there. Dreams that should be realized in the country of birth. It is their right."[40] According to one of the novel's arguments, it is because of the government's mismanagement that the frustrated Pedro must work as a salesperson, despite having a degree in mechanical engineering, and his wife, Mieko Saito, has to put her college studies on hold to work as an administrative assistant at a law firm: "It's directly linked to prior bad governments in my country characterized by absurd and continuous economic plans, thorough corruption, embezzlement and, worst of all, impunity."[41] Yet the novel, like Yoshioka and Sam's chronicles, still celebrates emphasis on education and scholarly success: "But I think that our parents' great virtue was to maintain the same domestic structure that has lasted throughout Japanese history, prioritizing education . . . Among descendants of the various ethnicities that settled in Brazil, the Nikkei ranks first in education."[42] Toward the novel's end, Pedro voices his wish that his son, Quinho, would become a mechanical engineer like him and that his daughter, Nana, would major in Asian Studies like her mother, but that, unlike their parents, they would be able to find a job in their field and in Brazil, rather than having to accept unskilled, blue-collar jobs abroad.

Like other Nikkeijin, the protagonist feels disappointed when he realizes, after months of desperate job-hunting in the field of mechanical engineering, that he will be unable to meet his professional and financial goals in Brazil. Financial shortcomings eventually compel his family to move to Japan, where they remain for four years, though they initially planned to return after two years. To emphasize the importance of mental preparation before resettlement, the author describes Pedro's cultural shock in Japan. After their arrival, he learns that he is unauthorized to work until he obtains a permanent work visa—the employment agency neglected to inform him that it is illegal to work in Japan with his three-month tourist visa.[43] In any case, Pedro eventually acknowledges that the financial benefits of working in Japan offset his feeling déclassé, that is, an engineer doing manual labor. As the narrator (the author's alter-ego) clarifies, "For those who, like Pedro, had not worked in their professional fields for a long time, working manually would not bruise their almost inexistent pride."[44] After four years of working and saving money in Japan, Pedro's family returns to Brazil, where they buy a house and open a business. The story, however, is not entirely optimistic: the business is unrelated to Pedro's engineering degree, which implies that he has given up on working in that profession.

In Japan, the family befriends César, a Brazilian who works for an *empreiteira* (labor broker or contract employment company) helping Brazilian dekasegi with transportation, visas, accidents and, at times, criminal charges. This Nikkeijin is invaluable in learning how to navigate the dekasegi experience in Japan. With time, César becomes an interlocutor who, because of his ignorance of his ethnic group's history, allows Pedro to reactivate social memory as he revisits the epic adventures of the first Issei in Japan and compares them with the second diaspora. This narrative device reminds the readers of how important it is to know one's history and to learn from past mistakes.[45]

Pedro, in his conversations with César and his Japanese coworker Yamaguchi, defends the thesis often included in dekasegi cultural production that, with the dekasegi phenomenon, history repeats itself: just as the pioneer Issei, disappointed with their reality, fled the plantations at night, some dekasegi left their broker company in search of another; however, they often were just as exploited by the one they found.[46] And as Pedro's father falsely believed, many Brazilian dekasegi plan to return to Brazil within a couple

of years with their savings but end up staying in Japan. In both historical cases, Pedro argues, the government is to blame for harsh economic crises. César also compares dekasegi suffering with that of the first Issei: "I was present during major surgeries because I had to be included when it came to Brazilian patients. I also encountered an endless number of patients with mental issues caused by a number of reasons . . . like those I've already told you: loneliness, nostalgia, powerlessness, and even paranoia . . . stemming from cultural shock, new customs, diet, mistreatment, not knowing the language, etc. Who knows what else . . . (he paused here) only now I understand how much our parents and grandparents suffered after they went to Brazil as emigrants."[47]

Throughout the novel, César espouses the author's ideas, playing the role of an omniscient stand-in. For instance, he once tells the protagonist: "It's true that we came to Japan to make money . . . but we're not going to forget to return with it as well . . . keeping our health. You get it?"[48] Thus, *Sonhos* warns about the risks of working too many hours to the point of risking one's physical or mental health, then returning to Brazil in worse shape than when they left.[49] César also cautions Pedro against excessive consumerism, squandering money on long-distance phone calls, and accepting a used car from an acquaintance (it may turn to be expensive). Both friends even consider founding an organization to protect Brazilian dekasegi interests. In fact, toward novel's end, Pedro praises the orientation sessions for future dekasegi on labor laws, contracts, health insurance, and Japanese culture provided by local organizations.

In contrast with Khaorin's *Poema para Você* and Kakazu's *Crônicas*, which thank Japan for welcoming the dekasegi, Sam's novel maintains that it is Japan that should be grateful to Latin American Nikkeijin for their contribution to its economic success. Thus Pedro tells Meiko, his Japanese wife, and his Japanese coworker and friend Yamaguchi: "The departure of those thousands of Japanese to Brazil and other countries must have contributed a bit to Japan's becoming the economic power of today . . . after the war, after a large community campaign, Japanese immigrants in Brazil created associations to help war victims."[50] He reminds those Japanese who discriminate and marginalize Brazilian dekasegi workers, though they share the same blood, of these historical facts and defiantly argues that dekasegi deserve more working rights and better health insurance.

*Sonhos* also includes numerous self-critical passages that denounce the unscrupulous behavior of some dekasegi. César, for instance, argues that when department stores announce the presence of dekasegi inside through loudspeakers for the purpose of alerting employees to possible theft, there must be a reason: "those Brazilians did it only to vandalize. 'To show each other how bad they were,' he emphasized."[51] He goes on to include theft among dekasegi, Brazilians with mistresses in Japan and dependent families back home, and the Maeda case, where a Brazilian dekasegi strangled a Japanese woman to death. Daniela de Carvalho explains the case:

> Maeda was the first Brazilian *Dekasegi* known to be convicted in Japan. He was accused of having murdered a Japanese neighbor in 1991. The explanation for the crime presented by the police and the media was that he could not communicate with anybody, owing to his poor command of Japanese. As a result he developed paranoid tendencies and became mentally unbalanced. According to a rumour, he was the scapegoat for the *Yakuza* (Japanese Mafia). The fact is that although he signed a confession in Japanese and was jailed as a result, there was no corroborating evidence to his confession. (107)

After their return to Brazil, Pedro and Mieko learn from César about the "growing decadence of the Nippo-Brazilian community in Japan":[52] "The number of serious offenses committed by Brazilians, such as armed assaults, gang fights, fatal traffic accidents and drug dealing, rose with every letter received from César."[53] These passages, of course, contribute to problematize Kakazu's claim that dekasegi are heroically improving the image of Brazil abroad.

Sam, however, refutes this criticism of the dekasegi, claiming that it does not take into account that, with 250,000 members, the community is the size of a medium city, where such problems are common. Moreover, he directs readers' attention to the impressive number of Japanese Brazilians who are entrepreneurs in Japan, having first worked as dekasegi. In one of the most expensive countries in the world, he adds, many dekasegi now own houses and farms. Others are successfully working in all types of professions, including those for which they received training in Brazil. Yoshioka and Sam then stress that "in any case, the dekasegi community in Japan must and deserves to be treated like any other. Perhaps the only difference in treatment must be in per capita income, which is higher than that of any Brazilian city."[54]

Likewise, in *Sonhos* Pedro rationalizes dekasegi crime rate by pointing out that dekasegi's overall number in Japan is comparable to that of a large city. But in this polyphonic novel, in which the protagonist and his wife, Mieko, often have contrasting opinions of the same issues, she still complains: "The number of cases that tried to tarnish the good image earned by Nippo-Brazilians was exaggerated. I too was shocked at how often newspapers listed those Brazilians who had disappeared or who 'disappeared' themselves, thus abandoning their families in Brazil to dire poverty; likewise, they reported the increasing rise in drug use within their neighborhoods."[55] Like Mieko, César expresses his concern about the deterioration of Brazil's image in Japan, a consequence of the "jeitinho brasileiro" (Brazilian "cutting corners") among the dekasegi: "It is true that we are considered a Third World country, but we don't need to go along with that, so that they may continue to see us that way."[56] Similarly, Sam is critical of dekasegi who forsake families in Brazil (incidentally, the character of Gabriel [Jorge Perugorría] in Tizuka Yamasaki's *Gaijin II* is one of these dekasegi who cuts all contact with their families), resorting to ethnocultural explanations for this behavior, before he appeals to ethnic pride: "But those fathers and mothers who still have any honor left, *a source of Japanese pride*, could well try to diminish the pain of those they abandoned with some sort of compensation."[57]

In consonance with other dekasegi texts, *Sonhos* depicts dekasegi residing in Japan as true Brazilians. Thus, the narrator emphasizes the protagonist's (stereo)typical Brazilian behavior in several passages: "'Well, at least there is no physical education in the afternoon,' relieved, he once again rejoiced in Brazilian style."[58] Later, when his peers stretch a rest break a few minutes, we learn that "as a good Brazilian, Pedro joined them fully and happily."[59] Even more important is the fact that the novel describes the protagonist and, by extension, all Brazilian dekasegi as devoted patriots. Therefore, in the closing passages Pedro declares: "My dream . . . continues to be . . . to one day see my country great . . . developed . . . and serious! And in the future, to see my children . . . and yours . . . getting a good education and being able to get a worthy job in their country of birth. Without having to leave it to survive."[60]

*Sonhos* warns potential dekasegi of the dangers and mistreatment they may undergo working in Japanese factories. Roth corroborates these abuses: "Although Japanese employers interpreted higher rates of job separation as indicative of Brazilian self-interest and irresponsibility, such behavioral

patterns were not the result of cultural differences alone. They were related to the marginalization of Nikkeijin into positions that were explicitly meant to be temporary" (8–9). He also records dekasegi complaints about being reprimanded for misunderstanding instructions and specifies that dekasegi were marginalized as contract workers in large factories or as brokered workers in smaller ones, effectively making them the first to be laid off when necessary. *Sonhos* cautions them about intermediaries, for example, empreiteiras, known for their false advertising. In some cases, the agencies offered to safeguard the dekasegi's money on their trip to Japan, purportedly to avoid thefts; after arriving, however, the agencies refused to return the money. Roth coincides when he underscores the negative effect these companies have on relationships between Japanese and Latin American dekasegi: "Without denying the existence of significant cultural differences, I suggest that little progress can be made to ameliorate tension between these groups without attending the function of mediating institutions in stimulating oppositional florescence between them" (141). Even Mieko, whose main narrative purpose is to defend Japanese behavior, is shocked by the false promises heard in Brazil before leaving for Japan.

Among other grievances, the protagonist feels aggravated by the made-up discounts (for washing their uniforms, for example) that the factory owners take from his salary and dismayed when he is forced to work overtime. Incidentally, according to Daniela de Carvalho, "Although it has been suggested that they are obliged to work long hours, the truth is that usually the *Dekasegi* volunteer and compete amongst themselves for overtime, and many cases of open conflict have been reported" (96). Worsening matters, Pedro finds his work so alienating, repetitive, and fast paced that he describes the factory as a "torture chamber."[61] His strongest denunciation, however, is directed at the illegal retention of dekasegi passports by certain employment agencies: "To make things worse, in some cases they had their passports withheld by Japanese agents with the purpose of deterring possible flight; employment agencies maintained that they took this measure in order to avoid Brazilian workers leaving the country without repaying the cost of plane tickets that were purchased by the agencies on their behalf."[62] Daniela de Carvalho documents these abuses: "Many complaints have been reported, such as the confiscation of workers' passports and/or return tickets as a method of securing workers, deductions of 40–50 per cent from wages, with

some agencies fining employees who want to change jobs. A frequent complaint is that the working and living conditions the *Dekasegi* encounter in Japan are different from those previously agreed upon in Brazil" (93).

*Sonhos* functions, therefore, as a repository of abuses committed against the dekasegi in Japanese factories and of unexpected sufferings that serve as a warning to future dekasegi. Readers learn of workers with missing fingers lost on the job, of suicide attempts and deaths, and of some who had serious workplace accidents yet, because they held tourist visas that did not allow them to work legally, were not entitled to compensation. There is also an implicit warning: if adaptation to living in Japan is difficult for an educated family whose members speak Japanese, three of whom are Japanese nationals (Pedro's family), then the experience will be harsher for those unfamiliar with Japanese language and culture.

Refuting the generalized assumption in Brazil that Nikkeijin are no different from Japanese nationals, *Sonhos* follows a realistic approach that distances the images of the two social groups. It follows that, by differentiating Nikkei culture from Japanese culture, Sam strategically revalidates the Brazilianness of his ethnic group.[63] Pedro, for example, is surprised to see female submission in his first factory job. Similarly, his Brazilian peers do not share their Japanese coworkers's sense of humor—they are shocked when the Japanese think it funny to grab each other's buttocks. Brazilian dekasegi also mock Japanese habits and body language, such as their squatting while smoking during breaks. On the other hand, dekasegi characters' admiration of Japan contributes to demonstrate their "foreignness" within Japanese culture.[64]

Overall, the cultural production by and about the dekasegi recalls how these mobile subjects' widespread social field has created permanent links between the distant societies of Japan and Brazil. Unlike the traditional migrant or immigrant, many Nikkei transmigrants do not entirely forsake their native land; in fact, some make no effort to familiarize themselves with the host culture—this attitude replicates that of many Japanese immigrants in Brazil until the end of World War II. As shown, their lives are marked by fluid transnational sociocultural relations and interaction, often engaging politically and economically with two countries by voting in elections and sending remittances, or by reciprocally transmitting cultural values, work ethics, gender relations, and other social practices. Engagement in local politics is generally a good indicator of social integration. It means that Brazilian

nationalism and Nikkei cultural nationalism become deterritorialized as transmigrants go beyond a nation-state. As Argentine anthropologist and cultural critic Nestor García Canclini points out, "The most radical inquiries into what it means to be entering and leaving modernity are by those who assume the tensions between deterritorialization and reterritorialization. With this I am referring to two processes: the loss of the 'natural' relation of culture to geographical and social territories and, at the same time, certain relative, partial territorial relocalizations of old and new symbolic productions" (229). Part of this cultural production is also aimed at training (potential) dekasegi to navigate and contest hegemonic social constructions dealing with race, culture, and ethnicity (the marginalization of dekasegi in Japanese factories through segregated restrooms and lack of compensation for work-related injuries, among other injustices).

Different social studies present opposing perspectives about the existence of discrimination against Brazilian dekasegi in Japan. The sociologist Keiko Yamanaka, on the one hand, maintains that "even legally resident unskilled newcomer workers, such as Brazilians and Peruvians of Japanese descent, and their families have been denied rights to inexpensive health and medical care (Yamanaka n.d.). In addition, many of their children are denied education equal to that of Japanese children because legal, institutional, and cultural barriers hinder them from learning effectively in Japanese schools (Ota 1996)" ("Immigrant Incorporation" 98). Along these lines, in a different essay, Yamanaka affirms that "the *Nikkeijin* found themselves regarded as aliens and treated as secondary citizens by the Japanese, while the Japanese found the *Nikkeijin* to be disturbingly Brazilian and therefore foreign" ("I will go" 120). Daniela de Carvalho's research, on the other hand, tends to downplay these claims, arguing that "whilst it is probably true that discrimination does exist, it would be misleading to exaggerate its extent and to assume that it is absolute" (134). At any rate, the dekasegi's sudden shift in affiliation from Japanese ethnicity to Brazilian nationality pointed out in these works as well as in studies on Brazilian dekasegi in Japan seem to suggest that they have generally not felt welcome in the land of their ancestors. Therefore, dekasegi cultural production adds yet another twist to the ongoing process of identity (re-) construction and to the seemingly endless processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization experienced by the Nikkeijin in Brazil and in Japan.

The next chapter continues the exploration of Brazilian dekasegi discourse

in Japan as well as the dekasegi condition, by focusing mostly on the representation of dekasegi youth in Japanese film. In contrast with the present chapter, it examines films not directed by Japanese Brazilians but that still include dekasegi themes, characters, and actors. Japan moves from being a model country to be imitated by Brazil to becoming an ungrateful country that wants to be rid of its dekasegi presence, which it considers an ersatz version of its "genuine" citizens and a foreign irritant to the national body, after its cheap labor is no longer needed. Two Japanese films reveal how significantly different the personal and collective stories of these real-life dekasegi teenagers (some of whom were born in Japan and/or identify as Japanese) are from those of their migrant parents. In most cases, the dismayed teenagers lack the agency to make their own decisions, as they have no alternative but to follow their parents in consecutive migrations and remigrations from Brazil to Japan and back, whether they like it or not; in other cases, however, they do follow their own instincts and refuse to comply with their parents' or the Japanese government's dictums. As will be seen, these Japanese filmmakers take drastically different approaches, from the denunciatory documentary film *Lonely Swallows*, in which dekasegi youngsters are encouraged to express themselves and vent in from of the camera, to the commercial action film *Hyôryû-gai* (*The City of Lost Souls*), which exploits Japanese society's perhaps exaggerated perception of dekasegi crime.

## NOTES

1. These five countries created their own development bank to compete with the US-dominated International Monetary Fund and World Bank. They also hold their own summits, emulating the G7 forum.

2. "Seguir diante das dificuldades" (106).

3. "La politique japonaise a ainsi toujours été régie par une logique utilitariste traitant les migrants tels des objets: le renvoi des nikkei brésiliens devenus indésirables succéda à l'envoi à l'étranger, un siècle auparavant, de leurs ancêtres japonais alors pauvres et indésirables" ("Le traitement" 65).

4. "Com a partida de muitos de seus membros ativos, só restam associados idosos nas associações de japoneses locais, influindo negativamente no seu funcionamento" (Comissão de Elaboração da História 454).

5. "São pouquíssimas as famílias que não tenham algum parente trabalhando no Japão" (*Porque Migramos* 21).

6. "Em geral, eles não tiveram grandes problemas burocráticos para entrar no território japonês, pois tinham origem japonesa . . . muitos tinham nacionalidade japonesa ou dupla nacionalidade . . . eram homens de idade avançada; chefes de família; casados; sabiam falar japonês e tinham pretensões de estada temporária no Japão" (Sasaki 105).

7. Born to immigrant parents in Frutal, Minas Gerais, Khaorin moved as a dekasegi to Aichi-ken, Japan, in May 1990, and finished his poetry collection *Poema para Você* a month before returning to Brazil.

8. For an analysis of Higa's *Japón no da dos oportunidades*, see my *The Affinity of the Eye: Writing Nikkei in Peru* (2013).

9. *Gaijin: Ama-me como Sou* won the best film award at the 2005 Granado Festival and the best photography award at the Prêmio ACIE de Cinema. The title, *Gaijin: Ama-me como Sou*, is a Portuguese translation of the song "Ámame como soy" (Love Me As I Am) by the Cuban singer-songwriter and guitar player Pablo Milanés; the song is played throughout the film.

10. "Esta terra é nossa!"

11. A softer and more polite way of expressing the same idea is *ganbatte*, usually spoken by women. By contrast, "Ganbare" is a sort of command and, therefore, sounds less polite.

12. "O japonês é um povo único, onde todos possuem o mesmo sangue, cultura e tradição, falam a mesma língua e possui história própria dentro de um território pequeno. A característica da aldeia rural japonesa de solidariedade e auxílio mútuo para enfrentar as dificuldades continua viva no Brasil." Shindo repeats the same idea almost verbatim in another chapter: "The Japanese are a unique people in the world, since they speak the same language, have the same blood, and have preserved, over the years, their culture, history and traditions, after remaining closed to the outside world for three-hundred years during the Tokugawa period." ("Os japoneses são um povo impar no mundo, pois falam a mesma língua, possuem o mesmo sangue e preservam ao longo dos anos a sua cultura, história e tradição, por terem-se fechado ao exterior por 300 anos no período Tokugawa" [211].)

13. "Nestes tipos de agricultura mecanizada, era necessária mão-de-obra qualificada . . . com conhecimento e técnicas de alto nível. Havia no Brasil daquela época o consenso de que somente os isseis japoneses conseguiam preencher estes requisitos. Isto porque . . . grande maioria da mão-de-obra era formada pelos trabalhadores braçais nordestinos, que tinham força muscular, mas eram analfabetos e com pouco conhecimento . . . Era sabido que existia grande diferença no resultado, se comparada com a de mão de obra japonesa" (301–2).

14. "Será que Batyan pensa que vaio a pena a aventura de ter cruzado o oceano?"

15. This title makes reference to a popular 1967 rock song titled "Era um garoto que como eu amava os Beatles e os Rolling Stones . . ." sung by the band Os Incríveis and included in the album *Para os Jovens Que Amam Os Beatles, Os Rolling Stones e . . . Os Incríveis!* This song is a Portuguese version of a 1966 Italian song composed by Brancato Jr.

16. "Em nome de todos os dekasseguis, deixo registrado, neste finalzinho de crônica, os sinceros agradecimentos a todos os agentes da informação" (193). Other Latin American and Caribbean testimonials, such as *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1966) by Miguel Barnet and Esteban Montejo, include impressions and information provided by the testimonialist's peers of runaway slaves ("maroons").

17. Kakazu also mentions other journals aimed at the Brazilian dekasegi, such as *Jornal Tudo Bem*, *International Press*, *Folha Mundial*, *Nova Visão*, *Brazilian News*, and the bilingual *Jornal do Clube do Brasil*.

18. Likewise, the first section of Khaorin's long poem "Poema para Você" closes with the line "I think about Brazil and I feel disillusionment" ("Penso no Brasil e sinto decepção" [*Poema* 14]) after bemoaning the pervasive social inequities and corruption in the country. Like Kakazu's, these pronouncements must be read as a strategic performance of patriotism: Khaorin wants to leave no doubt that his departure did not change the profound love he feels for Brazil. Thus, immediately after expressing his gratitude to Japan for welcoming him, he distances himself from Japanese nationals: "Grateful to the people that are not my people / I return to my ancestors' land." ("Grato ao povo que não é meu povo / Volto à terra de meus ancestrais" [11].) Landing at Tokyo's Narita airport, on his way to Nagoya-shi where he is to work at an antennae factory, the poet senses apprehension among his fellow dekasegi who, like him, left their homeland for economic reasons. He then expresses shame at being able to pay for his food when so many of his fellow Brazilians go hungry. Later, in the optimistic "Milagres" (Miracles), a patriotic Khaorin hopes for a collective miracle brought about thanks to the solidarity of all Brazilians: "I want to believe in solidarity / in my and our participation // To build another society / one of a much better tomorrow than today's / for this to happen, love and desire are sufficient" ("Quero acreditar na solidariedade / na minha e na nossa participação // Para construir a outra sociedade / de um amanhã bem melhor que hoje / para isto basta o amor e vontade" [111]). Finally, in the patriotic "Sabias" (You Knew) the poet celebrates the beauty of Brazil and reiterates his love for it: "There does not exist in the world a splendor / that can match the summer afternoons / of the homeland that wins my heart." ("Não existe no mundo tanto fulgor / Que se iguale às tardes de verão / Da pátria que conquista meu amor" [121].)

19. The chronicler also acknowledges the efforts made by the migrants' relatives who remained in Brazil (such as his own wife, to whom he dedicates *Crônicas*) and who often reared their children as single parents.

20. Along these lines, Khaorin, in his poem "Destino" (Destiny), blames Brazil for his reluctant departure: "Deep in my soul I confess / that in distant lands I truly search / for what my country has denied me / a country that my hopes did dash. / I feel in this stanza unrighteous // But I seek not forgiveness for dire poverty / to which millions of citizens my country subjects / through laws knotty indeed / that cause injustices I never could desire." ("Eu consinto na alma que longínquo / Busco direito que a pátria negou / Pátria que a esperança me toldou. / Me sinto nesta estrofe um iníquo // Mas não peço perdão pela miséria / Em que submete milhões de filhos / Nas legislações que são redilhos / Injustiças eu jamais as quereria" [*Poema* 9].)

21. "Somos todos uma grande família, e somos todos irmãos. Sentimos o laço destes vínculos um pouco mais apertado quando estamos longe" (144).

22. "Nada é mais bonito que um jardim no outono japonês. O verde e o amarelo se misturam nos topos das grandes árvores e fazem lembrar a nós, brasileiros distantes de nossos rincões, as cores do nosso Pavilhão Nacional" (57).

23. "Me senti como quem abandona o navio durante o naufrágio, deixando os meus entes mais queridos submergindo juntamente com o grande cargueiro chamado Brasil. A minha Pátria amada mergulhava na pior recessão da sua historia. Contudo, em meu coração, eu levava uma forte convicção de que, ao regressar, encontraria as coisas já estabilizadas e tudo nos seus devidos eixos" (17).

24. "Por ser larga, limpa e muito movimentada, lembrava-me com certo pesar do nosso pobre e poluído rio Tietê, cheio de dejetos domésticos e industriais, transformado em um grande esgoto ao céu aberto . . . Se Tóquio conseguiu recuperar a vida do rio Sumida, que também já esteve muito poluído, a ponto de ser considerado por especialistas como 'praticamente morto,' São Paulo pode muito bem devolver vida ao rio Tietê" (34).

25. "Munidos de responsabilidade, seriedade e forte determinação de superar dificuldades, puseram-se a transformar lixo em riqueza, miséria em fartura, escombros em edifícios e, em poucas décadas, acontecia o grande milagre econômico japonês.

Certamente nada disso existiria se, ao invés do trabalho, cruzassem os braços e se pusessem a reclamar da sorte, das dores, da fome e do frio.

Ao amigo Shioya-san, gostaria de externar os meus profundos sentimentos de gratidão por ter me ensinado a valorizar e acreditar na força do trabalho" (43).

26. "BRASILEIRO é o nosso sobrenome. Uma vez que a gente se propôs a trabalhar, acho que devemos nos empenhar ao máximo para cumprir as nossas

obrigações e procurar não denegrir a imagem positiva, tão arduamente construída pelos famosos e consagrados heróis de nosso país" (147).

27. "Nenhum povo ama tanto sua pátria / e nem erigiu tão justa sociedade / inspirada na simples honestidade / e na multiplicação da eficiência" (*Poema* 73).

28. "Na realidade, cada um de nós também carregamos uma parcela de culpa" (145).

29. Kakazu laments Brazil's image in Japan, as shown in Akira Kurosawa's 1955 film *Ikimono no Kiroku* (Record of a Living Being): "The most important thing this film showed me was to see on the screen the image of our country that the Japanese have. Most still believe that Brazil is the Amazon basin, inhabited by half-naked Indian tribes, and that the cities are just a jumble of slums, without electricity, without roads, and malaria-ridden."

("O que de mais importante me mostrou este filme, foi ver na tela a imagem que os japoneses fazem a respeito do nosso país. A maioria ainda acredita que o Brasil é a Amazônia, habitada por tribos indígenas seminus, e que as cidades não passam de um amontoado de favelas, sem luz elétrica, sem estradas e empestado de malária" [197].)

30. "Hoje, existem centenas de milhares de irmãos brasileiros no exterior, lutando e dando a sua pequena contribuição para ajudar essas grandes e ilustres personalidades a solidificar a imagem de um Brasil honrado.

Consciente ou inconscientemente, cada trabalhador brasileiro no exterior carrega em sua figura a bandeira brasileira, somos todos representantes de nosso país" (146). Whereas Kakazu, in *Crônicas*, praised the dekasegi for improving the image of Brazil abroad, Khaorin, in the dedication of his 1996 poetry collection *Poema para Você* (Poem for You), elevates this group to the category of heroes: "I dedicate this book to all dekasegi who carry, in the silence of anonymity, the courage and the obstinacy of heroes." ("Dedico este livro para todos dekasseguis, que levam no silêncio do anonimato a coragem e a obstinação de heróis" [3]. Heroism and bravery are again highlighted in Orlando Orfei's poem featured on the back cover: "If I lose money, / I don't lose anything. / If I lose a friend, / I lose. / But if I lose courage / I lose everything." ["Se perco dinheiro, / não perco nada. / Se perco um amigo, / perco. / Mas se perco a coragem, / perco tudo" (n.p.)].)

31. "Cujas respostas eram sempre secas, frias e carregadas de desprezo" (41).

32. "Existem muitas histórias de vítimas que contraíram doenças por trabalharem em ambientes tóxicos e insalubres . . . Não faltam também os casos de pessoas lesadas por empreiteiras desonestas, patrões exploradores, chefes irresponsáveis, colegas mal intencionados, etc . . .

Existem também aqueles que simplesmente desaparecem sem deixar nenhum vestígio do seu paradeiro, deixando os familiares no Brasil sem notícias e em desespero e quase sempre, em sérias dificuldades" (191–92).

33. He criticizes, for example, Japan's commercial approach to Christmas and his neighbors' complaints about noise whenever the dekasegi have a party. Perhaps here the chronicler fails to notice that Japan not being a traditionally Christian country, it should not be so surprising that Christmas has become a commercial event rather than a heartfelt religious holiday or celebration there. In fact, it has only been celebrated for the last few decades.

34. "Em nome da produtividade, tudo ao redor se transforma em campo de árdua luta contra as máquinas automatizadas, para superar-lhes a velocidade e conquistar a meta de produção estabelecida para a jornada daquele dia" (193).

35. "Um ano de vida escrava, subjugados pelas obrigações e pelo relógio" (68).

36. "Uma das causas dos traumas emocionais ocorridos com decasséguis no Japão é, sem dúvida, a falta do preparo psicológico para o confronto com uma cultura completamente diferente" (*Dekassegui* 98).

37. "Deposito irrestrita confiança no futuro de nosso jovem e querido Brasil!" (217).

38. The architect, journalist, and author Silvio Sam was born in Fernandópolis, São Paulo, in 1941. His first book was the 1996 detective novel *O Seqüestro*. In 1997, he published *O Meio Faz o Homem* and *Sonhos que de Cá Segui*. Two years later, he published, with Reimei Yoshioka, *Dekassegui, Com os Pés no Chão . . . no Japão* and in 2006, *Confrontos e Conflitos*. Sam is a founding member of the Associação de Amigos do Memorial do Imigrante (Association of Friends of the Memorial to the Immigrant) of the Secretariat of Culture of the State of São Paulo, and a member of the Conselho Deliberativo da Aliança Cultural Brasil-Japão (Deliberative Council of the Brazil-Japan Cultural Alliance).

39. The chronicles precede the novel, since they were published independently in dekasegi journals before their inclusion in the volume.

40. "Aos dekasseguis, ex-dekasseguis, e a todos os brasileiros que um dia, de cá, tiveram de seguir um sonho lá fora. Um sonho que deveria se realizar dentro do próprio país em que nasceram. Por direito" (n.p.).

41. "Está diretamente ligada aos maus governos anteriores do meu país, que geraram planos econômicos absurdos e consecutivos, da corrupção generalizada e abusada de políticos como os bens públicos e do mal maior que é a impunidade em meu país" (186–87).

42. "Mas acho que a grande virtude dos nossos pais foi a de manter a mesma estrutura doméstica que a história do Japão nos conta, em relação à importância da educação escolar . . . Dentre os descendentes das várias etnias radicadas no Brasil, a japonesa era a que melhor se situava no âmbito da formação escolar" (186).

43. Yoshioka and Sam warn the reader: "Leaving Brazil with a tourist visa to work in Japan is illegal, exposing oneself to being barred by the immigration officer and immediately deported." ("sair do Brasil com o visto de turista para trabalhar no

Japão é ilegal, estando sujeito a ser barrado pelo oficial de imigração e em seguida extraditado" [*Dekassegui* 53].)

44. "Para quem, como Pedro, que de há muito já não exercia mais a própria profissão, o fato de ser tornar um operário braçal nem mais qualquer dano faria ao ora quase inexistente orgulho" (18).

45. Incidentally, Pedro begins to relate the history of Japanese migration to Brazil with the allegation that Chinese immigrants are to blame for the anti-Asian hysteria in the United States and for the exclusionary laws that followed (the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, followed by the 1908 Gentleman's Agreement, as well as the 1917 Immigration Act, the 1924 National Origins Act, and the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934): "Japanese emigration to the United States was hampered as a result of the poor ethical behavior of Chinese immigrants who had arrived before. They accepted any job for ridiculously low salaries. This willingness caused them problems with other immigrants and made life very difficult for all Asians. As a result, restrictions were placed to reduce Asian immigration, a fact that kept many Japanese from settling in California" ("O que atrapalhou uma emigração maior de japoneses aos Estados Unidos, foi o mal comportamento ético dos imigrantes chineses, predecessores naquele país. Eles aceitavam quaisquer serviços, a preços ridicularmente baratos. Essa atitude acabou criando problemas com imigrantes de outras etnias, tornando o clima ruim para todo e qualquer asiático. Chegaram ao ponto de restringir a entrada de asiáticos naquele país, dificultado com isso a entrada de uma leva muito maior de japoneses na Califórnia" [151]). While it is true that Chinese "coolies" were known for accepting low wages, Pedro fails to note that during the California Gold Rush, they were generally well received and that it was only once gold became harder to find that economic competition fomented anti-Chinese animosity. White supremacy and the post–Civil War economic decline became a culture medium for a renewed nativist and xenophobic atmosphere. Therefore, not only economic concerns (the Chinese were soon replaced by Japanese immigrants) but also, perhaps largely, racial discrimination drove the passing of these exclusion laws. Tellingly, in 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution, which had been approved by the U.S. Senate a year earlier, expressing their regret for the Chinese Exclusion Act. In 2014, the California Legislature formally recognized the numerous Chinese American accomplishments in California. Senate Joint Resolution 23 celebrates their history and contributions in California, calling on Congress to apologize for these regrettable exclusion laws.

46. In Khaorin's poem "Taisho" (*Poema*) history likewise repeats itself when the poetic voice visualizes his countenance in old photographs of the Taisho Period, where his parents appear full of hope right before leaving for Brazil.

47. "Assisti ao vivo a cirurgias de ferimentos graves, pela necessidade da minha presença ao lado de pacientes brasileiros. Sem contar os casos de alterações nos estados psicológicos de alguns, devido a uma série de motivos . . . Como alguns que já te contei. Tais como solidão, saudade, sentimento de incapacidade e até complexo de perseguição, etc . . . etc . . . devido ao choque cultural, costumes, alimentação, tratamentos, desconhecimento da língua, etc., etc. Se lá o que mais . . .–fez uma pausa—Só agora, sei o quanto os nossos pais e avós sofreram quando foram para o Brasil como emigrantes" (171).

48. "Tá certo que viemos para o Japão pra ganhar dinheiro . . . mas não vamos nos esquecer de retornar com ele também . . . de bem com a saúde. Entende?" (73). Likewise, in Khaorin's poem "Dekassegui," the poetic voice, like other dekasegi authors, warns readers about becoming obsessed with making money, an obsession so prevalent among Nikkei workers in Japan: one leaves loved ones behind, moves to another continent, and is eventually overwhelmed by *saudade*.

49. There is actually a word in Japanese, Karōshi (overwork death), to refer to occupational sudden mortality. Its main medical causes are heart attack and stroke due to stress and starvation. Similar words and concepts exist in Chinese and Korean.

50. "A saída desse milhares de japoneses para o Brasil e para outros países também deve ter contribuído com uma pequena parcela, para que o Japão se tornasse a grande potência que agora é . . . logo após a guerra, numa grande campanha dentro da comunidade, os imigrantes japoneses no Brasil criaram associações de socorro às vítimas da guerra" (155–56).

51. "Esses brasileiros faziam apenas por puro vandalismo. 'Pra mostrarem uns aos outros o quanto eram malandros,' enfatizava" (180). Francisco Noriyuki Sato and Julio Shimamoto's graphic novel *Banzai! História da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil* also mentions the crimes committed by Brazilian Nikkeijin in Japan and how Japanese police officers were sent Brazil to receive training so that they could help Brazilians better. It also criticizes Japanese stores that warn Japanese customers about potential thefts whenever Brazilians come into the store (130–31). Karen Tei Yamashita denounces this prejudiced attitude: "Public announcement reported in stores: Attention shoppers and clerks! Foreigners have entered the premises. Shoppers, please take care to secure your personal belongings. Clerks, please watch for possible theft of merchandise" (47).

52. "Degradação crescente dentro da comunidade de nipo-brasileiros naquele país" (213).

53. "A frequência de casos graves, como assaltos à mão armada, briga entre gangues, acidentes fatais de trânsito e agora até de drogas, entre os brasileiros no Japão, aumentava a casa nova correspondência de César" (213).

54. "Enfim, a comunidade dekassegui, no Japão, deve e merece ser tratada como outra qualquer. Ou melhor, talvez o único tratamento diferenciado deva se referir à renda per capita, que é superior à de qualquer cidade brasileira" (*Dekassegui* 101).

55. "Era exagerado o número de casos que atentavam contra a boa imagem que o nipo-brasileiro havia conquistado perante a sociedade brasileira. E ficava pasma com o número de pessoas desaparecidas ou que se fizeram desaparecer, abandonando famílias inteiras no Brasil em precárias condições de sobrevivência, fartamente anunciados nesses jornais. Bem como o aumento do uso de drogas que em certos lugares já ocorria descaradamente entre os *decasséguis*" (216).

56. "Tá certo que somos ainda considerados país de terceiro mundo, mas também não precisamos ficar colaborando ainda mais com isso, para que continuem pensando assim da gente" (143).

57. "Mas aqueles pais ou mães que ainda tiverem um pingo de honra, um dos *orgulhos da raça nipônica*, bem que poderiam tentar minimizar a dor dos que aqui abandoaram, com algumas compensações" (97).

58. "'Bom, ao menos à tarde não há ginástica,' aliviado, comemorou mais uma vez brasileiramente" (101).

59. "Como bom brasileiro, Pedro aderiu plenamente e com muita satisfação" (102).

60. "O meu sonho . . . continua sendo . . . ver um dia o meu país grande . . . desenvolvido . . . e sério! E no futuro, ver os meus filhos . . . e os seus . . . se formarem bem e poderem trabalhar dignamente dentro do próprio país em que nasceram. Sem precisar ter de sair para sobreviverem" (219).

61. "Casa de torturas" (55).

62. "Tinham o agravante de em alguns casos terem os passaportes retidos pelos agentes nipônicos, como uma forma de evitarem novas evasões. Essas empreiteiras alegavam que era apenas para evitar que os brasileiros fossem embora sem pagar as dívidas das passagens financiadas por elas" (88).

63. Likewise, the following lines in Khaorin's "Poema para Você" stress the poet's lack of familiarity with Japanese culture by surprisingly resorting to a common stereotype about Asians: "The Japanese is an inscrutable being / in his righteous indifference" ("O japonês é um ente inescrutável / Em sua virtude a impassibilidade" [*Poema* 20].)

64. For instance, Mieko is impressed with the efficiency and technological advances of her children's school; Pedro appreciates the security one feels in Japanese streets (in contrast to Brazil) and is impressed by his factory coworkers' preoccupation with quality control, which he believes Brazilian workers ought to emulate: "That attitude is unimaginable or inconceivable when considering Brazilian factory workers in Brazil." ("Atitude essa, impossível de se imaginar ou se conceber num operário brasileiro nas mesmas condições, numa fábrica no Brasil" [106–7].).

# 6

# BRAZILIAN DEKASEGI CHILDREN IN JAPANESE FILM

> Maybe the next generation can answer or reject these questions, unless they grow up illiterate. They could grow up Japanese, get domesticated and all, but the documents will prove they're not. Being born in Japan doesn't necessarily have any meaning other than the labor of it.
>
> *(Karen Tei Yamashita,* Circle K Cycles *147)*

It could be argued that because of the dekasegi phenomenon, the Japanese Brazilian community now consists of two different diasporas, one in Brazil and another in Japan, both dealing with radically different circumstances and dilemmas, including different levels of social prestige and economic status. García Canclini has pointed out the potentially negative outcomes of deterritorialization: "The intense crossings and the instability of traditions, bases of the valorizing opening, may also be–in conditions of labor competition—a source of prejudice and confrontation. Therefore, the analysis of the advantages or inconveniences of deterritorialization should not be reduced to the movements of ideas or cultural codes, as is frequently the case in the

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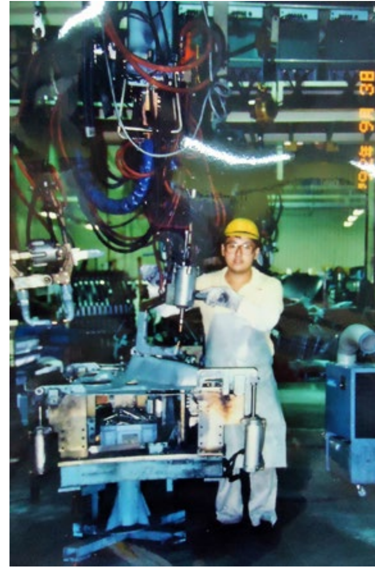
bibliography on postmodernity. Their meaning is also constructed in connection with social and economic practices, in struggles for local power, and in the competition to benefit from alliances with external powers" (241) In this context, although the Japanese government, overestimating biological and "blood" ties, assumed that it would be easier to integrate people of Japanese descent, the immigrants' integration into Japanese society very often did not take place as smoothly as expected. Their phenotype notwithstanding (most are indistinguishable from native Japanese), many Brazilian dekasegi did not speak the language and, from a cultural perspective, were fully Brazilian.

Several texts also point out a psychological shock caused the class demotion resulting from belonging to an educated and middle-class ethnic group in Brazil, which is considered a "model minority," only to become working-class members in Japanese factories, an often-rejected minority urged by the Japanese government to leave the country because it has been associated, at times, with crime and its labor is no longer needed. Along these lines, in *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland*, the anthropologist Tsuda observes that though Japanese Brazilians "are well educated and middle class in Brazil, they still earn five to ten times their Brazilian incomes as unskilled manual laborers in Japan and remit or take home well over $3 billion annually to Brazil, roughly equivalent to 6 percent of Brazil's entire export trade for 1996" (xi). He then adds that, along with an inferior social status, some had to put up with being ethnically rejected and treated as foreigners, as was done to other ethnic minorities.[1] The generalized malaise increased when, in April 2009, moved by an economic crisis that diminished demand for cheap labor, the Japanese government began to encourage Latin American dekasegi to return home by offering $3,000 for airfare and $2,000 for every dependent, provided that they agreed to never return to work in Japan. Lesser reveals that "the program ended in March 2010, and of the 21,675 Nikkei who took advantage of the program, 20,053 were Brazilian, 903 were Peruvian and 719 came from other nationalities, primarily Bolivian" (*Immigration* 193–94).

In Japan, therefore, the term *dekasegi* has taken on the connotation of "unwelcome foreigner." As a result, the second migration of the Brazilian Nikkeijin from Brazil to Japan ceases to be a symbolic "return home," Japanese hosts making clear to them that Japan is not their home. Dekasegi who often identified themselves as Japanese in Brazil suddenly disidentify or de-Japanize once they realize that they are considered foreigners in their

ancestral land. Feeling rejected as *gaijin*, Daniela de Carvalho explains, some "*Nikkeijin* attempt to differentiate themselves from the national Japanese" (137) by reconstructing their identity. Indeed, many Latin American dekasegi have undergone drastic changes in national and ethnocultural affiliation in Japan: "Many had immersed themselves in Japanese music (Hosokawa 1995), cinema (Hosokawa 1999), and other cultural activities, looking with nostalgia (*kyōshū*) toward Japan as their ancestral homeland. From that perspective, their travel to Japan was a return to their ancestral homeland. However, after several years of working and living in Japan, many younger migrants developed their taste for Brazilian music and culture, looking back toward Brazil with yearning (*saudade*), and in some respects conceived of themselves as members of a Brazilian diaspora and as an ethnic minority within Japan" (Roth 18). Roth adds that many, including those who permanently settled in Japan, expressed their increasing attachment to Brazil by rekindling their interest in soccer and samba, adorning their businesses with Brazilian flags, and maintaining transnational connections through telephone calls and videotaped television programs (5). Therefore, resentment among dekasegi has exacerbated their Brazilian nationalism: they articulate cultural differences between Japanese and themselves to offset a negative social identity.

Tsuda, having volunteered to work for no wages in a Japanese factory so that he could study social exchanges between dekasegi workers and Japanese employees (workers and managers), confirms that these treated their Brazilian peers "with ethnic isolation and utter indifference" (*Strangers* 16). Negative attitudes toward Latin American dekasegi may also account for Japanese social class prejudice: "Because of postwar Japanese economic prosperity, middle-class status has become a defining attribute of Japanese ethno-national identity. In contrast, the nikkeijin are generally viewed as descendants of indigent rural Japanese of low social class who were supposedly forced to leave their homeland and emigrate abroad many decades ago (when Japan was poor)" (28). More important for this study, the dekasegi phenomenon has opened new debates about issues of cultural and national belonging that had been laid to rest by younger generations of Brazilian Nikkeijin. The same Nikkeijin who saw themselves as fully integrated into Brazilian society suddenly became uprooted and began to fear a racist backlash that could disenfranchise, "re-foreignize," and denationalize them again, as is evident in much of their cultural production. Furthermore, the dekasegi



**FIGURES 6.1–6.5.** Brazilian dekasegi workers in Japan (courtesy of CIATE Centro de Informação e Apoio ao Trabalhador no Exterior Center for Information and Support to Overseas Workers).

exodus in itself begs one to question the rhetoric of Nikkei success, a position to which Japanese Brazilian authors and filmmakers have contributed.

This chapter addresses the constitution of dekasegi communities in Japan and the articulation of a migrant, ethnic minority discourse. This will be realized by means of three Japanese films that contribute to contextualize the study of the dekasegi diaspora by mostly focusing on Brazilian Nikkei youth—in the case of Kimihiro Tsumura and Mayu Nakamura's documentary *Kodoku na Tsubame-tachi: Dekasegi no Kodomo ni Umarete* (*Lonely Swallows: Living as Children of Immigrant Workers*, 2011) and Miike Takashi's narrative film *Hyôryû-gai* (*City of Lost Souls*, 2000)[2]—and on Brazilian dekasegi in general in Nanako Kurihara's documentary film *A Grandpa from Brazil* (2008). Since the directors are Japanese, this last chapter closes this study, which focuses for the most part on Nikkei self-definition through cultural production, with a Japanese perspective of the dekasegi, even though *Lonely Swallows* and *A Grandpa from Brazil* also allow the dekasegi themselves to describe their trials.

These films, and particularly Tsumura and Mayu's documentary, depict certain social problems that according to Yoshioka and Sam, have arisen as a result of the dekasegi phenomenon, including "Family disaggregation, Nikkei delinquency in Japan, mental disorders and the difficulty of repatriating dekasegi for re-integration into their society of origin, among other problems."[3] In spite of the fact that these films were not directed by Japanese Brazilians, it is noteworthy that they feature dekasegi protagonists and address issues that were neglected by the rest of the texts analyzed in this book. In fact, the Japanese-language documentary *Lonely Swallows* is, undoubtedly, one of the most interesting explorations of the dekasegi experience.

## *LONELY SWALLOWS'* STORIES OF DISPOSABLE YOUTH

According to D. de Carvalho, the concept of Japaneseness is based on three factors: "the possession or not of Japanese 'blood,' *Nihongo* (the Japanese language) and culture" (120). Yet many dekasegi children, though born in Japan, are familiar with Japanese language and culture, and have Japanese "blood," are still considered foreigners by the Japanese. This adds to the frustration of living in a cultural limbo between a Brazilian and a Japanese culture, to both of which they belong. Yoshioka and Sam, in *Dekassegui" Com os Pés no Chão . . . no Japão*, delve into the dekasegi's frustration with nomenclatures

and their ensuing identitarian struggles: "Since Brazilians call them 'Japanese' and the Japanese call them 'gaijin,' they are of the impression that they have no nationality."[4] This double national identity or lack thereof makes many feel as though they live in a stateless midpoint.

In 2007, Nakamura began to film the interviews that Kimihiro Tsumura, a professor from Hamamatsu Gakuin University, conducted with Brazilian dekasegi youths whom he met on the streets of Hamamatsu on Saturday nights. He later added the edited footage to *Lonely Swallows*. One day, Tsumura noticed that dekasegi youths, despite having no problem speaking Japanese, rarely interacted with the Japanese. This coincides, incidentally, with the experience of Issei pioneers in Brazil, who tended to isolate themselves in ethnic rural enclaves in the states of São Paulo and Paraná. As the cultural critic Philip Brasor explains in a *Japan Times* article, Tsumura criticizes the Japanese government's indifference toward these youths: "While almost all went through the public school system, only 30 percent continued on to high school. In fact, a good portion didn't even finish junior high school, which means they didn't fulfill their compulsory education requirement" (n.p.). Tsuda adds that "although immigrants are not legally obliged to send their children to school, it is widely recognized that foreign children have a right to receive education and local communities have required immigrants to enroll their children in Japanese schools" (Sellek 2001: 201; qtd. in Tsuda, *Local* 21). Yet as a result of their alien status (though born or raised in Japan), their compulsory education is of shorter duration than that of Japanese nationals.

Most dekasegi youth, including the five protagonists in the documentary, begin to work in factories after completing or dropping out of middle school. Daniela de Carvalho corroborates the existence of these problems: "The Japanese Ministry of Education has expressed concern about foreign children studying in Japan, but has not yet established a policy to integrate them into Japanese schools" (104). Tsuda, in turn, explores the reasons behind the neglect of foreign workers in recent countries of immigration, such as Japan, South Korea, Italy, and Spain: "Because immigrants are recent arrivals, few in number, and more likely to be sojourners than settlers, they are not considered legitimate, long-term residents. Rather, they are viewed as temporary laborers whose sociocultural and political integration in mainstream society is not yet a pressing concern. In addition, given that they are not yet

culturally assimilated, they also lack *cultural* citizenship" (*Local* 5; emphasis in the original).

Tsumura and Nakamura's documentary excludes reference to Japanese immigration policies, such as the passing of the controversial 2009 Nikkei law, "which provided cash to unemployed Brazilians and Peruvians if they left Japan and promised to never come back to work" (Brasor n.p.). In Japan, unlike the United States, no public conversation exists regarding immigration: "This subtext informs the local coverage of *imin* (immigrants), who, in any case, are never referred to as such. All non-Japanese are 'foreigners,' so distinctions with regard to length of stay and intentions mean little to most Japanese, and that makes the authorities' job easier" (Brasor n.p.). What is apparent from the onset of the documentary is that the featured dekasegi (a synecdoche for all Nikkeijin in Japan) feel unwelcome and discriminated against by the Japanese. Some young protagonists in the documentary identify themselves as Japanese, but their knowing that Brazilians and their descendants are now unwelcome in Japan makes leaving easier, though they will have to adapt to a new country. They and their families draw comfort from knowing that their residence status in Brazil is legal.

The opening scene of the documentary features Hakamatsu Station in 2007 to the sound of a Portuguese-language hip-hop song. We learn through Japanese-language subtitles that since the early 1990s, the industrial city of Hakamatsu, known for its automotive industry, has attracted Brazilian dekasegi on account of a local labor shortage. Once, we are told, there were more than 300,000 Nikkeijin in Japan, many of whom decided to become permanent residents. In a scene, young dekasegi, caught between their world and that of their parents, have fun breakdancing and skateboarding. A Banco do Brasil billboard can be seen in the background. They recall, speaking colloquial Japanese, one night when the police, as they often do, questioned them and their motorbike friends. After concluding the interrogation, the policeman told them to return to their country (some were born in Japan), though, the youngsters claim, they had done nothing wrong, all had jobs, and none caused any trouble. Feeling discriminated against, one of them exclaims: "I too have Japanese blood in me!"

The interviews included in *Lonely Swallows* explore the lives of five Brazilian dekasegi youngsters whose age, activities, and physical appearance often differ from other Nikkeijin described so far in this book. Some sport tattoos, "throw

up" gang hand signs, wear baseball caps backward along with gold chains, earrings, and bandanas, and some cover their faces with handkerchiefs, imitating Africa American and Latino gang subculture. With their lives torn by the 2008 global economic recession, they all dream of a better tomorrow as they look for their own place in society, be it in Japan or Brazil. The documentary vividly records their despair at having to leave their Japanese life and their friends behind to accompany their parents back to Brazil.

The first dekasegi who appears in the documentary is nineteen-year-old Yonsei Eduardo Satake, who dropped out of middle school at age sixteen and began working twelve hours a day as a contract laborer in a car factory, as did many of his Brazilian peers. In 2007, at the time of the first interview, he feels that the hardships the dekasegi have endured coupled with constantly being reminded that they do not belong in Japanese society have made them stronger. It is worth noting that the film's protagonists unproblematically call themselves *dekasegi*, even though they were either born in Japan or brought there at a young age. Eduardo, for instance, was two years old when he and his mother left Brazil, but, though he has lived in Hamamatsu for most of his life, the city still "doesn't feel like home."[5] In spite of his limited education, he tutors some Brazilian dekasegi in the English language, as they are planning to attend high school and need the knowledge. He then sends part of his earnings to his mother, who by now lives in Brazil with a man who is not his father.

Throughout the film, Eduardo voices his awareness that education is his only way out of "dead-end jobs": "Mom says, 'don't end up like me.' You learn nothing in factories, and there is no future there" (n.p.). However, his dream of going to college begins to fade in 2008, after he loses his job and is unable to find another one. Feeling discriminated against by employers, he declares that he no longer likes Japan; he realizes that he may have no choice other than returning to Brazil, as most of his friends have done. However, he later expresses his gratitude to Japan for having hosted his family. This acknowledgment may be prompted by the dekasegi's awareness of the treatment meted out to other Latin American Nikkeijin who were subject to immediate deportation. Unlike them, Brazilians were able to work legally in Japan.

As is common in cultural production dealing with the dekasegi, Eduardo compares his tribulations with those of his grandparents, who had a much more difficult time relocating to Brazil after World War II. Later, he manages

to find a job at a Japanese-language school for Brazilians, where he recruits and transports students. There he also helped instructors with translations, until he lost his job after his arrest for possession of marijuana. When the immigration office informs him that he is about to be deported, his seventeen-year-old girlfriend, pregnant with his child, offers him marriage so that he may stay in Japan, but he refuses. Still, he does not think that returning to Brazil is a viable option, because he feels that without a college degree, he has little future there. He now wishes that he had saved enough money to pay for college in Brazil. In tears, he struggles to understand how he can be deported after having grown up in Japan, living like a Japanese, paying taxes, and "working for Japan."

This perception coincides with the main message of the collection of chronicles *Com os Pés no Chão . . . no Japão*, where Yoshioka and Sam strategically describe migrant workers as courageous and hardworking citizens, significantly contributing to the Brazilian and Japanese economies, with their remittances and by easing the unskilled labor shortage in Japan: "After all, part of the billions of dollars that the dekasegi send to Brazil should go toward their benefit. On the other hand, if workers remit such an impressive amount, it means that their labor provides astronomic profits for Japanese companies and for Japan."[6] Lesser corroborates the economic impact of Brazilian dekasegi's remittances: "They earned a modest salary by Japanese standards, but one that represented five to ten times their Brazilian incomes. One important strategy was to work overtime hours, which were paid at a wage of 1.5 to two times the regular salary. In 2005 alone, US$2.65 billion was remitted from Japan to Latin America, with US$2.2 billion going to Brazil" (*Immigration* 192). In the essay collection, Yoshioka and Sam rely on these arguments to demand the support of the Japanese and Brazilian governments in bringing relief to a population victimized by social injustice.

In *Lonely Swallows*, teary-eyed Eduardo recalls when his father, who died when he was eight years old, appeared in his dreams telling him to persevere: "That's probably the best thing that's ever happened to me!" he exclaims. Perseverance to succeed, the *ganbare* spirit often alluded to in Japanese Brazilian cultural production, resurfaces in this scene. In the end, the dekasegi youth decides to skip his appointment at the immigration office, choosing instead to become an undocumented immigrant. Confused, he ponders: "I still don't know where I belong. My main goal now is to figure out where I

belong" (n.p.). Eduardo then proceeds to again compare his experience with the harsh displacement endured by his great-grandfather in Brazil: "It runs in the family" (n.p.), he concludes. Curiously, the first emigration choice of the pioneer Issei in Brazil would have been the United States, had it not been for the then enacted anti-Asian immigration laws. Eduardo too would have chosen the United States instead of his parents' homeland. *Lonely Swallows*, therefore, joins other dekasegi texts in implying that, after eighty years of Japanese emigration to Brazil, history repeats itself.

Whereas some dekasegi texts represent a eulogy of the Nikkeijin's perceived heroism and patriotism, other works provide a less flattering representation of their presence in Japan. Yoshioka and Sam, for instance, criticize the behavior of many dekasegi, revealing that 30 percent of Brazilian dekasegi in Japan have no contact with their families in Brazil. He scorns those who abandon their families in Brazil to form a new family in Japan without divorcing their left-behind spouses: "For some families, letters sent home become infrequent, phone calls end altogether and, worse yet, child support ceases, making it difficult for the spouse to pay rent and purchase food."[7] Yoshioka, in *Porque Migramos*, accuses these dekasegi of being bad representatives of their country, even though he admits that Brazil, to the Japanese, evokes images of underdevelopment and criminality: "because of their growing numbers, they have exhibited negative attitudes and behaviors, like showing disrespect for Japanese customs, to the point of creating stereotypes and prejudice."[8] Yoshioka notes that dekasegi youth crime (robberies, forgeries, graffiti tagging) strengthens negative stereotypes about Brazilians and increases immigration restrictions.

This less flattering representation of Brazilian dekasegi in Japan is also included in *Lonely Swallows*, particularly in the scenes featuring nineteen-year-old Yury Suzuki. He imitates African American and Latino gangbangers in the United States by "throwing up" hand signs and by wearing a baseball cap backward, baggy clothes, and a long gold chain. He has a tattooed tear by his left eye, another tattoo on his right eyelid, and the word "Hustlin" also tattooed on his left hand. After being incarcerated for a year, Yury admits that he was a former gang leader. This lifestyle is common among young dekasegi: "In areas where there are large concentrations of *dekasegi*, gangs of young Brazilians have been formed, sometimes leading to street fights. In other cases conflicts are with young Japanese gangs, but there are also cases of

gangs made up of both Japanese and Brazilian youngsters" (D. de Carvalho 106–7). In the film, Yury claims that his motivation was to earn the respect of his schoolmates and Brazilian peers: "I dropped out of school because nobody respected me there" (n.p.). Daniela de Carvalho maintains that this desire is common among dekasegi children in Japanese schools:

> Of all the difficulties that Brazilian children have to face, probably the worst is *ijime* (bullying). Japanese children are not used to foreigners and often laugh at them, tease them and call them "*baka Gaijin*" (stupid foreigner) or "*henna Gaijin*" (strange foreigner). They also subject them to physical harassment, such as tearing the earrings off Brazilian girls, for example. Though children in Japan are subject to this kind of bullying by their schoolmates, teachers do little to prevent it, or to tackle the attitudes of the bullies . . . In spite of these problems, a proportion of children succeed in adjusting themselves quite well, though others refuse to attend school. Some teenagers drop out of school and join the workforce in factories or run errands for gangsters, committing thefts and other crimes. (105)

For some time, Yury admits, he broke into cars and stole television monitors that, according to him, were worth as much as a week's salary at a factory. Yet his father's absence at his court hearing became a watershed moment for the youngster, who realized that he had to change his behavior because family was the only thing that made him feel grounded. This is also the case with the remaining dekasegi youths in the film. Although Yury has lived in Japan most of his life, he seems not to have social relationships outside his group of Japanese Brazilian friends and relatives.

In 2007, Tsumura and Nakamura began filming the documentary in Japan, but three years later they decided to follow the recent life of the four young dekasegi who had moved to Brazil with their parents. They find Yury in Governador Valadares, a small town in Minas Gerais. He has grudgingly accepted his family's return to Brazil because, in his own words, "We know we are here only as migrant workers, so we have to go where the jobs are. We can't help it" (n.p.). The narrator tells us that Yuri's appearance has changed drastically in a year; he no longer wears hip-hop attire. He bemoans his loneliness, as his childhood friends shun him. Although he maintains that he returned to Brazil to reconcile with his father, it is apparent that their relationship remains strained because he refuses to interpret for his father,

who cannot speak Japanese.[9] Tellingly, whereas Yury uses the formal or polite *otōsan* (father) in the first interview, he now calls him by the term of endearment *oyaji* (daddy), which suggests intimacy or closeness.

In Brazil, Yury lives with his mother. At one point, he discloses the reasons for his anger toward his parents, claiming that like all dekasegi parents, his are obsessed with making money. He also resents their yearly job change and fears that he is becoming like them. Yoshioka and Sam worry that many parents may be neglecting their children's education: "Many children, between the ages of eight to fourteen, are committing crimes in Japan, precisely because there is no parental supervision given that both must work. Leisure time leads to vice and from there, they move on to petty thefts and robberies."[10] In the film, Yury explains yet another reason for his diminishing respect toward his father: his father's inability to speak Japanese makes Yury "realize" that he is more Japanese than his father.

At the time of the interview in Brazil, Yury is looking for a job and complaining that he has much less money than he did in Japan. He is convinced that his tattoos prevent him from being hired. Later, he appears with his new girlfriend, who is two months pregnant with his child. The instability of his life is reflected by his ambivalence toward Japan and Brazil: while he initially stated that he enjoyed Brazil and no longer wanted to return to Japan, Yury is now trying to convince his girlfriend of the benefits of moving to Japan, where their child will have more and better opportunities. He then reveals his plan for saving enough money there so that he can one day return to live and die in Brazil. The ambiguity of Yury's ethnic identifications reflects the fluid and flexible ethnic boundaries that sometimes characterize the dekasegi community, one that lives between two cultures and that, in some cases, can claim to have created an in-between, hybrid third space. In the different scenes of *Lonely Swallows*, the viewer can observe how the same protagonist may activate different ethnic self-identifications, which are subject to negotiation depending on psychological circumstances (individual perceptions, subjective dimensions) and social impositions. This stance may be indicative of a mind change regarding national alliances, ultimately favoring Brazil in spite of its lack of opportunities and resources. After all, Yury optimistically maintains that "being a dekasegi is not that bad. At least you have a choice" (n.p.).

The third dekasegi youth in *Lonely Swallows* is the only female in the group: Yonsei Paula Ayumi Sato, a fifteen-year-old born and raised in Japan. After

her parents decide to return to Brazil, she has no alternative but to join them, leaving her boyfriend behind. Adding to her apprehension is the fact she has never visited Brazil. Like the other young dekasegi in the film, she began to work at a factory out of middle school and is now convinced that without a high school degree, she will be unable to find better employment in Japan. Paula's father corroborates her concerns by pessimistically assuring her that dekasegi will never find administrative jobs in Japan or Brazil. Paula, tearing up, at first says that she is willing to move to Brazil to help her parents, but then adds that she cannot legally remain in Japan without them. Standing with her best friend, who also weeps, a heartbroken Paula now states that she would rather stay in Japan with her friends: "These people define who I am so, without them, I'm going to be incomplete" (n.p.).

Later, we find Paula living in Brazil. She sends a video to her boyfriend in Japan in which she conveys her dislike for her parents' country and confesses that the idea of living in it has not yet sunk in. In her next appearance in the film, Paula is now seventeen years old, feels more mature, and has been living for two years in São Bernardo do Campo, a town in the state of São Paulo. She works full time to pay for night school and to support her seven unemployed relatives. Paula avers with resignation that she is always either at work or at school, but remains determined to persevere and succeed: "But I know I have to change; I can't wait around for someone to push me" (n.p.). In light of this scene, her ganbare spirit and resiliency seem stronger than those of her male peers. In contrast with the earlier scene immediately after her arrival, she now claims to like Brazil, but still wonders whether her true place is in Japan. Toward the end of the documentary, Paula still complains about having to give up her dreams and about being taken away from Japan: "I'll never understand why I had to leave," she wonders, "Why? Why?" (n.p.).

The fourth dekasegi showcased is the twenty-two-year-old Coca (Eduardo Matsumoto) who, at the time of the first interview, is the leader of a dekasegi hip-hop dance team the Floor Monsters. He explains to the interviewer that because many Brazilians were laid off and had to leave Japan, it has been difficult to keep the dance group together for eight years. Dancing, he adds, makes them feel good about themselves. Coca has lived in Japan since the age of seven, but all of his relatives have lost their jobs and are planning their return to Brazil. Teary eyed, he asks the only remaining member of the Floor Monsters to keep the group together for the "brothers"; he then

promises to be back in Japan in six months. The documentary follows Coca to an impoverished town in Brazil, where he tries to form a new dance team with his new Brazilian friends, practicing in the dilapidated kitchen of one of these friends. He hopes that dancing will keep them away from drugs, killing, or having nothing to do.

A few months later, the original Floor Monsters leader, Otávio Calpino, the fifth dekasegi youth to appear in the film (albeit briefly), reunites with the group for some time, before again having to leave for Brazil. Otávio, like other dekasegi, travels back and forth between Brazil and Japan several times. Daniela de Carvalho explains that "there are *Nikkeijin* who have re-emigrated twice and even three times to Japan, and this multiple migration clearly has further implications for the way those involved see themselves" (xviii). Underestimating Brazil's size, Otávio thought that he could join his dance partners there, but they live at a great distance from one another. Frustrated, he is filmed dancing by himself at home.

By film's end, four of the interviewees have reluctantly left Japan for Brazil in their families' company. Eduardo, who stays behind as an undocumented worker, simply roams the streets. Although, for the most part, these youths feel rejected by a Japanese society that gave them few opportunities for reaching success, some still dream about returning to begin anew there. In contrast with previous dekasegi texts that presented Japanese work ethics as a model and proposed the Nipponization of Brazil, *Lonely Swallows* offers a rather negative image of a Japan that discriminates against dekasegi and that discards them once their cheap labor is no longer needed.

It is also important to observe how several of the dekasegi protagonists conclude that education is the only solution to their predicament. The paradox, as Yoshioka and Sam observe, is that many Japanese Brazilians "want to go to Japan to make money and to provide schooling for their children, but what is happening is exactly the opposite: they are sacrificing their children and depriving them of an education. And what can be said of the youngsters who commit crimes in Japan out of their lack of motivation to attend school?"[11] They, therefore, voice his concern for dekasegi youth as they reveal that children, ten years of age or older, struggle in adapting to the Japanese school system, primarily because of difficulties they face with language acquisition. Furthermore, they are not learning Portuguese properly either, which may be a major obstacle to their parents' return to Brazil (*Dekassegui*

52). This is evidenced in *Lonely Swallows*. As Daniela de Carvalho explains, "Since many children have been raised in Japan and have an inadequate command of Portuguese, they are unable to follow lessons and are placed in a lower class than the one they attended in Japan" (106). In contrast with these observations, *Lonely Swallows* does not record linguistic problems with the returning dekasegi youth, but rather they come across as an object of empathy. Whereas Kakazu, Yoshioka, and Sam coincide in their appraisal of the dekasegi phenomenon as being a consequence of economic crises, social injustice, and corruption, as well as ineptitude exhibited by Brazilian politicians, *Lonely Swallows* confirms the continued victimization of the dekasegi's descendants, whose lack of formal education has condemned them to poorly paid jobs or, even worse, to marginality.

In the previous chapter, we witnessed in *Gaijin: Ama-me como Sou*, the Yonsei Yoko Salinas, who, having moved to Japan when a teenager, also struggles with her cultural identity, but proudly identifies as a Brazilian when teased by classmates. This is not the case in *Lonely Swallows*, where we find dekasegi teenagers fluent in Japanese language and culture, who see themselves as Japanese (despite Japanese rejection), because they were either born in Japan or brought there at a young age. And while Yoko, in *Gaijin*, misses her country, the young dekasegi in *Lonely Swallows* are instead nostalgic for their life and friends in Japan, where they grew up, and they look forward to returning. The age of dekasegi children brought to Japan, therefore, is a crucial factor in their self-identification. This also gives evidence that there is no single Nikkei identity, but many in Brazil and Japan, depending, among other factors, on the hegemonic sociocultural assumptions imposed by society (be it the Brazilian or Japanese) and on the Nikkeijin's agency to accept or reject these interpellations in social interactions. Dekasegi, like other underprivileged groups, mobilize different types of ethnic and social identities, moving in and out of them according to circumstances (migrations and remigrations included) or using them as a strategic and pragmatic sociocultural construction to cope with adversity.

Just as their Nisei and Sansei parents had to rebuild their identities after moving to a new country and a culture, the four dekasegi youths (most of them Yonsei) who followed their parents to Brazil also have to adapt to the changing sociopolitical, economic, and cultural circumstances, and make adjustments to their own identities, even if they wish to return to Japan

later. This case is, of course, not unique, as many children born in the United States have had to follow their immigrant Latino parents back to their countries of origin after being deported (2.5 million people were deported during President Barak Obama's term alone).

## NANAKO KURIHARA'S *A GRANDPA FROM BRAZIL*: DEKASEGI YOUTH IN JAPANESE SCHOOLS

Another Japanese documentary film dealing with the Brazilian dekasegi's "reverse migration"—this time not only with dekasegi youth—is *Burajiru kara kita ojiichan* (*A Grandpa from Brazil*, 2008), directed by Nanako Kurihara (1957–),[12] which premiered at the 2008 Tokyo International Women's Film Festival, the year of the centennial celebrations of Brazilian emigration to Brazil. Although the technical quality of the film is questionable, it is still a key document for understanding the dekasegi's living and working conditions in Japan, and, more important for this chapter, the place of dekasegi children in the school system.

The protagonist is the ninety-six-year-old Issei Ken'ichi Konno (1912–), the fifth son of a rice dealer in Suita, Osaka Prefecture, who migrated by himself to Brazil in 1931, at age nineteen. When the documentary filmmaker Nanako Kurihara (1956–) was twenty years old, she joined her father in a business trip to São Paulo, where she met and befriended Konno. Eventually, she stayed with his family for some time and learned about the painful experiences of Japanese immigrants in Brazil. Three decades later, Kurihara visited Konno again, and, after learning about his annual journeys to Japan, she decided to follow him on one of them.

In *A Grandpa from Brazil*, Konno explains how, during his youth, Japanese people were prepared for emigration in schools and then had their voyage abroad paid by the government. He was recruited by the Nippo Rikkokai emigration company, which was created in 1897 to help economically disadvantaged students. During his visit to his former school in Tokyo's Nerima neighborhood, which has now been turned into a dormitory for foreign students, the protagonist peruses a book with a photograph of himself as a young man right before emigrating. Visibly feeling emotional, he states, "In those times, one could not have hope in this world. If the economic situation had been better, they wouldn't have gone to Brazil after college"

(n.p.). It follows that the same could be applied to the case of the Brazilian dekasegi in Japan. Konno then recalls how he was encouraged to migrate to Korea but chose Brazil instead, because he knew that that country enjoyed a warmer weather. Interestingly, according to Konno, the Japanese government's investment in sending citizens overseas was to prevent overpopulation and, therefore, the potential spread of socialism or communism among the impoverished masses. Later in the documentary, he claims that it was also part of a plan to showcase Japanese national pride abroad: "In the old times, one said "I'm a subject of the Great Japanese Empire" and, for that reason, one had to show Japanese national pride. They educated us that way. They told us that regardless of the place where we born, if we had Japanese blood, we were still subjects of the Great Japanese Empire. Today it's not like that anymore" (n.p.).

Konno's next stop is the Museum of Japanese Overseas Migration in Yokohama, where he proudly shows his guide a construction tool invented by a Japanese Brazilian, as well as several books published by Nisei intellectuals in Brazil, all of them dealing with the question of whether one should naturalize as Brazilian and assimilate to the local society. Konno then explains that he traveled in the Rio Maru ship, stopping in Singapore and Cape Town, before arriving at Rio de Janeiro. He also recalls how, determined to learn Portuguese, he became a domestic worker in São Paulo to improve his linguistic skills. At age twenty, he also became Catholic and was baptized at a ceremony where his boss, who had learned to trust him, became his godfather.

Konno now claims to lead a happy life in São Paulo, having raised six culturally integrated children and having numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. However, throughout the sixty-minute documentary, we learn about the many obstacles he had to overcome during his seventy-seven years in Brazil, including going through bankruptcy as a cotton farmer as a result of the economic depression and losing all his properties; it would take him thirty years to recover from this financial loss. Besides working as a baker's apprentice, Japanese-language teacher, shop owner, and sugarcane liquor company employee, he worked at a publishing house from six in the morning till eleven at night, earning a very small salary.

*A Grandpa from Brazil* was filmed in 2004, when Konno was ninety-two years old. It follows one of the annual trips from São Paulo to Japan (after a twenty-six-hour flight) that he underwent by himself for fifteen years,

beginning sixty years after leaving his homeland, until, at age ninety-four, he felt that he no longer had the stamina. Concerned about the fate of the Japanese Brazilians who moved to Japan following the opposite route (also as a therapeutic way to fight the feeling of loneliness after losing his wife, Teruko, in 1994), he would fly once or twice a year to spend approximately one month visiting distant relatives and friends. In Konno's own words, "I needed to leave Brazil in order to understand Brazil's situation, Japan's situation, and where the world is going . . . I also wanted to see the dekasegi's situation in Japan and understand what their future will be" (n.p.).

In Japan, Konno offers advice to the struggling newcomers and nostalgically ponders his eventful life while visiting the sites of his youth. He empathizes with the trials and tribulations of the dekasegi who, as he did during his youth, are looking for economic prosperity in a faraway land. In the film, the still-energetic Konno walks or uses public transportation to visit and offer advice, based on his personal experience, to two welcoming Nikkei families in Kosai, Shizuoka Prefecture, and Fukuyama, Hiroshima Prefecture, to whom he is not related. In addition, Konno visits nonprofit organizations, museums, and other places in Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Shiga, Hiroshima, and Kobe. In a nostalgic scene at the Akaoji Community Center in Osaka, Konno sings a traditional song titled "Spring in the North" to a group of elderly Japanese, which includes the sentence "I want to return to my native land. Will I return?"

Konno first visits the Narimatsus, who own a Brazilian restaurant named Taiyoo in the city of Konan, Shiga Prefecture. Masayuki Narimatsu, Taiyoo's wife, and their customers reveal that though they work ceaselessly (often nineteen or twenty hours a day), they are making plenty of money. Konno then laments the fact that if they worked that hard in Brazil, they would also save enough money, but, unfortunately, there are not enough jobs even if one wants to work there.

The Narimatsus explain that their motivation to migrate to Japan was to save enough money to buy a house and open a restaurant in Brazil. Konno then proceeds to recommend, in Portuguese, that they return to Brazil in ten years, after having saved 300,000 reals, since those savings will probably allow them to live without working. Otherwise, staying longer than a decade, according to Konno, will have adverse identitarian consequences for their children, who will not know if they are Japanese or Brazilian. Later, a

forty-nine-year-old employee from Riberão Preto tells Konno that he works twelve hours a day. He also confesses that he finds Japanese people too cold and feels that there is not much human warmth in Japan.

In a different scene, Konno visits the de Silvas, who work at a lumber mill and construction company in Fukuyama, Hiroshima Prefecture. His Euro-Brazilian friend Roberto Jose da Silva explains that he works long hours and that he can no longer play soccer because he has a limp as a result of a work injury. We learn that he did not receive any sort of monetary compensation, because he applied for it three days after the deadline. Roberto is married to a Nikkei named Eliane Midori Oka da Silva, and they have two children. Konno's visit to this family focuses on the school progress of the da Silva children, the nine-year-old Douglas and the thirteen-year-old Fábio. In his conversations with them, Konno celebrates their scholarly achievements and encourages them to study hard and go to college. When Konno asks Fábio about the reasons half of dekasegi children never go to junior high school, the boy answers that even if they behave well, there is always a negative image of them and they are treated poorly in the schools. As a result, and since it is not easy to find a job at age fifteen or sixteen, many prefer to wander around in the streets stealing things, which ends up damaging the image of all Brazilians in Japan.

In what is perhaps the most interesting part of the documentary, Konno visits Fábio's junior high school, where he asks his teachers, in a unwavering manner, about the problems faced by Japanese Brazilian students: "Do you have a bullying problem against Brazilian children?" (n.p.). Fábio's teacher claims that in the three years he has taught in that school, he has not seen many problems. Curiously, as if it were an extraordinary event, the instructor adds that, at times, Japanese children even talk to Brazilian children, perhaps out of curiosity. When Konno asks about the kinds of grades Brazilian children earn, he learns that they have more problems with subjects for which they have to use many kanjis. In spite of reluctantly admitting the school's failure to educate foreign children properly, the teacher tries to stay positive by adding that at least Fábio is doing well and does not require a great effort to understand the lessons. Along these lines, another teacher attempts to soothe the exchange by claiming that the most important thing is that dekasegi students are making an effort to write kanjis and read books. Konno also finds out that Brazilian children often act as translators whenever

teachers need to talk to their parents, just as Nikkei children did in Brazil before the war.

When Konno visits Douglas's elementary school, he tells his classmates that, after living for seventy-two years in Brazil, he is now more Brazilian than Japanese. Even though, throughout the documentary, one can sense certain resentment toward the Japanese government for offering false promises to emigrants, Konno shows loyalty to Japan when he asks the children to study hard and make every possible effort to become good Japanese citizens. In his candid and at times somewhat abrupt conversation with Douglas's teachers, Konno explains that in Brazil, people are concerned with the fact that dekasegi children do not go to school, thus missing the opportunity to acquire either Japanese- or Portuguese-language skills. The children's unfamiliarity with the Japanese language and the constant bullying they suffer, he reminds the teachers, prevent many of them from attending high school or college. He bemoans the fact that so many dekasegi children drop out after junior high school as a result of the official policy of not making high school attendance mandatory for foreign children. As a result, he denounces, some of them, particularly those who cannot find a job, grow up in the streets, without their parents, and by the time they are fifteen, they end up being marginalized and often in trouble with the law. Konno argues that many of these social problems would be easily solved by making high school mandatory for foreign children. Finally, in a telling exchange in one of the last scenes in the film, Konno tries to convince Fábio of the need to return to Brazil as soon as possible, while the latter, seemingly unconvinced, only smiles.

Therefore, through the lens of the elderly Issei, mediated, of course, by the Japanese filmmaker, *A Grandpa from Brazil* offers insight into the daily life of transnational dekasegi families, their daily problems, and how this elderly, philanthropic Issei helped them overcome these trials for fifteen years. Konno offers hope by reminding the dekasegi that Japanese immigrants in Brazil encountered similar difficulties but managed to prevail through a strong work ethic and by recognizing the importance of a formal education: "In the case of Brazilian Nikkeijin, Issei and Nisei sacrificed themselves and, eventually, Sansei entered Brazilian society as full Brazilian citizens. I think that dekasegi are following the same path" (n.p.). He therefore reminds the dekasegi that it will take three generations for them to become fully integrated into Japanese society. He also underscores the need to make a decision

about whether the family will stay in Japan or not as soon as possible, before their children suffer identitarian problems. Having managed to succeed economically after decades of uncertainty, the protagonist wishes to deliver to Japanese Brazilian dekasegi the following main message: "If we don't give up, there is nothing we cannot achieve" (n.p.).

In the closing scenes of the documentary, Konno visits the emigration building in the Chuo neighborhood of Kobe, where he stayed before departing for Brazil in 1931. Looking at photographs at the museum, he confesses that from the beginning, he was determined to start a second life in Brazil and therefore had no intention to return to Japan, even if the situation was bad: "I was prepared to live in Brazil no matter what" (n.p.). Then, in a final, philosophical message, Konno declares: "To live is to do things with a purpose. Happiness is the capacity to be satisfied with anything. I learned this through my experiences in Brazil" (n.p.). He then adds that instead of being nationalistic, people should devote themselves to humankind in general. After living for so long, "one discovers the value of living as a human being, devoting oneself to the place where one lives" (n.p.).

## THE SPECTACULARIZATION OF DEKASEGI CRIME IN *THE CITY OF LOST SOULS*

Brazilian dekasegi also appear in the action-filled, Japanese-language film *Hyôryû-gai* (translated as *The City of Lost Souls*, *The City of Strangers* or *The Hazard City*, 2000), directed by internationally celebrated Japanese filmmaker Takashi Miike (1960–).[13] The protagonists of this violent thriller, adapted by Ichiro Ryu from a novel by the Japanese writer Seishū Hase, are two lovers: Mário (played by the Japanese Brazilian Teah), a Nikkeijin with an African phenotype, and the beautiful Kei (played by Michele Reis from Hong Kong), a Chinese hairdresser apprentice and undocumented immigrant. The action unfolds in Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo's Shinjuku District, and Okinawa. In the second scene, which takes place at a bar in the town of São Pedro in the state of São Paulo, Mário kills four fellow criminals and takes their money only to allow it to be blown away by the wind. The next scene takes us to Japan, a year later, where the daring Mário prevents the deportation of his lover Kei by hijacking a sightseeing helicopter and machine-gunning, in a violent confrontation in a desert, a police car and the policemen inside the bus who were

guarding her. Afterward, the two lovers jump off the helicopter and miraculously land safely without the aid of a parachute; incidentally, realism is not this director's goal. Following the style of the pulp-fiction subgenre, the film includes a cockfight with birds trained in the martial arts and a somewhat ridiculous table tennis death match between Chinese triad bosses and the Yakuza. As Jasper Sharp explains, "There's no pretense about what this film's all about, a fast-paced actioner with its tongue firmly planted in cheek. Miike, never one to be hampered by audience expectations, bends the framework to his own needs to create another skewed piece of entertainment, a relentless flurry of images which alternate between the grotesque and the absurd" (n.p.). These characteristics of the film, however, should not prevent viewers from analyzing how young dekasegi and, by extension, their social group are represented.

Mário and Kei plan to stow way on a ship heading overseas, having in their possession fake passports obtained through a Russian mobster. Since they need money for their flight, they unsuccessfully attempt to steal money in a drug deal between Mr. Ko (Mitsuhiro Oikawa), a sinister Chinese triad boss and Kei's former lover, and Fushimi (Koji Kikkawa), a Japanese Yakuza boss. Mário and Kei escape a bloody crossfire in Shinjuku and steal a cocaine-filled suitcase that they plan to sell. The Yakuza also kidnaps Mário's former lover's foster daughter, a blind girl named Carla, to ensure Mário's return to Tokyo to save her. Meanwhile, though Mário and Kei plan to leave Japan, she convinces him to return to Tokyo to rescue Carla. In a foreshadowing scene, Lucia (Patricia Manterola)—a Brazilian prostitute, Mário's former lover and Carla's foster mother—warns the protagonist that she will kill him if something bad happens to Carla. In the end, Lucia shoots Mário at the beach when he was on the verge of escaping with Kei.

The importance of *The City* for this study is its stereotypical rendering of Japanese Brazilians through the spectacularization of dekasegi crime (perhaps the beginning of a new trend in exploitation film), which is summarized by its trivial ending: a Japanese businessman tells the camera, "Must be Latin blood. Hot tempered" (n.p.). The dekasegi characters who appear in the film, including the protagonist, are part of the "lost souls" in Tokyo included in the title. In spite of Takashi Miike's irreverent, satiric, lowbrow approach, the film reveals a dekasegi world filled with shady bars and Third World destitution. Outside the TV Piranha studios, where a show for dekasegi is being

filmed, we are shocked to find a pigsty and an outhouse. In the scene that follows, a dekasegi man inappropriately touches three complacent women in a Brazilian bar in Tokyo.

Moreover, one can find in *The City* flashes of awareness to the Brazilian dekasegi condition. A Japanese Brazilian named Carlos, who provided the fake passports to the protagonists, tells Mário: "In Brazil, we're Japanese. Here, we're Brazilian" (n.p.). We then hear xenophobic comments made by Japanese characters. As Matthew Holland observes: "The film is expressing the idea that Japan is no longer Japanese and, as such, is set mostly in the confines of the Brazilian-Japanese community and some Chinese immigrants and gangsters. The few Japanese characters even comment at times about 'foreigners' taking over in modern Japan, although Miike does not present this situation in a negative way and, instead, simply relates it as a symptom of contemporary society" (276). It must be kept in mind that, as Dave Kehr puts it, "Miike is less a social philosopher than an unabashed entertainer, ready to do what it takes to hold the attention of his increasingly jaded audience. His formal gifts are evident; the uses he puts them to are trivial" (n.p.). The film, however, is a collection of tired Brazilian stereotypes: soccer craze, folk Catholicism (Madonna figure with candles), steamy sex, violence, corny cockfights (thanks to Brazil's 1934 Constitution and with Getúlio Vargas's support, cockfighting was banned in Brazil), drug trafficking, sexy Latina spitfires and prostitutes, and, of course, hot tempers. Some of these negative stereotypes imply Brazilian laziness as well. Thus, a dekasegi named Ricardo tells Carlos that he hates working for the Japanese and then declares: "I only work if I'm having fun" (n.p.).

Another interesting aspect of *The City* is that, like *Lonely Swallows*, it offers a very different view of dekasegi from those seen in previous chapters. Rather than encountering a hardworking Brazilian immigrant struggling to adapt to Japanese culture, we find a mixed-race, young delinquent who does not hesitate to use violence to achieve his goals. The position of mixed-race dekasegi in Japan—even though it does not seem to affect the protagonist—is discussed by Daniela de Carvalho, when she explains that the preference of Japanese factories is "for *Nisei*, whilst the *Mestiços* are the least desirable" (94). The dekasegi protagonist is also someone who can easily navigate the Brazilian and the Japanese worlds, as well as speak Japanese and Portuguese fluently. Although Mário's Brazilianness may be a mere added

nuance for an outsider type in a hyperviolent action film, the fact remains that he no longer is a passive victim of exploitation, but an active agent of his own destiny, to be feared by both the Japanese and the international mafias. Besides, his mere existence as a character in a Japanese film evidences that, in spite of their marginalization, Brazilian dekasegi have entered the collective subconscious of Japanese society.

Overall, these Japanese films reveal the young dekasegi's social identities' shaping and also being defined externally by Japanese perceptions. Just as Brazilian Nikkei identities resulted from multiple negotiations with the Brazilian host society to reach an accommodation regarding the new social situation (gaining social capital by becoming Catholic, for example), Brazilian dekasegi ethnic self-definitions are the outcome of sociocultural relations, encounters, and clashes with the Japanese host society that was—in many dekasegi's minds—supposed to receive its prodigal children with open arms. Even if there are significant individual differences among the cases, overall Brazilian dekasegi, noticing that they are perceived as foreigners in Japan or as an unfaithful, degenerate copy of the superior original, choose ethnic allegiances that they deem more convenient according to the evolving circumstances: in a search for belonging, they may have identified themselves as Japanese in Brazil, being somewhat familiar with Japanese culture and language, but a poor reception by the Japanese host society inevitably puts an end to the idealization of the ancestral homeland.

Likewise, homesick Japanese Brazilians, returning to Brazil after a period of hard dekasegi work, may feel disappointed with the high crime rate or the lack of economic opportunities in their country, thereby becoming twice deracinated. In this regard, Daniela de Carvalho posits that "the assumption has been that the *Nikkeijin* brought their ethnicity with them. However, it would be truer to say that their ethnicity did not cross the ocean intact, but rather developed within the host society" (xvii). Beyond the transmitted culture, bloodline, and ethnicity, changing sociopolitical and economic circumstances (inside and outside the group) and multiple migrations are what relationally transform ethnic allegiance, mobilize social identity, and affect self-perception among the Nikkeijin. These external and subjective processes often create a hybrid third space, an in-between Japanese or Brazilian space, where subjects can strategically find positive images with which they can associate and creatively make sense of their place in society through the social construction of

their identity. At times, to use Boym's words, "This is no longer nostalgia for one's local home but for being at home in the world" (25).

Therefore, the process of deterritorialization—that is, the displacement and the simultaneous loss of the natural relation between national culture and geographical territory—suffered by the dekasegi suddenly turns into a new (at times imagined, subjectivized) reterritorialization, by which the national territory is recomposed and new hybrid and transnational cultural practices are reformulated and relocated. After all, this provides evidence of the existence of what Brazilian sociologist and anthropologist Renato Ortiz, referring to the "deterritorialization of culture" and the "globalization of culture" in his *Mundialização e Cultura* (1994), defines as "global processes that transcend groups, social classes, and nations."[14] In his own words, "If the autonomy of the nation-state has been compromised by the process of globalization of societies, why would culture remain intact, immune to the world system's moods?"[15]

In the case of Brazilian dekasegi in Japan, the displacement of not only people but also of real and symbolic goods, cultural practices, imaginaries, and deterritorialized memories is accompanied by a recurrent feeling of nostalgia, a longing for a lost home and a lost time. As seen, in the cases of both dekasegi in Japan and Issei in Brazil, the painful feeling of fragmentation produced by displacement may lead migrants to long for a home (the *pátria*, or homeland for the dekasegi; the *furusato*, or birthplace for the Issei) that no longer exists or that has never existed; to put it in Svetlana Boym's terms, it may be "a romance with one's own fantasy" (xiii).

## NOTES

1. Korean Japanese, ethnic Korean residents, and Japanese citizens of Korean descent are the largest ethnic minority in Japan. Most are permanent residents and Zainichi Koreans, that is, descendants of Koreans who lived under Japanese rule during the occupation of the peninsula. Some, however, arrived in the 1980s or moved to Japan in premodern times. Some are third- or fourth-generation Koreans but have retained their Korean nationality. In turn, Buraku people, or Burakumin (meaning "hamlet people" or "village people"), have been historically stigmatized, ostracized, and discriminated against (in employment, marriage, and religion) and placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy, below samurai, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. They are descendants of outcast communities that in the feudal

period worked in professions considered impure or related to death, such as public sanitation workers, executioners, butchers, and slaughterhouse workers. As their name indicates, they lived in their own hamlets or ghettos. Finally, the Ainu are indigenous people, living mostly on the island of Hokkaido. Because of intermarriage with Japanese and discrimination (some hide their ethnic identity), the estimates of the population vary greatly (25,000 to 200,000). Most Ainu no longer practice their customs or speak their original language. In 2008, the Japanese Diet asked the government to recognize the Ainu as indigenous to Japan and to end the discrimination against them.

2. The Portuguese translation provided in the *Lonely Swallows* DVD is *Andorinhas Solitárias*. Mayu Nakamura was born in Kyoto and holds a BA in English literature and history of Art from the University of London. In 1995, she earned her MA from Columbia University and, in 2004, an MFA from the Graduate Film Program of New York University. In 2006, she directed a short film titled *Horiyo no natsu* (*Calling*). Kimihiro Tsumura is professor of multicultural education and second languages at Hamamatsu Gakuin University. He began, in 2006, to interview dekasegi youth and to conduct research on their experiences. He also opened a school named Aqarela to prepare Brazilian children for high school. Three years later, he created the school Juntos that focuses on young Brazilian dekasegi who have not completed secondary education.

3. "A desagregação familiar, delinquência de nikkeis no Japão, desajuste mental e a própria dificuldade dos retornados de esse integrarem ao seu meio de origem, além de outros problemas" (*Dekassegui* 40).

4. "Como o tratamento de 'japonês' pelos brasileiros e de 'gaijin' pelos japoneses, a impressão era de que não se tinha nacionalidade" (111).

5. At age four, Eduardo's mother sent him to live with some relatives in Brazil, only for him to be sent back to Japan a few years later.

6. "Afinal, os bilhões de dólares que os decasséguis remetem para o Brasil, uma parcela deve reverter em seu próprio benefício. Por outro lado, se os trabalhadores remetem montante tão expressivo, significa que essa mão-de-obra proporciona lucros astronômicos às empresas e ao próprio país" (*Dekassegui* 68).

7. "Para algumas famílias, as cartas começam a escassear, os telefonemas se tornam inexistentes e o que é pior, deixam de receber o dinheiro para manutenção das crianças na escola, pagamento de aluguel e a própria comida" (*Dekassegui* 51).

8. "Pelo seu crescente número têm apresentado atitudes e comportamentos reprováveis naquele país, ferindo usos e costumes do povo japonês, a ponto de criar estereótipos e preconceitos" (*Porque Migramos* 49).

9. Yury's father regrets having returned to Brazil, where he owns an herbal medicine shop and only earns about two hundred dollars a month.

10. "Muitas crianças na faixa etária entre 8 e 14 anos vêm praticando delitos no Japão, exatamente porque não conseguem a vigilância sobre elas, por estarem trabalhando. O ócio é amigo do vício e daí passam a praticar pequenos furtos e roubos" (*Dekassegui* 51).

11. "No que diz respeito à questão educacional, há um paradoxo entre os nipo-brasileiros. Querem ir ao Japão para ganhar dinheiro e para muitos, propiciar estudos aos seus filhos, mas o que está acontecendo é exatamente o contrário, sacrificando as crianças e tirando-lhes a oportunidade de estudar. E, o que dizer dos jovens que começam a delinquir no Japão, exatamente porque não encontram motivação par a frequentar a escola?" (*Dekassegui* 83).

12. Nanako Kurihara, an award-winning Japanese filmmaker, producer, journalist and dance scholar, was born in Osaka, Japan. She holds a BA in political science from Waseda University in Tokyo, as well as an MA and a PhD in performance studies from New York University. After working as a magazine editor in Japan, Kurihara moved to New York, where she began to film documentaries there. Her first documentary film, *Ripples of Change: Japanese Women's Search for Self* (also titled *Looking for Fumiko*, 1993), dealt with the Japanese women's liberation movement during the 1970s and its long-lasting effects on Japanese society. A *Grandpa In Brazil*, her second documentary film, was shown throughout Japan in theaters and communities with the goal of connecting Japanese citizens and Brazilian immigrants at a time of economic crisis. It was also screened in Brazil in 2008, during the celebrations of the centennial of Japanese immigration to Brazil; at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, in the United States; and at a meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Toronto, Canada.

13. Takashi Miike has directed more than fifty films since 1991, averaging four films a year. *The City of Lost Souls* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival on 15 September 2000.

14. "Desterritorialização da cultura" (108); "mundialização da cultura" (212); "processos globais que transcendem os grupos, as classes sociais e as nações" (7)

15. "Se a autonomia do Estado-nação encontra-se comprometida com o processo de globalização das sociedades, por que a cultura permaneceria intacta, imune aos humores do sistema mundial?" (117).

# EPILOGUE

As is evident in the anthology of texts by Gilberto Freyre *China Tropical* (Tropical China, 2003), edited by Edson Nery da Fonseca, the Brazilian sociologist addresses, in several of his works, how numerous Asian values absorbed by Portuguese colonizers were incorporated into Brazilian culture. In *Sobrados e Mucambos: Decadência do Patriarcado Rural e Desenvolvimento do Urbano* (*The Mansions and the Shanties: the Making of Modern Brazil,* 1936), for example, Freyre argues that only English interference and official westernizing policies would stop this long tradition of cultural and commercial exchanges between Brazil and the East:

> Normally, it would have been convenient for Brazil to continue, for many years, the trade and the abundant relations that, for centuries, kept it in touch with a part of the world with which it had become closely related in environmental and social terms. They were related by the climate and by the patriarchal system of economic organization, as well as by the coexistence among races and classes. This took place until the intense re-Europeanization

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> of Brazilian society, which began in the early nineteenth century . . . turned the East into something remote and vague for Brazilian society and for its still evolving culture. It became so remote and vague that Eastern values, once common among us, became almost as rare—museum-pieces, archaisms, curios—as in the most Westernized countries in the Americas.[1]

Freyre underscores, therefore, the influence of Asian cultures on the lifestyle, landscape, and culture of Brazil, establishing connections between the paternalistic human relations, and hierarchical familial and societal structures, as well as the exploitation of racialized labor in both regions of the world. Yet by the time Freyre was writing this passage, Brazil had already been receiving new Asian influences for three decades through Japanese immigration, which would end up transforming numerous aspects of national life, including the Portuguese language as well as Brazilian agriculture, diet, cuisine, poetry writing, and national identity.[2]

Nikkei cultural forms often try to emphasize these important contributions to Brazil's betterment, as evident in the following passage from Shindo's *Passos da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil*: "Our cooperative [Cooperativa Cotia] is proud of being able to collaborate with the government of the state of Minas Gerais's venture. This way, we can expand the horizon of the country's agriculture and contribute to its development."[3] Shindo goes on to underscore that by 1975, the Nikkeijin (he calls the Nikkei pioneers of the Cotia Agricultural Cooperative "The Seven Samurai"), who only represented 0.68 percent of the Brazilian population, were responsible for more than 6.8 percent of the country's agricultural production (259). Moreover, he recalls how a Japanese farmer lost his mind upon realizing that he would never be able to sell the vegetables he had grown: "At the time, the only vegetables consumed by the population were cabbage, green onions, parsley, and chicory. Back then, there was no way to sell Japanese vegetables and legumes such as turnips, chard, or spinach."[4]

Overall, Japanese Brazilian literature and film trace the emergence of a culture formed through the sedimentation of different ethnocultural identifications, from the Issei pioneer immigrant to the dekasegi in Japan, moving through the isolated Nikkeijin of the rural colonies from rural São Paulo and the Brazilianized and integrated urban Sansei. And this Japanese Brazilian culture suffers a renewed process of hybridization as a result of the dekasegi exodus. Nikkei cultural production also echoes the historical

process of racialization of this ethnic group. A key component of Nikkei cultural politics, these works remember the past and record the social history of Nikkei subject formation. They mediate, in an inevitably fragmented and limited way, an alternative history or counterhistory that is often related to the politics of space (migration from rural areas to the city, forced relocation, displacement for economic reasons, international migration) and how it expands notions of brasilidade (Brazilianness).

As determined, Nikkei cultural forms deploy different strategies for simultaneously stressing, on the one hand, the politics of identity and inclusion by claiming place within the nation and, on the other, the politics of difference, with several texts engaging heterogeneity in ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status and class (which arguable provoked the Shindō Renmei schism between Kachigumi and Makegumi), gender, and, in a few cases (Nishimura's *The Apprentice*), also sexuality. Some propose the modeling function of the Nikkei worldview, as implied in Katsuzō Yamamoto's article "Competição" (Competition), dealing with the history of competition in Japanese industry, originally published in 1970 in *Seleções Econômicas* and later included in the collection *Toda uma Vida no Brasil* (1984): "For now, it seems that there are two options for industrial development in underdeveloped countries. One is to quickly copy the know-how of developed countries, and another one, to develop, without delay, light industries that can take advantage of abundant and cheap labor."[5]

Yamamoto is later more explicit in his presentation of Japanese employees' loyalty to their company as well as Japanese and Nikkei work ethics as a model for Brazil. Thus, in "Persistência Combativa (Gambari)" (Combative Persistence [Ganbare]), originally published in *Jornal Paulista* in 1972 and later included in *Toda uma Vida no Brasil*, he makes the following recommendation: "I have the impression that the Japanese Ganbare suggests something beyond common expressions such as full force, maximum effort, etc. Ganbare! expresses this moral desire or sense of superhuman effort . . . It is desirable that we the Japanese increase the Ganbare spirit, among many other virtues, to the Brazilian crucible of races."[6] The same idea resurfaces in another somewhat paternalistic essay of the same collection titled "Problemas das Pequenas e Médias Empresas no Brasil" (Small and Medium Brazilian Companies' Problems) and originally published in *Seleções Econômicas* in 1979: "Brazil must follow Japan, with a twenty to thirty year lag. Thus, the

know-how and business administration techniques developed in Japan will be very useful as a reference when choosing types of activities."[7]

Other works re-create the process by which the Nikkeijin "became" Brazilian, focusing on the true Brazilianness of the Nikkeijin and dekasegi, as well as on the common history and culture they share with the rest of Brazilians. Thus, in another essay of the same collection, titled "Animal Anfíbio" (Amphibious Animal) and originally published in 1976 in *Jornal Paulista*, Yamamoto, who was born in Japan in 1909 and moved to Brazil in 1932, defiantly proclaims his Brazilian patriotism: "And when they insist on explaining something about Brazil, I say to them, there's no point, I'm more Brazilian than you are. I assume a defiant attitude, stating that I was already in Brazil before they were born."[8] After all, as Boym points out, "immigrants often share a peculiar inferiority-superiority complex, believing themselves to be more dedicated to the ideals of the adopted homeland than the natives themselves" (342–43). These texts' goal is to offset the image of the Nikkeijin as the racial and cultural "other," necessarily located outside the boundaries of the political body of the nation, even if they hold Brazilian passports. This claim is a reaction to the fact that Nikkeijin, in Brazil and Japan, are often presumed or expected to share the same culture with the Japanese, when in fact that is clearly not the case, even if many are familiar with Japanese language and culture. Paradoxically, stereotypical preconceptions are also reciprocated. As Lesser explains, "Nikkei militants felt resentment about the diasporic representation construed by majority society and rejected the idea that they were simply 'Japanese.' These same people, however, would see themselves as different from normative Brazilians, and their stereotypes of 'Brazil' and 'Brazilians' as 'others' were frequently as predominant as the non-Nikkei stereotypes about 'Japan' and the 'Japanese.'"[9]

Nikkei texts and films attempt to shape public opinion by presenting a new, loyal, dekasegi subject, thus becoming contradictory sites of contestation and struggle for recognition of their full citizenship in Brazil, Japan, or both countries. In the case of dekasegi texts, these also respond to the authors' anxiety about potential doubts regarding Nikkei loyalty to Brazil, particularly after their massive departure in the early 1990s. It is apparent that dekasegi authors are aware of the ambivalent signs sent by the exodus of a quarter of a million people. As a result, they sometimes feel excluded from Brazilian and Japanese national identity discourses. Subsequent deterritorializations and

reterritorializations have only exacerbated this perception, as the shuttling back and forth between Japan and Brazil has created a community of transnational migrants or transmigrants whose mobility links two very different societies, sometimes revealing fissures in the notion of national identity. As Pauline Cherrier observes in the case of Japanese national identity, "The arrival of Brazilian Nikkeijin to Japan disrupted the myth of Japanese identity's ethno-cultural homogeneity: the Japanese discovered that one may look Japanese and be Japanese by blood, without behaving like a Japanese."[10] Elisa Sasaki coincides in her analysis of the influence of the Brazilian dekasegi presence on Japanese national identity:

> The presence of foreigners in a country that still maintains the idea of its people's mythical homogeneity forces the Japanese to rethink their own society. The image reflected in a distorting mirror is not always eloquent or easy to look at. Receiving in their country those Nikkeijin—when they had not imagined them to be like that before meeting them (with their Japanese colleagues) on the factory floor, but with a face and a document that attest to their consanguinity, proving that they are people of Japanese ancestry living abroad—makes them turn their attention to their own history and to the history of its relationship with Brazil throughout the twentieth century.[11]

This cultural production also retrieves lost social memories and recalls the arduous evolution of Nikkei subject positions from the first diaspora at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the second one toward the end of the twentieth. But this creation of new forms of subjectivity also involves strategic negotiations of memory and even social amnesia, such as denying or omitting a history of racialization, disenfranchisement, and economic violence, particularly during the first years of the immigration process and during World War II. As Renato Ortiz points out, "the realism of the past is a threat. The construction of national memory is carried out through forgetting. It is the result of selective amnesia. Forgetting means confirming certain memories, erasing the traces of others that are more uncomfortable and less consensual."[12]

These works are also mobilized to challenge a genealogy of orientalist or nativist racializations that is pervasive in the mainstream Brazilian imaginary and national memory. Among its many phases and stereotypes, one can find the idea of Asian unassimilability, the Yellow Peril, the Japanese as a fifth column, the unpatriotic or traitorous Nikkeijin, the submissive Japanese

woman, the model minority, and the Nikkeijin as a foreigner, a metonym for Japan, unfair economic competition, or racial enemy. Unfortunately, as King has demonstrated in his 2015 study *Virtual Orientalism in Brazilian Culture*, orientalism—techno-orientalism, or virtual orientalism in this case—is alive and well in Brazil. After all, as Lisa Lowe posits, "Racism is not a fixed structure; society's notions about race are not static and immutable, nor has the state been built on an unchanging exclusion of all racialized peoples. Rather, legal institutions function as flexible apparatuses of racialization and gendering in response to the material conditions of different historical moments" (22).

Some Nikkei (including dekasegi) authors and filmmakers volunteer themselves as their ethnic group's flag bearers to counter this range of expressions of social anxiety by invoking, among other real and imagined notions, ethnicity, an inherited millennial culture, traditional Japanese values, or Confucianism as both markers of difference and the secret for Nikkei success. In a way, they strategically essentialize themselves by accepting allegedly positive stereotypes, such as the model minority one.

Boym clarifies that nostalgia, a historical emotion, "is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future" (xvi). Indeed, displaced people sometimes reinvent traditions and create phantom homelands as tools for self-empowerment or as strategies of survival. Besides looking toward the future by negotiating Japanese and/or Nikkei social subjectivity as a door to modernity for Brazil, Nikkei cultural forms also look nostalgically to the past, offering a rich inventory of symbolic and material culture. As if it were a curio cabinet, it may include explanations about Japanese and Nikkei cultural practices, objects, customs, sports, food, kinship, work ethics, anxieties, and historical events. The fast pace of work in the coffee plantation or the Japanese factory leads Nikkei workers to express longing for a stable tradition, a slower pace of life, and a less fragmented world. But, as previously stated, even this nostalgic look back at the past is sometimes linked to the future and a will to power. On occasion, certain passages fall into a type of sentimentalization of the history of Japanese immigration to Brazil that may verge on the multicultural commodification of nostalgia; most authors studied here, however, avoid nationalist nostalgia and readymade nostalgic clichés, re-creating instead individualized and nuanced migration experiences.

These works also explore the family and the classroom as ideological apparatuses, as sites of indoctrination (sometimes of oppositional resistance) where children are interpellated as subjects. It is also there that national identity (Japanese or Brazilian ultranationalism, nativism, xenophobia, racism and/or patriarchy) is imposed, and ethnocultural differences are partially erased in the pursuit of national homogeneity. Besides the ship *Kasato Maru*, which brought the first Issei immigrants to Brazil, other important chronotopes recurrent in Nikkei literature and film are the Brazilian coffee plantation for Issei and the Japanese factory for dekasegi. These workplaces are loci of reproduction of similar sociocultural impositions and spatialized race relations, as well as sites of resistance against state or ethnic group regulations. As Lowe explains, racial formation is created by "the shifting construction of racial meanings formed in the dialectic between state categorization and social challenges to those categorizations, and the sociohistorical process by which racial meanings are created, lived, and transformed" (21). The social dynamic created by the tension between state-imposed racial meanings and this minority group's resistance to them produces new cultural practices and, ultimately, the "racial formation" of the Nikkeijin.

The mediation of the past by some Nikkei texts also shares ethnographic and didactic overtones, bordering at times on pluralist multiculturalism and nostalgic self-orientalization. Yet the majority of this cultural production documents or re-creates specific histories of conflict, disenfranchisement, and oppositional resistance in their plots. By contrast, Japanese imperialism/colonialism is, for the most part, conveniently ignored, even though some texts do establish a connection between imperialist expansion and emigration to Latin America. As may be expected, aesthetic reconstruction of past events and aspiration for political representation go hand in hand. Yet, as Jacobowitz argues, "immigration was integral to prewar Japan: an indispensable supplement, if not outright pillar of imperial expansionist doctrine" (n.p.).

This performative ethnic minority discourse aims at having an active effect on the non-Nikkei reader, as it attempts to reposition the Nikkeijin and their subjugated knowledge in the Brazilian imaginary. With this objective in mind, Nikkei (including dekasegi) authors speak as the Brazilian citizens they are, all the while celebrating their ethnic group's numerous achievements, including its economic and class ascension; they may well be aware

that in Brazil, wealth is often the great equalizer that erases traditional racial hierarchies. These narratives also reveal the multiple identities strategically adopted by Brazilian Nikkeijin in Brazil and Japan, according to determining factors such as spatial changes, impositions of majority society, economic and historical circumstances, or increased tolerance to diversity in Brazilian or Japanese society. For instance, it is evident in several texts herein analyzed that Nikkei self-perception has been deeply affected by the military or economic prestige of Japan or Brazil.

These cultural forms also interpellate Nikkei readers as members of an imagined (ethnic) community, asking them to unite and assess together their own historical right—after having contributed significantly to the development of Brazilian capitalism, the economy, and modernity through harsh labor and sacrifice—to claim full citizenship as well as sociopolitical and cultural membership in Brazil. Along the way, they uncover, beyond the limits of black African slavery, the racialized foundations of Brazilian capitalism. In the case of dekasegi texts, they inadvertently expose the Japanese government's racist turn to Latin American dekasegi labor since the late 1980s in order to replace the unauthorized labor of foreign workers of non-Japanese ancestry. They also contest the purportedly essentialist Japanese view of Latin American Nikkeijin as a less genuine or authentic reproduction of the "pure" and fixed original form of Japaneseness.

Finally, dekasegi texts vindicate early twentieth-century Issei immigrants to Brazil as participants in the construction of Japan's and Brazil's modernity, and contemporary dekasegi in Japan as major factors in this country's economic might. Simultaneously, in these times of "deterritorialization of culture" and "globalization of culture" (to use Renato Ortiz's phrases), Japanese Brazilian dekasegi in Japan retreat to a proud Brazilian cultural nationalism or to a "cultural intimacy," which Boym describes, in opposition to global culture, as "a social poetics that characterizes existence in a small nation and transposes upon the national community what was historically the realm of private individual and familial relationships" (255). In a way, alienated dekasegi rebuild the shelter of a mini-Brazil in the host country, where they enjoy a sense of belonging and a particular type of imagined homecoming. For the most part, the postnational approaches present in the works of several Chinese Peruvian and Japanese Peruvian authors are absent from Japanese Brazilian narratives.[13]

## RESISTANCE AND INTEGRATION

Nikkei cultural production explores different forms of agency, as well as the tactics of cultural and political resistance used to expose orientalist fantasy and to combat marginalization and oppression. Among these orientalist tropes was the view of the unassimilable Japanese that nativist Brazilian politicians—influenced by the then prestigious pseudoscientific discourses of eugenics and social Darwinism—professed, for decades, as a threat to Brazilian national identity and as a reason for additional legislation to prevent Japanese immigration. On the other hand, Lesser explains that by the 1930s, the economic success of the Japanese in Brazil, along with the increased militarism of the Japanese Empire, created resentment among Brazilian politicians and population: "A number of political movements sought to limit Japanese immigration. In the mid-thirties Brazil's elites fought a political and cultural battle among themselves over whether Japanese immigrants would save or ruin Brazil. In 1933, members of the Constitutional Convention, charged with producing what would become the Constitution of 1934, debated Japanese immigration in detail, discussing its relation to imperialism, assimilation, and nationalism" (*Discontented* 7).

Often, literature and film reveal how Japanese Brazilians integrated (or tried to adapt) into mainstream society. Among other tactics, they chose to intermarry with other ethnic groups, disobeyed their parents' customs and mandates, or joined the armed struggle against the military dictatorship, against their community's wish to keep a low profile. This affective disobedience evidences the failure of some transmissions of cultural affect between generations. For example, at one point, the transfer of traditional tropes reached an impasse and received truths began to be questioned. Then, younger generations collectively reshaped old emotions (the opposition of social integration and intermarriage, for instance), adapting them to new circumstances, or ultimately banishing them. Nikkei literature and film review the afterlife of these structures of feeling that have become obsolete, often turning the passage or the scene into a didactic moment for readers or spectators. Along these lines, several works try to prove the true *brasilidade* (Brazilianness) of their authors and, by extension, of all Nikkeijin, presenting Brazil as the true homeland of the Nikkeijin, a land to which they have shown their loyalty throughout decades. This is exceptionally obvious in those works that point out the direct involvement of Nikkei youth in the

armed struggle against dictatorship as, for example, Júlio Miyazawa's 2006 *Yawara! A Travessia Nihondin-Brasil* and *Uma Rosa para Yumi* (A Rose for Yumi, 2013). These characters are portrayed in several works as the ultimate embodiment of the effort to integrate into mainstream society.

As Nikkei discourse approaches the present time, the feeling of being a minority oppressed by anti-Japanese hysteria gradually disappears. This optimistic outlook, however, does not lack calls for caution, as evident in the following passage: "In today's Brazil, anti-Japanese feelings do not represent a problem. But one cannot say that anti-Japanese thinking has disappeared. As late as in 1984, a book was published under the title *Cerrado, a Ocupação Japonesa* (Cerrado, the Japanese Occupation), which was riddled with prejudice and fact distortion."[14]

Therefore, without forgetting their intrinsic aesthetic merit, these narratives are seen as an essential part of the elaboration of a Nikkei diasporic identity that is formulated, contrapuntally, against the background of Brazil's and Japan's official identitarian discourses. This is evident in Katsuzō Yamamoto's essay "Nós Somos Ex-Japoneses—A Posição dos Antigos Imigrantes" (We Are Ex-Japanese—The Old immigrants' Stance), originally published in 1966 in *Jornal Paulista* and later included in the essay collection *Toda Uma Vida no Brasil*, where we read that the ex-Japanese "is an originally Japanese subject who differs from the Japanese in Japan. His nature is completely different from that of the Brazilian and the Nisei . . . If a Japanese comes to reside and work in this country, it is better for him to transform himself, as soon as possible, into an 'ex-Japanese,' a condition that allows him to live and work better."[15] Yamamoto goes on to recommend Japanese companies in Brazil to take advantage of the Japanese Brazilian know-how by hiring ex-Japanese or creating joint ventures with their enterprises. And after negotiating a flexible citizenship that leaves enough room for Japaneseness and Brazilianness to coexist, he even provides the formula to become a "perfect ex-Japanese": "Whenever some indiscreet visitor criticizes Brazil, we feel a strong displeasure; and when they speak of the country's flaws and backwardness, we try to explain by saying 'it's not quite so.' That's what I mean by a perfect 'ex-Japanese.'"[16]

## COMPARATIVE VICTIMIZATION

Japanese Brazilian discourse and cultural production presents itself as a major factor in the transformation and modernization of Brazil begun in the late

nineteenth century, along with the contributions of other immigrant groups, such as the Italians and Germans. However, while these two major groups also carried the stigma of originating from the two other Axis Powers, they did not bear the mark of complete foreignness in their phenotype. As Sasaki explains, "Because the Japanese were neither black nor white, they could not easily find their place in the Brazilian context. Blacks and whites were the two sides of a tense racial relation that intercrossed the diverse nature of the social relations established in Brazil" (101).[17] These ethnocultural differences made Japanese immigration to Brazil quite different from that of Italians and Germans. In addition, the cultural distance between Brazil and Japan was much greater than that between Brazil and southern European countries. Last, the Nikkeijin's tendency to isolate themselves in ethnic enclaves often fomented suspicion from other groups.

Of course, there were also commonalities among the experiences of Italians, Germans, Japanese, other immigrant groups, and all their descendants. Yet, as Lesser explains, "World War II was more difficult for Japanese and their descendants than for immigrants from other Axis countries" (*Immigration* 168). Moreover, while European immigrants refused to be exploited in Brazilian coffee plantations and either returned to Europe or moved to urban areas, Japanese immigrants, with their government's aid, mostly left coffee plantations to form their own Japanese government-sponsored agricultural communities—"a powerful and activist Japanese government deeply committed to immigrant success abroad made sure that return would be infrequent" (*Immigration* 174). Even though, recognizing the blatant mistreatment of their emigrants, Italy, France, and Spain prohibited future subsidized emigration to Brazil, Japan tried to ensure that its emigrants remained in Brazil by purchasing large tracts of land for them. According to Daniela de Carvalho, "the importation of Chinese labour was considered, but was ruled out on racial grounds. Although the Japanese were not particularly well regarded, they had gained prestige through their victory in the Russo-Japanese war" (5).

Before arriving in Brazil, Japanese migrants were victimized by their own government's imperial project. As part of the biopolitics practiced by a Meiji government obsessed with achieving Western industrialization and modernization, they were virtually expelled from their homeland. Emigration overseas was encouraged as a way to rid the country of an excess labor force of mostly impoverished and landless peasants. And, judging by the farewell

speech of Gonta Doi, the representative of the Japanese government to the first 781 Japanese emigrants in the port of Kobe, the government hoped that this migration would become permanent: "You are leaving for another country and must not forget that each of you represents Japan; each one carries with him his own country. You must make sure not to stain Japanese honor or the name of the Fatherland. If you are not able to live with dignity, do not even think about returning—have some shame and die there."[18] From this perspective, the peaceful migration of Japanese to Brazil and other countries in the Americas is, in fact, indirectly linked with the aggressive imperialism that led to Japanese colonization of large regions of Asia. As Jerry García explains, "emigration became one of the many mechanisms Japan used to study and adapt to its new role as an imperial power. By sending its subjects overseas to acquire additional knowledge that could be used for the empire, Japan hoped to acquire a competitive edge against Western nations that threatened its own hegemony in the East" (23). Besides relieving the burden of massive rural unemployment, the Meiji government hoped that these Japanese settlements in the Americas would increase commerce with the region and provide much needed remittances and knowledge.

The Japanese Brazilian experience, as a case study, is easier to understand in comparison with that of other ethnic groups in the Americas. The first Japanese contract laborers ("colonists") were often de facto indentured workers. As stated, some Brazilian landowners, accustomed to black African slave labor, treated these workers as slaves by forcing them to live and work under appalling conditions. Unlike European immigrants, since the first years of the immigration process and, particularly, during and after World War II, Japanese immigrants inherited the so-called Yellow Peril marker imposed, throughout the Americas, on the Chinese coolies, the first Asian group—with the exception perhaps of the indigenous inhabitants—to migrate en masse to the Western Hemisphere half a century earlier.[19] Along with their common Asian physical markers, Japanese immigrants' upward social mobility was also reminiscent of Chinese economic success. Although, for the most part, the experiences of Japanese immigrants were not nearly as harsh as that of Chinese coolies, both cases may be considered forms of institutionalized unfreedom and Asian indentured servitude, a legacy of institutionalized racial slavery. Both groups also shared their unconcealable alterity, formerly seen as unassimilable and undesirable to others. Thus, Hosokawa points out

that "assimilation became a coercive issue for Japanese immigrants in the 1930s when the Japanese government organized a pro-assimilation campaign for these immigrants with the slogan of *Gozar a terra* (love the land [love Brazil]). This campaign was launched to mitigate Brazilian officialdom's view of Japanese immigrants as being 'unassimilable' people or an insoluble 'sulphur' in mainstream society. The basic rhetoric of this slogan was 'to collaborate with Brazil is to be helpful to Japan" (65).

Like the Chinese before them, Japanese immigrants tried to improve their lot by moving—though at a much slower pace in Brazil—from rural areas to cities. There are several historical factors behind the drastic differences between the Chinese and the Japanese experiences. The defeat of China during the Opium Wars (1839–42 and 1856–60), for example, fueled the tragic addiction to opium of many Chinese who would later migrate to the Americas. Moreover, perhaps because they arrived half a century earlier and often worked alongside African slaves, Chinese coolies were more harshly treated.[20]

A reason the Japanese overall experience in Latin America was not as traumatic as that of the Chinese is the former received a superior formal education under the Meiji government. They also enjoyed the "luxury" of having a somewhat respectable government behind them, one that could demand better living and working conditions in exchange for sending further shiploads of cheap labor.[21] J. García, who has contrasted the experiences of Chinese and Japanese immigrants in Mexico, thus states: "Although compared with the Chinese the Japanese were generally treated well, some still became extremely concerned with their treatment in Mexico. The constant communiqués from the Japanese government sent to the Mexican government to protect Japanese subjects and their property indicated, at the very least, that the Japanese were swept up in the general anti-Asian movement" (39). Although most were impoverished peasants, an additional source of pride and self-confidence for a few Issei immigrants in the Western Hemisphere was their background as former samurai, a privileged warrior class in existence before the 1868 Meiji Restoration.

Another significant difference between the Japanese Brazilian experience and that of Chinese immigrants in Brazil and other Asian immigrants in the remaining Latin American countries is that with the former, the workings of governmental biopower forced them to come with their families; that is,

there had to be a minimum of three adults able to work in coffee plantations: "Preference was given to farmers, in families of three to ten persons able to work."[22] The idea, according to Roth, was to "ensure a more docile workforce" (21). Daniela de Carvalho, however, argues that the reason for this policy was the Brazilian government's belief that "unattached individuals did not stay long on the plantations" (7).

Although this imposition by the Brazilian government managed to balance the gender divide among the Japanese more than in other Latin American countries, an unwanted outcome was that often certain adults pretended to be family members. This became, as re-created in several of the selected texts, a source of jealousy, infidelity, and conflict. By way of contrast, in Peru and Mexico, for example, the Japanese were not forced to migrate with their families; in fact, the vast majority of the immigrants were single men. And in these countries, the Japanese government rarely purchased large tracts of land to develop autonomous communities, as it did in Brazil upon finding out that "over fifty percent of all immigrants were fleeing plantations within a year of arrival" (Lesser, *Immigration* 157). As a result and in contrast with Brazil, Japanese in Peru and Mexico became more integrated with mainstream societies, learned the new language faster, and never reached the aggressive type of nationalism displayed in Brazil, where the ultranationalist organization Shindō Renmei terrorized Nikkeijin for several months.

## SELF-ESSENTIALIZATION AND CULTURAL NATIONALISM

The Shindō Renmei violence that erupted after World War II eventually disappeared in Brazil, leaving instead an incipient cultural nationalism similar to that found in Peru. We can detect it, for example, in the attempt of Japanese Brazilian authors and filmmakers to find Japanese authenticity, "the Japanese spirit," or the "ganbare spirit" in Nikkei history and behavior (it recalls the essentializing idea of the "black soul," described by Fanon as a "white artifact"). It is also latent in their honoring the Nikkei ability for emotional management and scholarly success, at times even hinting at a timeless and unchanging essence or at a stable national identity. Indeed, a factor that differentiates Nikkei discourse from other repressed voices in Latin America is that, after World War II, Nikkeijin cannot be considered an oppressed or marginalized population. In contrast with other minorities in Latin America,

Asian communities in general have managed to attain social prestige by reaching middle- and upper-class status rather quickly.

Other Japanese Brazilian narratives, however, contest this mythical portrayal of a stable and eternal Nikkei identity, or the unique and privileged status of "the Japanese spirit." Besides this tendency to self-essentialization, there are hints of an embryonic cultural nationalism in texts such as Júlio Miyazawa's *Uma Rosa para Yumi*, which propose a pantheon for Nikkei heroes and heroines for those revolutionaries who fought against the military dictatorship or for the first leaders of the Japanese agricultural colonies in Brazil, such as Umpei Hirano, glorified in Tsugio Shindo's *Passos da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil* and in the manga *Banzai! História da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil* (2008): "On August 1, 1915, Unpei Hirano and a group of twenty pioneers left the Guatapara plantation. They had acquired a total of 1,620 bushels of land . . . In the land acquired with so much sacrifice, the group began to scream 'hooray' as loud as they could, tears fell down the face of Unpei and of those of other young men."[23] Along these lines, some narratives try to reclaim and restore the silenced history of the Nikkeijin, including traumatic episodes, such as the humiliation suffered by the pioneers in coffee plantations and the racialization endured during World War II. Thus, Tsugio Shindo avers: "The period between the end of the Meiji era and the beginning of the Taisho era was the 'living hell' of the immigration to Brazil."[24]

Another major difference between the Japanese and Chinese experiences in Latin America is that Issei pioneers migrated shortly after their country's entry onto the world stage, thanks to the Japanese Imperial Army's military victory over a major power, China (1894–95), followed by the unexpected victory over the Russian Empire (1904–5). This last conflict, considered the first great war of the twentieth century, arose as a result of rival ambitions over Korea and Manchuria. Since it was the first time in the contemporary era that a non-European country defeated a European power, the impressive victory undoubtedly provided prestige and self-confidence to Brazil's Japanese, some of whose members had fought in that war. However, it also fueled the host country's apprehension about having a mighty fifth column within its national borders that could compromise its sovereignty. The double-edge sword of these perceptions cut throughout the Americas. While Japanese Peruvian community leaders suffered the

negative consequence of having 1,800 of its members sent to internment camps in the United States, the Japanese in Mexico benefitted, during the Mexican Revolution (1910–20), from the myth about their military skills and training: "The Japanese were often released from captivity or their lives spared when captured by the various revolutionary factions because they were Japanese and quickly conscripted and commissioned as officers. Of course, this was based on the false assumption and stereotype that all Japanese males in Mexico were combat veterans or that the Japanese were inherently military leaders" (García 57).[25]

In any case, the recent military victory against Russia added to the mystique of a Japan that had not lost a war in thousands of years, a source of pride, and, occasionally, a mark of purported ethnic superiority for many Japanese in Brazil. Tomoo Handa describes certain self-confident war veterans who arrived in the port of Santos with their military decorations: "Some men had been soldiers in the last (Russian-Japanese) war and brought their decorations on their chests";[26] others indicate that it was some of these former officers who founded and led the terrorist organization Shindō Renmei.

## PROCESSES OF DEETHNIFICATION AND REETHNIFICATION

Some Japanese Brazilian narratives explore hybrid identities and identitarian uncertainties, delineating, like Japanese Peruvian ones, processes of deethnification and reethnification, where one character feels more or less Brazilian or Japanese according to the circumstances or country of residence. This is obvious in films, documentaries, novels, memoirs, testimonials, chronicles, and poetry collections by or about Japanese Brazilian dekasegi in Japan, in which, as discussed in chapters 5 and 6, one witnesses how characters may strategically enter or leave Japaneseness according to personal experiences or the perceptions of the majority population. In the most typical examples of transnationalism and in how ethnic identity is connected to place, Japanese Brazilians affiliate themselves with Japaneseness much more while in Brazil (a positive mark of intelligence, honesty, and hard work), only to feel increasingly more Brazilian or Latin American while in Japan, after feeling rejected as gaijin by mainstream society. These drastic changes during the process of identitarian formation reflect a fascinating type of strategic societal amnesia.

Other works, such as Ryoki Inoue's novel *Saga* and Tizuka Yamasaki's films *Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade* (1980) and *Gaijin: Ama-me como Sou* (2005), openly celebrate miscegenation and sociocultural integration, often disapproving of the pioneers' sojourner mentality and their refusal to intermingle with majority Brazilians. But the miscegenation they celebrate is different from the official discourse of *mestiçagem*, often used throughout Latin America as a veiled official policy for further whitening national culture. Instead, these works refuse to dismiss ancestral Japanese roots, incorporating or adding an ethnocultural Nikkei identity to the palimpsest of geopolitical Brazilian identities in Brazil and Japan. More important, this ethnic framework does not assume specific national borders; it has become, through the dekasegi exodus that began in the late 1980s, even more transnational than before. Their narratives propose a differential way of being in the world by adding their worldviews (somewhat liminal between Western and Asian knowledges) to other epistemologies in Brazilian society.

This goal of epistemic recovery includes a linguistic component that may take the form of language borrowing in literature and film, with Japanese words that are now and then translated (subordinated to Portuguese) while at other times left in the original language for readers to derive the meaning from the context, if they do not read Japanese or *uchināguchi*, the main Ryūkyūan, or Okinawan, native language. These two languages, forbidden in Brazil during World War II, return to the text defiantly as an identity marker. Overall, the border-like quality of these narratives results from their authors' being caught between two contested modernities, those of Brazil and Japan. In the end, neither of these two ways of thinking describes the Nikkei experience in Brazil and only a third space of in-betweenness can encompass their repressed subjectivities and subjugated knowledges. Nikkei discourse, consequently, democratizes knowledge in Brazil by adding another wrinkle to its already complex heterogeneity.

Nikkei literature and film reveal a genealogy of forces that have transformed Brazilian Nikkei identities throughout time, including, among others, international capitalism, patriarchy, racism, pressures from Japanese and Brazilian nationalisms, Japan's World War II defeat, discrimination against Okinawans, the arrival of postwar Issei, the transformation of Japan into an economic powerhouse, and the dekasegi phenomenon. They expose the racialized foundations of Brazilian citizenship by recording a history of active

resistance to compulsory acculturation processes and laws, which was subsequently followed by a telos of progressive sociocultural integration to the wider Brazilian society. By articulating an ethnic and migrant discourse that challenges the national self-images of both Brazil and Japan that had hitherto been taken for granted, these works become, per se, privileged sites for the production of new sociopolitical subjects. In this sense, Rivas argues that "the Japanese Brazilian *nikkei* identity began through its print media, becoming an alternative to national histories and narratives as Japanese Brazilian communal memory" ("Songs" 814).

Indeed, Brazilianness and Japaneseness are called into question by a transnational and fluid ethnic group that defies national borders and whose cultural practices, as represented in this cultural production, appear to be unsettled and evolving rather than fixed. These works invite their audience to consider the existence of a heterogeneous canon of Nikkei literature and film, and open the Brazilian cultural canon to more inclusive possibilities. Moreover, they attract critical attention to the existing complexities and gaps in official, hegemonic renderings of Brazilian and Japanese national identities. This Nikkei literary and filmic production reveals Nikkei authors or filmmakers as cultural agents willing to strive for sociopolitical change for their ethnic group as well as for the Brazilian nation.

## NOTES

1. "Normalmente, teria sido da conveniência do Brasil a continuação, ainda por longos anos, do comércio e das abundantes relações que, durante séculos, conservaram-no em contato com uma parte do mundo de que ele se tornara ecológica e socialmente parente. Parente pelo clima e parente pelo sistema de organização patriarcal de economia e de convivência entre raças e classes. Até que a reeuropeização intensa da sociedade brasileira, a partir dos princípios do século XIX . . . tornou o Oriente remoto e vago para a mesma sociedade e para a sua cultura ainda em formação. Tão remoto e vago que valores orientais, outrora comuns entre nós, tornaram-se quase tão raros—peças de museu, arcaísmos, curiosidades—como nos países de civilização mais acentuadamente ocidental da América" (Freyre, *China Tropical* 107–8).

2. Mirian Lie Hatanaka, in "Coronaria-go," "Sogra é oba-san?," "Pé da letra," and several other chronicles included in *Olhar*, studies Japanese Brazilian pidgin as well as the use of code-switching and language borrowing in Brazilian Nikkeijin's Portuguese.

3. "A nossa cooperativa sente-se orgulhosa por poder colaborar como o empreendimento do governo do Estado de Minas Gerais. É porque podemos expandir a linha do horizonte da agricultura do país e contribuir para o desenvolvimento da mesma" (44).

4. "Na época, as verduras consumidas pela população se restringiam à couve, cebolinha, salsa e chicória. Não havia como vender, então, verduras e legumes japoneses como nabo, acelga ou espinafre" (182).

5. "Por ora, parece que há dois caminhos para o desenvolvimento das indústrias de países atrasados. Um consiste em copiar rapidamente o *know-how* de países adiantados, e outro, desenvolver, sem perda de tempo, as indústrias leves, que podem aproveitar a mão-de-obra abundante e barata" (33).

6. "Tenho a impressão de que o *gambari* nipônico sugere algo além das expressões comuns como força total, esforço máximo, etc. O *gambari!* Expressa esse anseio moral ou o sentido de esforço sobrehumano . . . É desejável que, nós japoneses, acrescentemos o espírito *gambari*, entre muitas outras virtudes, ao cadinho brasileiro de raças" (37–38).

7. "O Brasil deverá seguir o Japão, com uma defasagem de 20 a 30 anos. Assim, o *know how* e técnica de administração de empresas que se desenvolveram no Japão serão muito úteis como referencia na escolha de tipos de atividades" (132).

8. "E quando eles teimam algo sobre o Brasil, respondo-lhes: não adianta, sou mais brasileiro do que vocês. Assumo atitude desafiante, afirmando que estou no Brasil desde antes que eles nasceram" (92).

9. "Os militantes nikkeis se ressentiram das representações diaspóricas construídas pela sociedade majoritária e rejeitaram a idéia de que eles eram simplesmente 'japoneses.' Essas mesmas pessoas, porém, viam a si próprios como diferentes dos brasileiros normativos, e seus estereótipos de 'Brasil' e dos 'brasileiros' como 'outros' era freqüentemente tão prevalecente quanto o estereótipo dos não-nikkeis de 'Japão' e dos 'japoneses'" (Lesser, "Reflexões" 279).

10. "L'arrivée des *nikkei* brésiliens au Japon brisa le mythe de l'homogénéité ethnoculturelle de l'identité japonaise: les Japonais découvrirent que l'on peut paraître japonais, être japonais par le sang, sans pour autant se comporter tel un Japonais" ("Le traitement" 60).

11. "A presença de estrangeiros num país em que ainda vigora a idéia de uma homogeneidade mítica de seu povo obriga a repensar sobre a sua própria sociedade. A imagem refletida no espelho distorcido nem sempre é eloqüente, fácil de se olhar. Receber em seu país aqueles *nikkeijin*—que não era bem assim que tinha imaginado antes do encontro (com seus colegas japoneses) no chão de fábrica mas com a cara e o documento que atestam a consangüinidade e que dizem ser os descendentes de origem japoneses residentes no exterior—faz voltar a atenção à sua própria história e à história da sua relação com o Brasil ao longo do século XX" ("A imigração" n.p.).

12. "O realismo do passado é uma ameaça. A construção da memória nacional se realiza através do esquecimento. Ela é o resultado de uma amnésia seletiva. Esquecer significa confirmar determinadas lembranças, apagando os rastros de outras, mais incômodas e menos consensuais" (138–39).

13. For more information on this topic, see my *Dragons in the Land of the Condor: Writing Tusán in Peru* and *The Affinity of the Eye: Writing Nikkei in Peru*.

14. "No Brasil atual o antiniponismo não representa problema. Mas não se pode dizer que o pensamento antijaponês tenha desaparecido. Ainda em 1984 foi publicado um livro com o título de *Cerrado, a Ocupação Japonesa*, eivado de preconceitos e distorção dos fatos" (Comissão de Elaboração da História 441).

15. "É um sujeito, originariamente nipônico, que difere do japonês do Japão. E é de natureza completamente diferente do brasileiro e também do nissei . . . se um japonês vem residir e trabalhar neste país, é melhor se transformar, o quanto antes, em 'ex-japonês,' condição que lhe permite viver e trabalhar melhor" (28–29).

16. "Quando algum visitante indiscreto critica o Brasil, sentimos um forte desagrado; e quando falam defeitos e atrasos do país, tentamos explicar, dizendo 'não é bem assim.' Eis a condição para se declarar um perfeito 'ex-japonês'" (29).

17. "Pelo fato de o japonês não ser nem branco nem negro, os japoneses eram aqueles que não podiam achar facilmente o seu lugar no contexto brasileiro. Negros e brancos eram as duas pontas de uma tensa relação racial que atravessava as diversas naturezas das relações sociais estabelecidas no Brasil" (101).

18. "Vocês estão seguindo para um outro país, e não devem se esquecer de que cada um representa o Japão; cada um carregando seu próprio Pais consigo. É necessário que todos se encarreguem de não manchar a honra japonesa ou o nome da sua Pátria. Se não forem capazes de viver condignamente, não pensem em voltar—tenham vergonha disso e morram par lá" (Rodrigues 4).

19. Although the presence of Chinese nationals in Brazil has been documented back to as early as the eighteenth century, the first large contingent arrived in 1814, when John VI of Portugal brought several hundred tea growers from Macau to work in the Imperial Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro. During the mid-nineteenth century, more than 2,000 new Chinese laborers arrived in Rio de Janeiro to aid the transition from slave to wage labor. As happened throughout the Americas and the Caribbean, during this time Brazilian politicians often debated, in Orientalist terms, about this labor alternative as a potential danger to Brazilian society. Today, there are approximately 250,000 persons of Chinese ancestry in Brazil, who are concentrated mostly in São Paulo (many Chinese settled in the originally Japanese district of Liberdade after the 1949 Chinese Revolution). According to Lesser, "nineteenth-century attempts to bring Chinese labor were not successful . . . In the 1980s, however, Chinese immigration expanded along with Brazilian-Chinese

commercial relations. While a 2005 report from the overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission of the Republic of China (Taiwan) put the number of immigrants at 150,000, press reports cite figures two times larger" (*Immigration* 186).

20. For this reason, Humberto Rodríguez Pastor (*Hijos del celeste imperio* 43) and Fernando de Trazegnies (*En el país de las colinas de arena* 161) have described the Chinese coolies' condition in Peru as "semi-slavery." To establish differences between the two conditions, slavery and semislavery, Trazegnies points out that unlike that of Chinese coolies, slaves' childbearing was often controlled by the master and they did not usually receive salaries. Even if the salaries they received were exploitative and withheld because of illness and other excuses, at least Chinese and Japanese indentured workers in Latin America and the Caribbean did receive some sort of salary. However, the fact that only a tiny minority of them were able to return to their countries, as was initially the desire of most of them, proves that their earnings rarely matched their expectations. Furthermore, in spite of the frequent contract breaches, Chinese and Japanese indentured workers were given a set number of years of work for the same landowner. After these years, they were usually free to go or to recontract.

21. By contrast, only many years after the inception of Chinese indentured labor in the Americas did the Imperial Chinese government become concerned with its citizens' appalling working and living conditions abroad. At first, Chinese migrants were just blamed as traitors for leaving the fatherland.

22. "Era dada preferência aos agricultores, em famílias de 3 a 10 pessoas aptas ao trabalho" (Rodrigues 9).

23. "No dia 1° de agosto de 1915, Unpei Hirano e um grupo precursor de 20 pessoas deixaram a fazenda Guatapara. Haviam adquirido um total de 1,620 alqueires de terra . . . Na terra adquirida com tanto sacrifício, o grupo posse a gritar vivas a plenos pulmões, lágrimas brotaram pela face de Unpei e dos outros jovens" (*Banzai! História* 55–57).

24. "O período compreendido entre o fim da era Meiji até o início da era Taisho foi uma época de 'inferno vivo' da imigração no Brasil" (153).

25. According to Jerry García, the Japanese population in Mexico during the Revolution did not exceed 3,500 (49).

26. "Alguns dos homens foram soldados na última guerra (russo-japonesa) e traziam ao peito as suas decorações" (Handa 5). Other texts point out the same anecdote: "It has been said that among the immigrants who landed, some flaunted proudly the medal received in the Russo-Japanese war, won by the Japanese." ("Dizem que, entre os imigrantes que desembarcaram, alguns ostentavam orgulhosamente a medalha recebida na guerra russo-japonesa, vencida pelos japoneses" [Shindo 146].)

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