

Japanese Diaspora in the Americas: Literature, History and Identity Symposium
Abstracts

KEYNOTES

Jeffrey LESSER, Emory University

“Japanese Diasporas” and Other Not so Tall Tales of National Identity

Scholars of diaspora often examine groups as divorced from the “new” nation, with the moments of intersection coming only via prejudice and discrimination. As a result, the scholarship tends to present so-called “diasporic” populations as un-integrated into majority society and thus as long suffering victims. When integrated, they are frequently represented as somehow not fully authentic. What happens, however, when we treat “diaspora” as a national identity rather than a transnational one? By focusing on Shizuo Ozawa, the feared “Mario Japa” of Brazil’s Popular Revolutionary Vanguard, I will ask how an imagined diasporic community and an imagined national one work together. In doing so I will suggest that discourses of Japanese diasporic distinctiveness in Brazil (manifested in notions like language, traditions of violence and solidarity, and cultural dissatisfaction) became part of a larger program in which Japanese-Brazilian became critical parts of Brazilian nation building.

Ignacio LÓPEZ-CALVO, University of California, Merced

Japanese-Brazilian *Saudades*: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Production

In this presentation, I analyze some key works and topics in Japanese Brazilian discourse and cultural production, paying particular attention to an archive of intersubjective emotions in which epistemicide, de-ethnification, and split temporality take central stage. 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 hybridity. This cultural production is analyzed as a tool for both epistemic decolonization and the sociopolitical empowerment of the Nikkei community within Brazilian society, as they are part of a strategic, rhetorical engineering: the collective assertion of citizenship and belonging to the Brazilian nation. Without forgetting their intrinsic aesthetic merit, these narratives are seen as a key part of the elaboration of Nikkei diasporic identities that are formulated, contrapuntally, against the background of Brazil’s and Japan’s official identitarian discourses.

PRESENTATIONS

Facundo GARASINO, Osaka University

Cultural Propaganda by Japanese Migrants in Buenos Aires: Experiencing Locally the Transnational Expansion of the Japanese Empire

Recent historical research has been calling attention into the intertwining of Imperial Japan’s expansionism and Japanese transpacific migrations, concentrating on the

unintended repercussions of migrant practices of empire-building on discourses and policies of racial exclusion in the Americas. Focusing on the intersection between Japan's cultural diplomacy, Japanese migration to Argentina, and Argentine cultural nationalism, this paper attempts to bring a different perspective by exploring the confluence between Japan's projection of imperial power, and the political and intellectual structures of the host state.

It analyzes the endeavors of migrant community leader Shinya Yoshio (1884-1954) for organizing pro-Japan cultural propaganda during the 1930s in association with local elites and Japan's *Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai* (Society for International Cultural Relations). It will demonstrate that migrant social leaders reinterpreted Japan's imperialism vis-à-vis Argentina's cultural nationalism, attempting to influence the local public opinion as a means to protect the community against xenophobic violence while presenting Japanese culture as a model for nation building in the host state. This case will offer a nuanced understanding of how diasporic communities experienced the expansion of the Japanese Empire and translated locally its cultural discourses from their double status of imperial subjects and members of a migrant ethnic minority.

Andre Haag, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Seeking “Good Koreans” in the Fictions of Imperial Diaspora: Migrating Literary Sources of Affective Knowledge Versus the Epistemic Anxieties of Integration

This paper recasts the literature of Japan's colonial empire and multiethnic imperial diasporas as a potential source of affective knowledge (of “that which moves people to feel and act”) crucial to managing tensions of colonial integration and insurgency. The project of harmoniously integrating Japan and Korea was haunted by persistent anxieties about impenetrable colonial minds; “treacherous Koreans,” one official worried, “outwardly appear submissive but *inwardly* rebel. Best quarantine them on some island and castrate every one.” To quiet violent epistemic anxieties, imperial bureaucrats, scholars, and translators produced a substantial body of knowledge about Korea's culture, character, and virtues, thereby conjuring “good Koreans” to neuter the treacherous ones, with mixed results. An additional archive of affective knowledge, however, was the literature resulting from migratory movements and transcultural contacts among Japanese settlers, Korean sojourners, and writers caught in-between. Surveying the contours of this unstable corpus, I isolate diasporic fictions that crossed borders of ethnonational subjectivity to render intelligible the interiorities of Korean subjects across the empire, including: former settler Nakajima Atsushi's sketch of insecure colonial authority “Landscape with Policeman,” a spoof of proto-Zainichi sexual dysfunction by Tokugawa Musei, and passing Korean novelist Imamura Eiji's tense tales of Manchurian migration. Narratives focalized through “good Korean” figures promised distinctively diasporic insight into what moved outwardly-assimilated, psychically-castrated subjects to seek inclusion, revolt, or vacillate between the two. These fictional sketches of fractured Korean interiorities, however, were inevitably infected by paranoid structures of feeling and reference, resulting in parodic visions of disharmonious integration and impotent authority.

Koichi HAGIMOTO, Wellesley

Japanese in Argentina: Alternative History and Literature

This paper examines the history of Japanese diaspora in Argentina through its literary and cultural representation. In general, the scale of Japanese migration to Argentina was smaller compared to the massive number of immigrants who went to Brazil and Peru using the government-sponsored programs. Partly for this reason, the Japanese in Argentina have enjoyed a more favorable social status than their counterparts in Brazil and Peru, who suffered anti-Japanese campaigns or were sent to the U.S. internment camps. In addition, the diplomatic relationship between Japan and Argentina has been unusually amicable, as evidenced by Argentina's support for Japan during the Russo-Japanese War as well as its decision to maintain a neutral position during WWII. My argument is that such a positive reception of Japan not only presents an alternative narrative of Japanese diaspora history in Latin America, but it also reflects Argentina's hidden motive that seeks to celebrate the idea of modernity and cultural diversity. For Argentina, a self-proclaimed melting pot of racial and ethnic blending, using Japanese immigrants as instrumental symbols of diversity is convenient and practical. By analyzing such contemporary works as Anna Kazumi Stahl's *Flores de un solo día* (2002), Maximiliano Matayoshi's *Gaijin* (2003), and Pablo Moyano's *Silencio roto: 16 Nikkeis* (2015), I will discuss how the positive images of Japanese immigrants have both contributed to and resisted the ideology of Argentine multiculturalism.

Brian HAYASHI, Kent State

And Justice for One: Re-examining the Japanese Diaspora during World War II

Although Japanese Americans are among the most widely studied and written about diasporic groups, many aspects of their past still remains "a buried past." Instead, what is presented about Japanese Americans and World War II in print focuses heavily on their internment experience and their struggles with relocation out of those camps during and immediately after the end of the war, told almost without exception from the perspective of those whose loyalty lay with the United States. Others highlight their military service with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Military Intelligence Service in the Pacific Theater, or with the Women's Army Corps, asserting their meritorious conduct reflected their strong attachment to America, the land of their birth. Seldom do scholars provide a glimpse of the "other side" of the American national narrative, or how some Japanese Americans at least, chose to support the land of their ancestors.

Understanding how others in the Japanese diaspora behaved politically during World War II offers insights into that "other side." Japanese Brazilians, for example, were split between those who believed Japan had won the war and those who asserted the homeland was defeated by the Americans. Those Japanese who lived under American jurisdiction in the Philippines were also divided and some, at least chose to closely identify themselves with the Imperial Japanese forces by landing with them at Davao as part of the invasion force. Others proved remarkably staunch in their support of the Imperial Japanese Army, as was the case with Yutaka Tani, the Japanese Malaysian who barely spoke any Japanese but served valiantly as a guerrilla leader of some three-

thousand men in southern Thailand fighting against the British forces and paving the way for the Japanese conquest of Singapore in 1942. Taken together, their examples suggest some Japanese Americans at least, may have behaved politically in a similar manner during World War II, especially if they resided apart from the continental United States.

Through an analysis of three Japanese American males situated in locations far removed from the continental United States, this presentation explores how some Japanese Americans living on the periphery of the Japanese empire during World War II behaved politically. It utilizes previously unused or underutilized materials drawn from the US National Archives in Washington DC relevant to war crimes investigation of Ray Uyeshima (Shanghai, China), the trial of Samuel T. Shinohara (Hagåtña, Guam), and the internment of Richard Kotoshirodo (Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii). It finds that, despite Uyeshima's hand in purchasing 30,000 tons of oil from the United States which the Imperial Japanese Navy "confiscated" from his warehouse in Shanghai, Uyeshima was not guilty of aiding and abetting the enemy during time of war. Nor did the Japanese immigrant Samuel T. Shinohara owe allegiance to the United States by virtue of his legal residence on American territory. And the dual citizen, Richard Kotoshirodo, while not tried, was wrongly interned when he should have been deported to Japan as his service to a foreign government should have meant termination of his American citizenship.

The presentation concludes with a short but suggestive comparative with other diaspora—Japanese American in Japan and American diaspora in Ogasawara Shoto to place the historical experiences of these three Japanese American males into a larger and wider context of how the Japanese Diaspora behaved politically during World War II.

Robert HEGWOOD, Harvard University

After Empire: Consolation Goods and the Rebirth of Nikkei Trading Companies after the Pacific War

Within Japanese American historiography, the trauma of wartime mass incarceration serves as a profound moment of rupture that caused Nikkei communities rebuilding their lives to distance themselves from Japan. As victims of racial exclusion tied to their Japanese heritage, cutting ties was a natural reaction. Thus, the history of early postwar Japanese America is largely a story of resettlement and civil rights activism. Apart from scholarship on Nisei in postwar Japan, it is largely a domestic story. We have yet to fully explore the impact of enduring transpacific connections and enduring prewar social and financial ties to Japan on the postwar Japanese American community.

Relying on Japanese-language newspapers from San Francisco and Japanese archives, I argue that affective, social, and commercial ties to Japan had a profound impact on postwar Japanese American communities. Despite significant community unease about being publicly associated with Japan, community leaders embraced Japan by fostering a broad-based movement to donate money, food, and clothing to war-ravaged populace from 1946 to 1952. This aid program called Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia (LARA) and a related care-package business, significantly shaped postwar community organizations and businesses. Fund-raising drives were an impetus to re-form Issei community organizations, a reflection of how drives to send consolation goods to Japan strengthened prewar community organizations. The care-package trade also

allowed Nisei to rebuild trade ties with Japan, rekindling consumption of Japanese everyday-life goods, which helped shape Nikkei conceptions of their Japanese cultural heritage.

HIBI Yoshitaka, Nagoya University

Japanophone Literatures and Books: Materiality, Distribution Networks and Immigrant Writers

This paper explores eco-systems of Japanophone literature through the perspective of books and its distribution networks. The emergence of Japanophone literatures in Americas cannot be separated from establishments and maintenance of cultural environments where people can read and write in Japanese. Only after creating the systems both of importing newspapers, magazines, and books from Japan, and of publishing such printed materials in the settlements outside Japan, a sustainable structure of writing and reading Japanophone literature will be established. It is important to consider that these flow of printed materials were driven by transnational network of book-distribution system consisted by various publisher, distributor and bookseller inside and outside Japan, and also that the transported books had formed durable archives or collections in libraries, bookstore and personal houses in many parts of Americas. Each aspects concern with materiality of books. We should note here that migrations of people and circulations of books are based on different logic although the latter follows the former in some aspects. Lastly I would look at the ways of local ‘publication’ by immigrants like Taro Matsui, which did not assume large-scale distribution. Those were also one of the styles of diasporic literature.

Seth JACOBOWITZ, Yale University

Immigrant Colonial Literature Between Japan and Brazil in the 1930s

“Japan is an orphan in the world.”

—Ishikawa Tatsuzō, *Recent Travels in South America* (1930)

Appearing as a melancholic refrain in Japanese novelist Ishikawa Tatsuzō’s travelogue *Recent Travels in South America* (1930), these words expressed a paradox of isolation and alienation precisely when Japan was at the apex of imperial expansion and international migration. Although Ishikawa’s experiences with anti-Japanese sentiment overseas led him time and again to repeat this lament, it was no coincidence Brazil was the focus of his most significant literary production during the 1930s, culminating in *Sōbō* (The Emigrants), which won the inaugural Akutagawa Prize for Literature in 1935. Nor was he alone. In expansionist journals such as *Kaigai* (The Overseas Journal) and *Shokumin* (The Colonial Review), and in popular literary magazines such as *Shin Seinen* (New Youth), the risks and rewards of making one’s fortune in Brazil were a constant presence in prewar Japanese print culture, including in the nascent genre of “overseas/immigrant novels” (*kaigai/imin shōsetsu*).

From 1908 to 1941 nearly 189,000 Japanese immigrated to Brazil primarily to

work on coffee plantations and agricultural colonies. They established no fewer than four Japanese-language newspapers and half a dozen magazines that sustained the far-flung immigrant imagined community. Literature written by and for the community was an indispensable supplement to their political, legal, commercial, and cultural life. This paper interrogates how “immigrant colonial literature” (*ishokumin bungaku*) and its variants arose in critical essays and literary texts from the 1930s and negotiated a new diasporic consciousness of being Japanese in Brazil.

Nayoung Aimee Kwon, Duke University

Min Jin Lee’s *Pachinko* Goes Global: Translating “Zainichi” Between Anglophone and Japanophone Literatures

Korean-American author, Min Jin Lee’s tour de force, *Pachinko*, became a global literary sensation and bestseller since its debut in 2017. Garnering literary accolades including critical acclaim and raving reviews in major publications, it became a regular feature from the literary mass media to book clubs, and was swiftly translated into more than 20 languages, including Korean. Notably absent is a translation into Japanese considering that it is a novel about the story of ethnic Koreans in Japan, one of its largest and oldest minority communities.

This essay explores the significance of this absence in relation to the absent category of Japanophone Literature in global literary discourses as a symptom of the unresolved predicament of the postcolonial question in Japan and its neighbors. What might be the significance of the global circulation and recognition of an Anglophone “translation” of the locally marginalized literature of the Zainichi migration experience? On the occasion of this symposium on the Japanese Diaspora to the Americas, this paper poses a transpacific query into what is voiced and silenced in these global and local circulations and impasses in terms of literary histories and markets in the contemporary context of globalization.

Sarah LEBARON VON BAEYER

Doubly Precarious: Migration and Mobility among Japanese-Brazilian Labor Migrants between Japan and Brazil

Now in their third decade migrating between Japan and Brazil, most Brazilian workers of Japanese descent—known as *dekasegi*—and their families have continued to toil in brokered, unskilled labor in Japan, with limited chances at occupational mobility. While the beginning of the *dekasegi* movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s harbored the promise of abundant jobs and substantially higher wages in Japan than were available in Brazil at the time, the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 and the Fukushima triple disaster of 2011 have considerably altered this auspicious migratory landscape. At the same time, the prolonged economic recession and fractious politics that have dominated Brazil since 2013 complicate the already tenuous dreams of return for many *dekasegi* and their families. Although significant numbers of *dekasegi* have returned to Brazil over the last ten years, many continue to live and work in Japan, or else move back and forth between the two countries. How have Japanese-Brazilian labor migrants and

their families responded to the ongoing double precarity of recessionary Japan and Brazil in recent years? How do they experience aspirations of mobility under such conditions? In tackling these questions, this paper draws on ethnographic fieldwork conducted among Japanese-Brazilian labor migrants and their families in both Japan and Brazil between the years 2009-2018. It examines hope, despair, and resistance from the perspective of transnational Brazilian labor migrants who necessarily have to navigate two different national economies and political frameworks, as well as the vicissitudes of a global, neoliberal labor market. In particular, it focuses on the role of religion, class identity, and gender in how *dekasegi* have experienced and responded to such precarity.

Ana Paulina LEE, Columbia University

Geographies of Samba: Radical Parading Cultures of São Paulo and Tokyo

Samba is more than a symbol of Brazilian national culture. It is an embodied transmission of history. Samba schools and their radical parading practices emerged throughout the twentieth century across many Brazilian cities as a form of resistance to loudly call out the politics of housing inequality, social exclusion and exploitative labor. Samba holds a prominent place in Brazil's annual carnival parades, a multi day moving theatre with more than 50,000 performers. Samba's steps, gestures, lyrics, and polyrhythm relate histories of resistance to slavery and the politics surrounding the historical continuity of the passage from the slave quarter to the favela and the manor to penthouse that developed with urbanization and new modes of spatial segregation and unfree labor. Samba has always been, as performance scholar Barbara Browning asserts, resistance in motion. But, how do samba's sound and visual histories about exploitative labor and racial difference circulate across borders? Do samba's historical and performative codes similarly express resistance in the Japanese neoliberal capitalist context of *karoshi*? My working thesis is that samba is a technology of performance that spatially un-maps colonial optics of visual domination. Brazilian Samba Carnival in Japan, which occurs each August in Asakusa, Tokyo, allows us to examine how black radical parading cultures are repurposed and appropriated in a Japanese context. The practice of samba school parading transforms one's relationship to the city and produces the embodied and imaginative possibility to create new affective bonds to lived spaces.

Sidney X. LU, Western Michigan State University

From Brazil to Manchuria: Aliança and the Illusion of Co-existence and Co-prosperity in Japanese Settler Colonialism, 1924-1945

This article examines the intellectual and institutional connections between Japanese migration to Brazil and the Japanese migration to Manchuria from 1924 to 1945, by focusing on the history of the Aliança colony. Established by migration leaders of Nagano Prefecture in 1924 in São Paulo, Aliança was the first Japanese overseas community formed under the principle of "co-existence and co-prosperity" (*kyōzon kyōei* or *kyōzon dōei*). As a new ideology of settler colonialism, co-existence and co-prosperity challenged the Anglo-American mode of imperialism and capitalism by promoting Japan's own expansion as a mission to bring genuine peace, liberation, and happiness to the world. It later served as the ideological foundation of the Greater East Asia Co-

prosperity Sphere, the new world order envisioned by Japanese empire-builders during World War II.

Aliança also marked the birth of a new model of recruiting and relocating migrants in the history of Japanese expansion. While Japanese emigration previously was conducted either individually or under the auspice of migration companies, Aliança migrants collectively moved and resettled in groups that were based on their native prefectures and villages. Beginning in the late 1930s until the empire's demise in 1945, the Aliança model served as a central reference for the Japanese empire to relocate hundreds of thousands of rural Japanese to Manchuria and other parts of Asia. As a pioneer of this prefecture-centered model, Nagano became one of the most active participants in the campaign of mass migration to Manchuria during the late 1930s. Out of all the prefectures in the archipelago, it was Nagano that sent out the most men and women to Manchuria.

Zelideth RIVAS, Marshall University

Of Sunsets and Goldfish: the Fantasy of Japanese Brazilian Representations

Here I present two postmodern cultural productions that feature Japanese Brazilians: Bernardo Carvalho's Brazilian novel *O sol se põe em São Paulo* (2007) and Shiozaki Shōhei's Japanese film *Akaneiro no yakusoku* (2012). In both, Japanese Brazilians facilitate the narrative, allowing for postmodern fantasies to heal the wounds of Japanese Brazilian immigration. In Carvalho's novel, the fourth-generation narrator seeks to untangle fact from fiction in a first-generation's immigration story. Following her story to Japan, the unnamed narrator finds it intertwines with his own life. The narrator pulls the reader further into the narrative, looking for answers to past secrets. In Shiozaki's film, Ricardo, a Japanese Brazilian schoolboy in Japan stumbles on a *kofun* tomb where a blue goldfish swims. Wanting to know more about the blue goldfish, he befriends Hanako, a classmate whose father works in the aquaculture business. Together, they protect the fish from the town that seeks to profit off the fish. In this presentation, I argue that these postmodern cultural productions attempt to bridge the intimate distances characteristic of Japanese Brazilian representations. Moreover, through their postmodern narratives, they seek to celebrate fantasy in order to illustrate new possibilities for Japanese Brazilians beyond the disappointing failures of history.

Greg ROBINSON, History Dept., Université du Québec À Montréal

Japanese in Louisiana

"Japanese in Louisiana" focuses on the history of economic and cultural connections between Japan and Louisiana, most importantly in New Orleans, in the early 20th century. Large-scale contact began with the Cotton States Exhibition of 1884-85, for which the Japanese government sponsored a pavilion to show off its industry and agriculture. New Orleans soon became a central axis of the cotton trade with Japan. Throughout the 20th century, raw cotton produced in the South and shipped via the port of New Orleans represented the bulk of US exports to Japan, and helped fuel Japan's industrial revolution. After the opening of the Panama Canal, business boomed so strongly that a local Japanese consulate was opened in 1922, and remained a center of economic and political activity. New Orleans also became a central exchange point for

Japanese trade and emigration to Latin America. During World War II economic relations were cut, and the Japanese consulate and businesses were shut down. However, trade revived during the postwar years, and by 1960 Japan stood as Louisiana's largest foreign trading partner.

TSUBOI Hideto

Professor of Modern Japanese Literature, Nichibunken

In The Time of Survival: How to Relocate Japanese Poets Repatriated from Siberia

There are a large number of literary works by Japanese writers that describe their experiences of internment in Siberian concentration camps. Among such writers, why have the works of Ishihara Yoshirō in particular attracted so many readers? Whoever narrates his experiences as a prisoner in Siberia inevitably takes contradiction upon himself. For example, Nagao Tatsuo, a poet who published his collected poetry, *Shiberiya Shishū* (*Collected Poetry of Siberia*, Hōbunkan, 1952), describes the difficulties of his returning to post-war Japanese society and denouncing the absurd regime of internment on one hand, but on the other hand, he also sang the praises of the Stalinist Soviet Union in a poem entitled “Farewell, USSR.” This contradictory and conflicting doubling of the experience and memory of Japanese prisoners in Siberia might be seen as reflecting the program of Communist indoctrination called “Minshu Undō” (Democratic movement). In similar fashion, Ishihara Yoshirō, along with fellow writers Uchimura Gōsuke and Takasugi Ichirō, could be positioned as literally living a double life by standing on the border between the Japanese and Russian languages. In this paper I would like to consider how Ishihara tried to desperately defend the individuality of human beings in the ultimate bio-political process in which one had to be made to survive without being allowed to simply die.

Louise YOUNG, Northwestern University

Imperial Migration and the “Millions to Manchuria” Movement

In 1936 the Japanese government announced an ambitious plan to resettle five million Japanese—an estimated 20% of the rural population--in Northeast China over the course of twenty years. This policy was the culmination of years of effort to solve the protracted agricultural crisis, a crisis based on chronic farm debt, minute-scale agriculture, and class tensions between landlords and tenant-farmers. Against the backdrop of a series of failed reform measures, a bold solution took shape: export the “excess population” of rural poor to agricultural land in Manchuria, forcible appropriated from Chinese and Korean farmers. With a generous budget and an army of civil servants, the Colonization Bureau in Manchuria and the Rural Rehabilitation Movement in Japan undertook to social engineer harmonious farm communities that would avoid the pitfalls of capitalist agriculture in the main islands.

The movement to undertake mass resettlement to the empire in the 1930s drew on a long history of emigration promotion tracing back to the 1870s. From the colonization of Hokkaido to the migration to the white settlement societies of the Americas and the Pacific, public and private organizations promoted emigration as a means of expanding Japanese power and influence in the world. With the acquisition of Taiwan in 1895, the

Kwantung Leased Territories in 1905, and Korea in 1910, visions of a flood of migrants to develop a putatively empty frontier and establish a bulwark against native resistance animated further migration schemes. This history provided a deep reservoir of ideas about the links between emigration and empire, as well as a host of institutions designed to publicize the benefits of emigration and to facilitate the recruitment and resettlement of migrants themselves.