

## Editor's Introduction

It is hard not to be struck by a sense of irony as we present Number 32 of the *Japanese Journal of American Studies*, with its focus on the transnational approach to American Studies. The onset of COVID-19 worldwide coincided with the start of preparation for this volume, and the virus has been with us since. The adverse effects that this epidemic has had on scholarship, from restrictions and bans on research trips abroad to a general sense of discouragement from undertaking ambitious projects, are all too familiar by now to members of the Japanese Association for American Studies. Understandable as the restrictive measures are, there is no denying today that national borders are constricting us in a significant way by separating us physically from the rest of the world.

We offer this volume, nonetheless, with the belief that the transnational approach will continue to develop even as COVID-19 will eventually come under control. By paying attention to movements of people, capital, goods, and information across borders and the ways people have framed their thinking, writing, and acts transnationally, the transnational approach to American Studies challenges the traditional framework of analysis centered on the nation, the national culture, and the government. Pioneered in the 1990s by Australian historian Ian Tyrrell among others, this approach over time has inspired not just historians but Americanists of various other disciplines in and out of the United States. Cultural studies scholars and literary historians today deal with many different forms of inspiration that artists, authors, and traveling visitors have derived from their contact with the world outside the United States without neglecting the imperial inclinations, explicit or implicit, that often accompanied their glimpses and forays. Nowadays, even international relations scholars pay greater attention to nongovernmental international organizations as significant actors in the making of major foreign policy decisions. While US state and national culture in itself still merits attention as a legitimate subject of inquiry,

scholars in a variety of disciplines today are invited to examine the flows and connections between the United States and the rest of the world.

A look back at one of the early issues of our journal reminds us of the distance JAAS has come in embracing this approach. Number 18 (2007) of this journal was devoted to the transnational approach, featuring American Studies Association president Karen Halttunen's address on it and papers by Tyrrell, Gary Okihiro, and others that were presented at the association's 40th anniversary symposium in 2006 called "American Studies in Trans-Pacific Perspective."<sup>1</sup> Compared with those included in the journal in 2007, the articles published in this volume are indicative of the degree to which this approach has been incorporated by JAAS members. In 2007, the emphasis was on the "Trans-Pacific," reflecting in part where Japan was located geopolitically vis-à-vis the United States; the present issue features articles on Americans who acted in, or with (the governments of), Europe, Africa, countries in the Western Hemisphere and even Middle East to a lesser degree. Of course, this volume represents no more than one point in the long sweep of a developing trend in scholarship that is still unfinished. The articles featured here are just some samples, as of 2021, of scholarship informed by such creative strategies on the part of JAAS members.

This volume begins with the undelivered presidential address by former JAAS president Yuko Takahashi. In "Transgender Students and New Admission Policies at Historically Significant Women's Colleges in Twenty-First Century United States and Japan," she discusses how the Seven Sisters, America's leading women's colleges, have struggled to come up with new ideas to open their gates to transgender students while maintaining their identity as women's colleges. She rounds off her address/article with a discussion of how women's universities in Japan are making their own efforts to create a framework that is accommodating to such students. Regrettable is the missed opportunity for JAAS members to hear this address presented by President Takahashi herself at JAAS's annual meeting scheduled to be held at Hokkaido University June 13–14, 2020, but which was cancelled due to COVID-19. Still, through the written version published here, readers can benefit from her research and conclusions and see how an American Studies perspective can contribute to creative thinking on a major, pressing issue in academia today.

Our special feature on transnationalism continues with literary studies, in which scholars explore how authors in their sojourns abroad have incorporated aspects of foreign histories, foreign artists, and literary traditions into their works as contexts or themes—subjects that have escaped

attention in the traditional framework of American literature. In “Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Transnational Revision of America and Civil Wars,” Nozomi Fujimura discusses three versions of a narrative in Hawthorne’s unpublished manuscripts that were later compiled as *The American Claimant Manuscripts* in the 1970s. Taking a cue from historian David Armitage’s argument on the recurrent nature of civil wars in political and juridical ideas about the flow of history, Fujimura shows how Hawthorne during his stay in Britain and Italy in the 1850s came to see those countries through the prism of their various civil wars—the ancient civil wars in Rome, the War of the Roses, the seventeenth-century English Civil War, the wars during the Risorgimento—and increasingly connected them with his own America with its impending civil war. As his manuscript morphed from one form to another with significant alterations, images of civil wars continued to be woven into the story in subtle ways that provide an important transnational context. In the third version of *The American Claimant Manuscripts*, the United States takes its place as part of this long train of civil wars.

Takayuki Tatsumi describes how literary imagination has worked across borders in his “The Laws of Literary Life Cycle: Reading Mark Twain’s *Is He Dead?* as a Transnational Play.” Inspired by Sōseki Nasume’s idea of “literary life cycles” (patterns in the rise and fall of popular appreciation of a work of art and its author/creator, in part conditioned by the times), Tatsumi explores this “cycle” in Mark Twain’s *Is He Dead?*, a black comedy written in 1898 during Twain’s sojourn in Vienna but published only in 2003. Twain’s drama takes the career of the French painter Jean-François Millet and adds his own twists. Twain turns Millet, who was very popular in America during the Gilded Age when he was writing, into a transvestite, as he poses as a wealthy widow in an attempt to escape from his debt collector by arranging his own funeral. The “death” and funeral is even expected to boost the market value of his paintings (the first “law” of the literary life cycle). This rendition of Millet presents a totally different painter from the then-current image of him as a poor but honest artist. In his second life, the postfuneral Millet has to live in an assumed identity that reflects another of the “laws” of the literary life cycle: he is condemned to live as an imitator of himself, imitating the best works of the “deceased” Millet.

The last two articles in this volume turn to social movements and international history. In “Transnational Nationalism: Revisiting the Garvey Movement,” Keiko Araki takes up the issue of race in the nation-based international order of the early twentieth century. Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) sought to secure a

strong territorial state for Blacks that would support them both within the state and outside it, one that could take its place in the world community of nations. From 1919 through 1924, UNIA approached Liberia for a land grant for its Back-to-Africa movement. Garvey also petitioned the League of Nations in 1922 for access to the former German colonies in East Africa and Southwest Africa as homelands for what he considered the transnational racial group of Black people and won some backing from Haiti and the prince of Persia. Araki argues that Garvey believed that a strong Black territorial state could guarantee fair treatment to all Blacks in the world and that educated Africans would assume leadership over those in Africa in forging an African nationalism. Though these initiatives lacked much prospect of realization at the time, given the dominant understanding of the state as an entity separate from race, Garvey's ideas and movements were both national and transnational.

In "Interwar Transnational Network and the British Commonwealth: The Institute of Pacific Relations and Transformation of Relations among the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, 1942–43," Yoshie Takamitsu discusses how Canadian intellectuals with membership in the US-led Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR) anticipated the reactions of the United States to the policy outlook of the Britain-led British Institute of International Relations (BIIR) and sought to mediate more cooperative Anglo-American relations as their vision of a postwar world order was forming during the critical years of 1942–43. In the exchanges in February 1943 between Canadian officials at the Department of External Affairs and IPR-based members, in the aftermath of the 8th IPR conference at Mont Tremblant (December 1942), the Canadian side agreed to urge Britain to engage in multilateral negotiations with colonies to arrest potential conflict between Britain and the United States. More cognizant of the US perspectives, Canada was asserting itself more forcefully in Commonwealth and world affairs vis-à-vis Britain, which intended to hold on to its empire and was not inclined to consider the US position.

As always, we thank Katy Meigs for her assistance in copyediting articles for this journal and Maki Tsunoda for her support. The authors, however, are solely responsible for the articles published in this volume. Finally, we would like to note and thank that the publication of this issue has been made possible by generous financial support from the Tokyo-based American Studies Foundation. The articles published in the *Japanese Journal of American Studies*, including those from back issues, are freely available online (<http://www.jaas.gr.jp>). We invite responses and criticisms from our

readers and hope that the journal will continue to be an important player in the field of American Studies.

NOTE

<sup>1</sup> Karen Halttunen, "Transnationalism and American Studies in Place," and Natsuki Aruga et al., "American Studies in Trans-Pacific Perspective," *Japanese Journal of American Studies* 18 (2007): 5–19, 37–162.

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