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Editor's Introduction

The special topic of this volume of the *Japanese Journal of American Studies* is "Affluence and Poverty." The question of how an interdisciplinary academic journal such as ours could find common ground for its readers on a topic like this is an intriguing one. A constructive step to take is to conceptualize and contextualize the oppositional terms—"being poor" and "being rich"—in a way that enables the readers to grasp the complex nature of the issue. The contributors to the present volume, in one way or another, attempt to grapple with this task and in so doing present us directly or indirectly with important questions. For instance, what does it mean to "be poor" in one of the wealthiest nations in the world, where people rarely die of starvation or from the lack of other resources? Another important question, especially for students and researchers, is why the rich receive disproportionately less scholarly attention than the poor, despite their undoubtedly having tremendous political and cultural influence in American society. Yet another and related question is whether there are any organic relations between affluence and poverty, a pair of conditions that tend to be conceptualized as distinct from one another? By posing these questions that defy simplistic answers, we invite our readers to consider and take up positions in the fruitful discussions for which these articles advocate.

The first two articles are not related to the volume's special theme. They are based on the presidential addresses delivered at the 44th annual meeting of the Japanese Association of American Studies (JAAS) held in June 2010 at Osaka University. "Stevie Wonder's *Songs in the Key of Life* and the 'Long Civil Rights Movement'" by Kevin Gaines, the president of the American Studies Association, places Wonder's seminal album *Songs in the Key of Life* in the context of what recent historians call the "long civil rights movement." Through analysis of its musical style, lyrics, and historical contexts, Gaines illustrates how Wonder's album, much like the enduring African American voices of Martin Luther King Jr. and James Baldwin, impacts the listeners by presenting a prophetic vision of community—a kind of vision that transcends racial, cultural, religious, and even national boundaries and differences.

The second essay, "Is a Japanese Standpoint Useful for Studying about Amer-

ica?: Child Labor during World War II Revealed in Comparative Perspective" by the president of the JAAS, Natsuki Aruga, reaffirms the usefulness of comparative history, which has lately been overshadowed by the trend of transnationalization within the field of American studies. Aruga suggests a broader concept of comparative history and demonstrates its usefulness by making a comparison of how child labor was viewed in the United States and in Japan during World War II and showing how these views affected the ways historians have dealt with the problem. In the end, Aruga proposes that historians make a conscious use of a comparative perspective so that their studies become indeed transnational.

The following nine articles are dedicated to this issue's special theme, "Affluence and Poverty." In the first essay, "'Povertiresque': The Representation of Irish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America," Mikayo Sakuma focuses on how American Renaissance writers Henry David Thoreau and Herman Melville depicted the poverty of the Irish immigrants who came to America, spurred by the great potato famine. Sakuma argues that both writers, while witnessing the divisive slavery debates and the rise of nativism, were arrested by the poverty of the Irish, and that their textual representation of the immigrants elevated economic poverty to a cultural phenomenon. Thus, she concludes, this historic immigration boom provided American writers with a broader understanding of poverty and its culture.

In "Perceptions of Poverty in Progressive Era Chicago," Kotaro Nakano contextualizes poverty discourse within historical developments at the turn of the twentieth century, including mass immigration and the formation of the color line, and explores the character of nation building along with its unique process of stratification and stigmatization. Middle-class intellectuals of that period regarded "poverty" as a preventable social problem rather than a personal moral issue, and yet they also represented the emerging ethos of separating the dependent as, in Jacob Riis's term, "the other half." This testifies to the fact, Nakano argues, that the discourses of poverty at that time were informed by Americans' concerns about economic destitution as well as their increasing dread of ethnic and racial subcultures.

The next two articles bring us back to American literature. In "Creating a Culture of Wealth in *The Great Gatsby*," Tetsuro Uenishi regards Fitzgerald's novel as a skillful representation of the transformation in the culture of wealth, namely, the democratization of the rich, in the United States during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Behind the modest self-portrait of the narrator Nick Carraway as "poor" and having to work, Uenishi sees a figure who tried in vain to follow this new trend of democratization that was prevalent among the rich of the time. What Jay Gatsby represents, Uenishi contends, is Nick's failure in his ambition to become the champion of this new culture among the rich.

The other literature article, Kazuhiko Goto's "Reading William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* as a Poverty Narrative," reconsiders the recent trend in American literary criticism of exploring how literature can contribute to the conceptualization of "poverty" as a category of social marginalization. According to Goto, this trend goes so far as to consider it morally necessary for a literary critic to unmask lamentable blind spots in a society's structure by criticizing a literary text for not indicting such a society. In his analysis of Faulkner's first successful attempt at a poverty narrative, *As I Lay Dying*, Goto demonstrates that by appealing to the reader's sense of pathos, a literary text can focus on poverty not as a socioeconomic phenomenon but as a universally potential fate, and thereby allow the reader to vicariously experience what it is like to be poor.

In "Poverty, Education, and National Policy in the 'Affluent Society': A Comparison of the United States and Japan in the 1960s," Ichiro Kuraishi compares the U.S. Elementary Secondary Education Act and Japan's Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects and traces the process through which the national governments of the United States and Japan decided to take action to resolve the extremely difficult social problems of poverty and discrimination among their minority populations. In so doing, Kuraishi demonstrates that despite some slight differences, a similar transformation of recognition took place in both cases on the part of national governments and that education played an important role in the efforts to resolve the paradox of being poor in an affluent society.

Kazuyo Tsuchiya in "'Jobs or Income Now!': Work, Welfare, and Citizenship in Johnnie Tillmon's Struggles for Welfare Rights" examines the case of Johnnie Tillmon, who in 1963 established one of the first organizations created by and for the nation's welfare recipients who were, and still are, labeled as the "undeserving poor." She fought for both "decent jobs with adequate pay" and adequate income to support the lives of welfare recipients. By establishing a system that guaranteed women's autonomy in decision making as to whether they would work outside or stay home or both, Tillmon contested the narrow definitions of "work" and "welfare," the very premises on which the American welfare state had been built. Tsuchiya also argues that for Tillmon and her allies welfare rights signified a series of entitlements as citizens, and that the welfare rights movement was thus a struggle for recognition as fully entitled members of postwar American society.

We cannot discuss the issue of affluence and poverty without paying due attention to race and ethnicity. "The Fight for Indian Employment Preference in the Bureau of Indian Affairs: Red Power Activism in Denver, Colorado, and *Morton v. Mancari*" by Azusa Ono focuses on one of the political and legal battles of Native Americans during the height of the Red Power movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. More specifically, she focuses on the Red Power activism—voicing grievances and taking some militant actions—staged in

Denver against discrimination in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the subsequent lawsuits that determined the future of the Indian preference policy. Ono argues that the combination of Red Power activities, which involved both local and national Indian organizations as well as legal tactics, led to the confirmation of Indian preference in federal employment and showed the Indian people's will to take control over their lives.

In "The Japanese American 'Success Story' and the Intersection of Ethnicity, Race, and Class in the Post–Civil Rights Era," Fuminori Minamikawa takes up the "success story" of Japanese Americans as an ethnoracial group in the post-civil rights era and explores how ethnicity, race, and class are intertwined in the discourse of such a success story. Minamikawa's approach is based on ethnoracial formation theory, which seeks to deal with the conceptual relationship of ethnicity and race in a particular historical context and points to a new direction in the sociological discourse of success.

In "Fair Price for Whom?: A Critique of Fairness and Justice in the Albany Park Workers' Rights Campaign," by focusing on a particularly problematic campaign during the first decade of this century by the Latino Union of Chicago, Satomi Yamamoto examines how the concepts of "fair price" and "fair labor" are interpreted differently by immigrant workers, Workers' Center organizers, employers, and community residents, and observes that because the idea of fairness was an unexplored cultural concept invoked by Workers' Center organizers, the Albany Park Workers' Center did not give sufficient critical thought to the possibility that these expressions could generate misconceptions about their program for day laborers. As a result, she contends, the Center created the misleading impression that it was trying to appropriate day labor employment in the neighborhood of Chicago in which the Center operated.

This issue of the *Journal* presents several approaches to the special topic from a wide range of disciplines; we hope that, taken together, these articles constitute a significant contribution to the current critical conversations on affluence and poverty in American Studies.

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JURO OTSUKA
Editor

For those who wish to submit a manuscript to the *Japanese Journal of American Studies*:

1. Contributors must be dues-paying members of the JAAS.
2. Contributors are expected to observe our time schedule. They must first submit the title and abstract (about 300 words) by mid-January. We are unable to accept the manuscript without this procedure.
3. The final manuscript (maximum 8000 words including notes) is due early May. The editorial committee will inform each contributor of the result of the selection process by the end of June. If accepted, the paper will be published in June the following year.
4. The fall issue of the JAAS Newsletter will carry a "call for papers" announcement with exact deadlines and the special theme for the forthcoming issue.
5. The JAAS will accept inquiries through email: office@jaas.gr.jp