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Introduction: Framing Japan’s Historiography into the Transnational Approach

Pedro Iacobelli, Danton Leary, and Shinnosuke Takahashi

Rarely are national histories seamlessly insulated within national borders. For example, no event in recent Japanese history illustrates this more shockingly than the triple disaster on March 11, 2011. The disaster that devastated large areas of northeast Japan and left thousands dead or missing was a tragic and poignant reminder of the interconnectedness of Japan with the wider world community. The earthquake, the tsunami it caused, and the subsequent nuclear emergency at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant were truly global events—geologically, humanitarianly, economically, and politically. Fear of nuclear fallout, like seismic waves, respects no national borders. Neither does the generosity of the human spirit. The disaster elicited a transnational outpouring of humanitarian support from governments and individuals across the globe. It also reignited the smoldering debate on the potential dangers of nuclear energy.  

The triple disaster highlighted in a most tragic fashion that national histories can rarely remain confined to the national unit; they transcend political and geographical borders and entwine with regional and global ones. Similarly, transnational influences penetrate national histories leaving indelible legacies. This volume explores the transnational history of Japan by looking at that history through the prisms of empire, migration, and social movements.  

Within Japanese history, as in other fields, the last decade has seen an upswing of research that approaches history from transnational perspectives. In a recent edition of the American Historical Review, for example, Louise Young has pointed out the increasing body of English language publications dealing with Japan’s history through transnational, international, and global history perspectives.  

Despite this, “transnational history”—as a category in its own right—remains a relatively new field within historical
Pedro Iacobelli, Danton Leary, and Shinnosuke Takahashi

While some historians have for a long time sought to transcend the boundaries of the nation-state in their narratives, it has only been since the “transnational turn” in the 1990s that transnational history has emerged as a self-consciously distinct scholarly project. Taking inspiration from this body of literature built up over two decades, here transnational history is broadly understood as: (1) history that focuses on flows across borders, (2) history that contextualizes the nation-state within its global setting, and (3) history that is sensitive to the local ramifications and manifestations of these transnational trends. Within modern historiography, this approach has been confined to the minority and even today much history remains intrinsically tied to the nation-state perspective. It is widely recognized that historical narrative has been integral to the formation and maintenance of national consciousness and in the affirmation of the nation-state. Over the last few decades some historians have increasingly undertaken a concerted effort to exorcise history from the Hegelian nation-state-focused Geist. This perspective continues to gain popularity with an ever-increasing number of explicitly transnational histories that deal with a wide array of subject matter being produced every year.

Fittingly, “transnational history” emerged into English-language historiography through a transnational circuit, with Australian historian of the United States, Ian Tyrrell, contributing most profoundly to this trend in the Anglosphere. In his seminal article “American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History,” Tyrrell sought to dismantle the myth of US “exceptionalism” by placing that history within its world context under the rubric of “new transnational history” and thus rescuing it from the parochialism engendered in that perspective. According to Pierre-Yves Saunier, it was within the context of this debate that the term “transnational history” was coined. Tyrrell’s views, echoed by other scholars of US history, were followed by a publication of a special issue of the Journal of American History devoted to the topic: “The Nation and Beyond” and in an volume edited by Thomas Bender in 2002, Rethinking American History in a Global Age. In the spirit of the transnational perspective, these efforts by scholars of US history have not been limited to the United States alone, but have had a wide-ranging influence.

Despite the influence of debates coming out of the United States, the “transnational turn” in historical writing was not solely the product of re-conceptualizing the history of the United States within its global context nor isolated to the English-speaking world. Roughly
contemporaneously to developments in US history, French, Ibero-American, German and, indeed, Japanese historians similarly began to question the hegemonic position of nation-bounded approaches to history. These developments, no doubt, are emblematic of the continuing transnational transnationalization of historical writings. Central among recent efforts to push the transnational history agenda has been Akira Iriye, who together with Pierre-Yves Saunier, edited the enormous volume *Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History* in 2009. This dictionary is expressive of the long journey transnational history has taken over the last two decades to become a firmly established historical approach.

This chapter introduces some of the most important elements of the transnational approach to history. In particular, it delves into the emergence of transnationalism in historical practice, its usefulness and relevance as an historical approach, and its place in Japanese historiography. The second section of this introduction contextualizes the chapters of this book from the specific perspective of transnationalism in the history of empire, migration, and social movements.

**The Meaning and Usefulness of Transnational History**

Benedetto Croce famously claimed that “every true history is contemporary history.” All serious studies of the past, in other words, are informed by the problems and needs of the writer’s own time. Living in an increasingly globalized world we are more easily able to appreciate the connectedness of the places we inhabit to wider global trends. These trends know no national boundaries, and while our entanglement with the wider world is increasingly intensifying, these processes are not new. The transnational turn in history represents Croce’s truism insofar as historians began to study the past from a contemporary understanding of the state which includes elements that transcended national boundaries. Indeed, the transnational approach to history emerged, in the form we understand it today, as the result of changes in the historical paradigm: from being centered within nation-states to a more general, global, and international framework.

Underlying these changes is the far-reaching effects of globalization and also the reconfiguration of the metanarratives triggered, among other factors, by poststructuralist thought. Both phenomena, as noted by Akira Iriye, began around the 1970s but were only belatedly noticed by historians. The social and cultural changes in the second half of the twentieth century affected the work of historians...
and their perception of the global past from the late 1980s and early 1990s. The transnational turn, thus, meant the re-examination of the past from a perspective that cuts across national borders and narratives. Along the latter line, the most important contribution of poststructuralist thinkers to history was a critical consciousness of the limits of nation-based historical narratives. As Jean-Francois Lyotard defined it, postmodernity encompassed an increasing dis-belief toward “grand narratives,” historical accounts of the past, and correlative anticipation of the future of a people, nation, or other community, which perform the functions of social integration and political legitimation. It emerged as a critical and explicit rejection to Hegel’s organicism of history, philosophy, and the nation. Indeed, it criticized the epistemological assumption of national history that had been strongly rooted in the spatiality of the modern nation-state (e.g., its borders).

For many historians of the late twentieth century, writing amid a buoyant globalization in terms of the flows of people, goods, and ideas, nation-state centered scholarship required at the very least a context. Responding to this increasingly globalized world context, since the end of the Cold War, historians began to provide more global and international perspectives to their historical narratives. To be sure, the transnational historical approach is bounded within a narrative that goes beyond national borders. The bird’s eye perspective of history was thus a response to the cultural and social changes that occurred in the latter part of the twentieth century. The growing awareness that nations were the products of modernization processes contributed to questions on the historical paradigms that sustained national histories. In this sense, this historical approach raises critical issues about transnational flows but, as Chris Bayly notes, does not claim to embrace the whole world. The very same self-awareness that the transnational history is another approach and thus does not claim to be the Holy Grail for all historical narratives has allowed historians to present a more critical view on established national-based institutions and subjects. For example, the transnational approach enters into conflict with nation-based areas studies. This is particularly evident in Northeast Asia, where Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Mongolian studies have been separately configured as the principal areas of study. Flows across the region tend to be fragmented by national contexts, thus losing their coherence as part of a wider and richer experience. In the same vein, Harry Harootunian has criticized the metonymical characteristic of area studies, that is, taking a partitioned knowledge of the region and projecting it onto the whole. A transnational approach, by contrast,
forces the historian to look beyond national borders aiming for a more complete level of understanding.

To be sure, the centrality of nation-states to both the lived-reality of most humans and to the foundations of the international order is undisputable. Yet nation-states are not, nor have ever been, hermetically sealed, self-contained and absolutely self-referential spaces of action; they are porous zones susceptible, indeed reliant, upon external stimuli. The transnational history approach, thus, brings to the fore the nation’s existence within its wider regional and global contexts and within the multitudinous connections and relations it and its inhabitants have with phenomena beyond the borders. Yet, it does not deny the political, epistemological, and ontological significance of the nation to both international affairs and to the people who live within it.

But is transnational history a useful approach to historical problems? Or, is the emphatic rejection of national perspectives, as Sebastian Conrad has discussed in relation to the postwar Japanese Marxist experience, a Sisyphean task that frequently continues to rotate around the nation as the center of gravity of historical interpretation? The question about the utility of transnational history emerges as a result of the preexistence of other international, global, and comparative approaches. How useful is it to adopt a new approach if what we want to refer to has already been framed within other perspectives or areas? The problems of the historicism of supranational or international phenomena have been thoroughly discussed from global and international approaches. But it is from the limits of these very same approaches that transnational history acquires its own relevance. For example, “international history,” as Erez Manela has pointed out, is so spatially and theoretically broad that it risks losing intellectual coherence, becoming a “catch all designation.” In contrast, Akira Iriye has emphasized that traditional international history is pregnant with a focus on state actors (haute politique), tying it closely with older forms of diplomatic history and rendering it less capable of embracing non-state subjects. Iriye also points out the problematic uninational focus of much of this history, where the foreign relation of a single nation dominates the analysis. Global history, inheritor of both world history and the late twentieth century’s globalization process, presents its own limitations. At first glance, the term brings into mind the totality of the world. The problem is the scope of the term, which preferentially focuses on global processes such as the expansion of industrialization and the various paths to progress and modernity around the globe. Therefore, this approach tends not to favor regional or
more local historical problems and subjects.\textsuperscript{25} The focus tends to lie on unidirectional activity, on the homogenization of the world.\textsuperscript{26} Conversely, transnational history can be a useful historical approach since it combines an implicit critique of nation-centered approaches in preference for “movements, flows and circulations that transcended politically bounded territories.”\textsuperscript{27}

The transnational historical perspective, to be sure, reexamines the nation-state from different angles, perspectives, and dynamics.\textsuperscript{28} Indeed, the nation-building process is a transnational phenomenon, spreading from one section of the globe to others. An awareness of this \textit{transnationality} in nation-building processes deeply enriches our understanding of the history of the nation and the forces and precedents that shape it. That is to say, a transnational historical perspective does not, necessarily, attempt to efface the importance of the nation; rather, it seeks to place the nation within these transnational forces that have impacted it. In other words, the transnational history perspective focuses on the social and political forces that cannot be contained by national boundaries. These forces emphasize uncovering connections across political units and the strengthening of alternative solidarities, social connections, and interpenetrations among actors from within and without the nation-state.

Isabel Hofmeyr has commented on this topic as follows, “the key claim of any transnational approach is its central concern with the movement, flows, and circulations, not simply as a theme or motif but as an analytic set of methods which defines the endeavour itself.”\textsuperscript{29} Hofmeyr meant by this that historical processes are made in different places but that they are constructed “in the movement between places, sites, and regions.”\textsuperscript{30} In the same vein, we could say that transnational history is also methodological honesty. For, if we follow our subjects wherever they may lead us we will sometimes cross borders just as they did.\textsuperscript{31} It could be said that the transnational turn is a renovation of the \textit{histoire-problème}, the problem-oriented historical inquiry, developed by the \textit{Annales} School in France. Yet, the \textit{Annales} School, together with the Japanese and British Marxist historiographical tradition, social history in Bielefeld, and American social and economic history tended to encapsulate their historical inquiries in their immediate national context.\textsuperscript{32} Moreover, beyond adjusting the sociospatial perspective of the problem researched, transnational history is not limited to any particular methodological approach. It could be said that the transnational historical perspective, therefore, is an umbrella perspective under which a wide range of histories have been written. It is a historical approach that
recognizes that national histories cannot be understood within the delineated space of the nation only, but must be grasped within the interlocking spaces surrounding the nation. In sum, it embraces a methodological diversity.  

In Japan, where self-centered narratives are still influential, histories that transcend the nation-state have gradually emerged from social, political, and intellectual trends dating back to the 1980s. While outside of Japan transnational history has been widely discussed in relation to academic methodology, curriculums, and institutions since the 1990s, in the Japanese context the concept of transnationalism had originally been directed toward a different trajectory. In Japan, as part of government initiatives tied to boosting economic growth, the idea of “internationalization,” or kokusaika, has become fashionable since the late 1980s. Similarly, the term “globalization” (gurōbaruka) has come to be widely used since the new millennium. Tied to these wider trends, researchers from a range of backgrounds have directed their efforts toward studying these phenomena since the 1990s. Particularly, the transnational approach to history has been informed by academic trends such as Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Studies and has benefitted from the international interaction of scholars in Japan and those overseas. Realization of the deep interconnectedness of Japan and the wider world led many Japanese researchers to question the underpinning assumptions of Japanese ethnic identity and nationalism, and indeed, notions such as “national culture” (kokumin bunka) and “the Japanese” (nihonjin) began to be scrutinized within fields such as sociology and literature. Issues such as gender, diaspora, indigenous culture, minority groups, and so forth drew attention among intellectuals who also began to critically examine the issue of power in dominant representations of “Japaneseness.” These elements helped to promote the historical reconsideration of the notions of “national identity” (nashonaru aidentitii), “national history” (nihonshi), and “Japan” (Nihon/Nippon) within the Japanese academia. In this sense, early efforts by Japanese scholars to break away from a singular focus on the nation in historical narrative derived from an internal deconstruction of the most basic tenets of Japanese national consciousness—the critique of so-called nihonjinron (or, “theories of the Japanese”).  

From this perspective, we can identify a number of recent academic works that develop transnational issues in the scholarship on Japanese history. Most notable are the 25 volumes that cover Japanese history from the ancient to the contemporary period, History of
Japan (Nihon no Rekishi), published in the early 2000s by Kodansha. Including contributions by scholars from differing disciplines and covering many topics, one of the common themes of this project was how to overcome the homogenous images of Japan in historical perspective and also how to open our understanding of “Japan,” “Japanese,” and “Japaneseness” to spaces that tend to be dismissed in the dominant discourse of Japanese history. For this project, scholars based outside of Japan such as Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Harry Harootunian, Carol Gluck, Brett de Barry, and Takashi Fujitani joined scholars from Japanese universities such as Kang Sang Jung, Hiyane Teruo, Iwasaki Naoko, and others. Other important works produced include the eight-volume collection The Knowledge of ‘Imperial’ Japan (‘Teikoku’ Nihon no Gakuchi), published by Iwanami Shoten in 2006 and edited by historians such as Sakai Tetsuya, Yamamuro Shin’ichi, and Hirosue Akira and the more recent scholarship of Akita Shigeru and Momoki Shirō under the rubrics of regional and global history. This and the work of other historians, sociologists, and cultural critics based in Japanese institutions have sought to reformulate our understanding of Japanese history as enmeshed within global power relations during the periods of imperialism, the Cold War, and post-Cold War. Approaching closely to these works, our project aims to contribute to the historiography of Japan by re-framing it as a transnational historical subject.

Transnational History and Empire

Empires are axiomatically transnational polities and the study of empires perfectly fits a transnational history perspective. Between the “scramble for Africa” in the 1870s and the close of World War II in 1945 empires, often violently, enveloped the majority of the world’s populations within their borders. From 1895 Japan, too, was an active participant in the politics of modern imperialism. The Empire of Japan together with the Western Powers were instrumental in acting as the political adhesive in the formation of a globalized world and extending “modernity,” in its many and contested forms, to all corners of the earth. Indeed, the emergence of modern Japan was shaped by the global order of European imperialism and Japan self-consciously adopted the imperial formation, not just the nation-state form, in its quest for political independence from the threat of European imperialism. Once fully established as a modern empire, Japan acted as a partner of the Western Powers in molding a transnational discourse on imperialism as the dominate form of political organization and as the “standard of civilization.” And yet, in Japan
the dominance of this Euro-centric imperialism was eventually challenged by new Japan-centric imperial projects under the guise of pan-Asianism and the political programmes of the New Order in East Asia and the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere from the late 1930s.  

The process of imperial expansion was at most times exploitative, coercive, and violent, but at others conciliatory and accommodating; no uniformity exists in the process by which empires acted to connect the world in a common, though contested, modernity nor in the process by which colonial populations encountered, reacted to, molded, adopted, or rejected this modernity. Importantly, this process was also by no means unidirectional. Empires, the Japanese or otherwise, did not have the unfettered ability to cast their modernity onto accepting populations *carte blanche*, and imperial metropoles were not sealed from the effects of the imperial project and the presence of colonized peoples.  

A transnational history approach to empire offers insight into the multidirectional flow of influence within empires, yet is still sensitive to the endemic power disparities inherent in imperialism. 

While a transnational history perspective can be usefully applied to increase our awareness of the mutually influential relations between the metropolis and colony, it can also enlighten our understanding of the empire and its colonies within the global order. Tomoko Akami has recently pointed out that the modern world order was as much an inter-imperial one as it was an international one and that “the notion of the ‘nation state/empire’ as a new way of conceptualizing an actor in international politics, and as a basic unit in an analysis of international politics for the period between the late nineteenth century and 1945” can usefully be applied to history.  

Until at least 1945, empires, centered on powerful nation-states, continued to dominate world politics, and indeed, imperial formations provided the model of political organization until nation-states rose to dominance on the wave of the decolonization movement following the political upheavals of World War II. A transnational historical approach fruitfully deepens our understanding of the modern history of the Japanese empire within its intra-imperial relations between the imperial metropole and the colonies and in the totality of its global connections. 

The three chapters presented in this volume focusing on the issue of empire offer illuminating examples of the transnationality of the Japanese Empire, its potentialities, and its legacies. Toyomi Asano begins by reconsidering Japan’s decision to annex Korea in 1910 from the perspective of the legal reform process to abolish
extraterritoriality. Asano argues that the legal reform process pursued by the Japanese Government, most enthusiastically by Ito Hirobumi, was a transnational endeavor that encompassed a diverse range of actors, including the Japanese Government, Japanese settlers, the Korean population, the United States and the European powers. In this process, Japan deployed “civilized” legal codes produced in the West to formulate an alternative regional order, based on a confederative project that would maintain Korean sovereignty and be distinct from European-style empires. Japan’s decision to ultimately annex Korea into the formal empire, Asano argues, was an outcome of the failure to realize this historical transnational alternative. In Chapter 2, Yuka Hiruma Kishida examines pan-Asianism within intellectual circles of Manchukuo’s Kenkoku University. Hiruma Kishida argues that Japan’s imperial project in Manchukuo entailed the creation of transnational spaces in which alternative visions of pan-Asianism could be articulated. While a mainstay of Japanese imperial ideology in the 1930s, pan-Asianism was also intrinsically a transnational ideology capable of being interpreted diversely. Hiruma Kishida offers a unique insight into this diversity by comparing and contrasting the pan-Asianist scholarship produced by both Japanese and non-Japanese faculty members of Kenkoku University. The transnational space of the University allowed several non-Japanese scholars to offer subtly alternative versions of the discourse which circumvented the Japan-centrism of wartime ideology. Finally, Sherzod Muminov examines the legacies of the Japanese Empire in the immediate postwar period through the history and memories of around 600,000 Japanese who returned from internment in Siberia. Internment, Muminov argues, was not only indelibly marked on the minds of the returned internees, but memory of the event significantly impacted the politics and imagery of the Cold War in Japan. Not only does Muminov offer a transnational perspective on the legacies of Japan’s empire, crucially, he presents a transwar story that persuasively ties Japan’s prewar and postwar histories together; where the Empire’s end in battle against Soviet troops in northeast China and the ideological battles against Communism under the turbulent politics of Cold War-era Japan are fused.45

Transnational History and Migration

International migration is one of the most natural venues for reflecting on the concept of transnational history. People’s mobility is a central element in many transnational accounts of the past. But the
older form of the history of migration, with respect to countries such as the United States, Argentina, Australia, or Brazil, was written to incorporate the immigrant into a national narrative. Indeed, in many historical migration accounts the arrival of peoples has been closely connected with the nation’s internal processes. As Patricia Seed put it, the focus has heavily laid on the impact of migration on the destination. Pioneers seeking to incorporate new territories to the hosting nation, European migrants unconsciously helping to “whiten” the local society; or even more recently, non-European people contributing to the building of a modern and multicultural society, among others, are all narratives centered in the receiving state. These stories tend to obscure the migrant’s agency and the conditions of departure and favor forms of national mythologizing (e.g., “melting pot” or “immigration nation”).

In contrast, the transnational history approach frames migration within a more complex circuit where multiple networks coexist. As Adam McKeown puts it, international migration is a world of “complex and overlapping flows and nodes, none of which can be entirely captured within a single national or regional history.” In the same vein, transnational accounts of the past focus on migrants’ experiences and processes at both ends of the migratory line; but not only as a history of the circumstances at the points of origin and arrival in the migratory flow. Transnational history explores the exchanges along the way, the different forms of migratory movement and transformation of identities. Also, transnational history sees migration not as a unilateral movement where one end is severed once the migrants arrive at the other; it focuses on the fluid interconnections at both ends that migrants embody. Furthermore, the transnational perspective is open to examine the continuing presence of the country of origin throughout the migrant experience. And thus, migration can be adopted as part of the sending state’s transnational history as well.

There are good examples of the transnational history approach to migration for the Japanese case. For example, Eiichiro Azuma in his many studies on Japanese immigration to the United States has explored the ways in which Japanese first generation of migrants (issei) in California attempted to create a “pioneer theory” that highlighted their position over other foreign nationals in the quest for expanding the US border westward. His study also reflects on the repercussion that this “pioneer theory” had back in mainland Japan and the ways in which the Tokyo government later distorted and used it to foster nationalism before the Pearl Harbor attack. Further,
as Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder point out, because migration is so often a highly selective process, families and households are separated by migrations, creating incentives for communication and further movement in order to perpetuate fundamental social bonds, ties of affection, and familial forms of economic exchange, solidarity, and mutual assistance. Indeed, we can observe literally tens of thousands of cases where Japanese migrants saw their household conformation radically changed by migration, including the well-documented cases of mail-order brides (shashin kekkon) for single Japanese migrants. Finally in the postwar era, migrants (Japanese and otherwise) problematized the reconstruction of a new and democratic Japan. The repatriation of former Japanese colonizers and the presence of former imperial subjects from Korea and China in mainland Japan became transnational reminders of the near imperial past. Japan was both origin and destination for migration and the Japanese state an active agent in its promotion.

This volume presents three studies on Japanese migration seen from the abovementioned framework. The fluid interconnections between the point of departure and destination, seen from a cultural perspective, is examined in Tessa Morris-Suzuki’s chapter on colonialism and the migration of mainland Japanese (naichi) to Karafuto (Sakhalin) in the early twentieth century. Indeed, as the case of the Japanese in Karafuto shows, not all migrants left their homes with the intention of settling permanently elsewhere, some succeeded in moving back and forth across borders altering the material culture in the host society. Noriaki Hoshino’s chapter frames migration within a more “complex circuit of multiple networks” emphasizing the impact that migration had on both ends of the migratory line. By examining the discourse and activities of Nagata Shigeshi and other early presidents of the Japanese Christian Organization (Nihon Rikkokai)—particularly their involvement in Japanese migration to the United States and the development of an “ethnic discourse” that was applied in Japan’s colonies—Hoshino explores the relationship between migration and ethnic discourses during the formative years of the Japanese empire. Finally, Bill Mihalopoulos’ chapter provides a good example of the continuing presence of the country of origin throughout the migrants’ experience. In his study, Mihalopoulos brings to the fore the important subject of labor migration, in particular, the case of poor Japanese women, from rural areas, and their engagement in the sex industry in British Colonial Singapore. The power relationship between these Japanese prostitutes and the Japanese consuls emphasizes Japan’s attempts to shape and regulate...
overseas Japanese migrant communities. In all, these three studies provide a truly transnational approach to the study of Japan’s migration history.

**Transnational History and Social Movements**

Social movements are those developed through “a series of interactions between power holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation.” As in this definition by Charles Tilly, the concept of social movements illuminates a crucial dimension of modern social life, focusing on politics for the equal distribution of material wealth and also for recognition. While the notion of “power” and “power-holder” can be flexibly applied depending on different circumstances, the core element of social movements is the assumption that social masses and social forces speak or take action for the equal treatment of the less powerful or invisible subjects. Following from this premise, the study of social movements has ramified into the research of many different kinds of social and political practices that take social justice as their objectives. Traditionally within sociological literature, social movements have been imagined as emerging from problems associated with industrialization—such as urban poverty and labor-related problems, and identity-based issues such as gender, youth, and the ecology movement found under conditions of so-called late capitalism in Western countries. The arrival of “transnationalism” in the 1990s has been accompanied by a new wave in the research on social movements. The new approach inspired by transnationalism has focused on nongovernmental civic organizations working on global agendas such as war, poverty, refugees and migration, political violence, labor condition, and other matters related to human rights issues. Namely, the transnational approach has enabled us to imagine a form of civil society that transcends territorial boundaries.

Historical studies also play crucial roles to enrich our understanding of transnational social movements. For example, cultural historians such as Paul Gilroy in his famous *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), and Robin D. G. Kelley in *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (which are greatly inspiring works) have covered the history of slavery, imperialism, and counter-culture across the Atlantic Ocean. Their works have been considered as insightful and also provocative in the way in which they have brought different experiences and consciousness into modern historiography through the prism of “race.” In relation to the history
of the so-called Global South, scholars such as Vijay Prashad have also published an alternative view of contemporary history. In his *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and Myth of Cultural Purity* (2002) and in *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World* (2008), the early period of this history has been persuasively illustrated. Further, Leela Ghandhi’s *Affective Communities* is a great example that explains the intellectual linkage of anticolonialism and affective solidarity friendships between the United Kingdom and colonial India during the late Victorian period.

In the context of Japanese studies, the number of contemporary and historical works on transnational civic movements has been growing since at least the early 2000s. Jennifer Chan’s *Another Japan Is Possible* (2008) along with Michiba Chikanobu’s *Teikō no Dojidaishi* (2008) are good examples of studies of social movements in Japan. Also, Uemura Hideaki and his colleagues compiled a volume on civic diplomacy based upon their transnational movement for the rights of indigenous people. Similarly, historical inquiries into transnational aspects of Japanese civic activism have also recently increased. For example, Yuichiro Onishi wrote *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro-Asian Solidarity in 20th-Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa* (2013) and Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo edited a volume called *The Trans-Pacific Imagination* published in the same year. Historians such as Tessa Morris-Suzuki map out the traditional livelihood space of northern indigenous people which spread over the Sea of Okhotsk and Simon Avenell shows the transnational historical traces of the environmental movement in postwar Japan. Those works sought to find and establish a historical common ground in Japan and the Pacific region through a cross-cultural history of the movement of people, ideas, and problems.

Building upon this scholarship, this section’s three scholars discuss the histories of transnational social movements from different perspectives. First, Ian Rapley, explores the Esperanto movement in the early twentieth-century Japan. Esperanto is an engineered language that emerged in the modern period with the intention to be used as a universal language. However, by focusing on people, their ideologies, and the international political environment, Rapley considers Esperanto as a social movement through which he elucidates cultural and societal connectivity among European and Japanese intellectuals and social activists in the 1920s and 1930s. While Japanese social movements, inclusive of liberalism, communism, and labor movement, were influenced by and connected with overseas countries, the second chapter by Hiroe Saruya applies this
basic understanding to discuss transnationality in the post-1945 peace movement in Japan. As an example, she delves into the history of the transnational networks of the antinuclear movement, which were very significant in Japan and in the world from the 1950s. The importance of Saruya’s chapter is not only because it shows us the Japanese antinuclear movement in the global historical context, but also because her work illuminates the historical present of today’s antinuclear movement, which has become widely active in Japan and elsewhere in the world since the Fukushima nuclear disaster of March 2011. The third chapter by Kelly Dietz examines issues of political identity in Okinawan anti-base politics by highlighting ethnicity or indigeneity as core to this identity. It critically articulates liberalistic notions of civic identity, which are arguably dominant in Okinawan anti-base politics. Yet Dietz does not merely characterizes the current trends in the local political identity, she considers this identity as a key that enables Okinawan anti-base politics to be connected with other ethnic minorities who have been conducting social activism inside and outside Japan such as Ainu, ethnic Koreans in Japan (or so-called Zainichi Koreans), the Chamorro people in Guam, and those in the Philippines and South Korea. By analyzing the historical consciousness of activists in Okinawa and other places, Dietz theorizes people-to-people connectivity that transcends national and cultural boundaries in order to challenge “empires” in Japan and further afield in the Asia and the Pacific region.

Notes


7. Saunier, *Transnational History*, p. 27.


10. Struck, Ferris, and Revel, “Introduction: Space and Scale in Transnational History,” pp. 573–84. In French the seminal work of Gérard Noiriel together with, for example, Roger Chartier are good examples of this trend. See Gérard Noiriel, *La tyrannie du national: Le droit d’asile en Europe 1793–1993* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1991); Roger Chartier, “La conscience de la globalité (commentaire),” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 56, no. 1 (2001). In the Ibero-American scholarly world, we can mention the seminal work of Carmen De la Guarda and Juan Pan-Montojo, “ Reflexiones sobre una historia transnacional,” *Studia historica. Historia contemporánea* 16 (1998); the work done in Colombia by Hugo Fazio Vengoa, “La historia global y su conveniencia para el estudio del pasado y del presente,” in *Historia Crítica Edición Especial* (Bogotá: 2009); and the volume edited by Chilean scholars Fernando Purcell and Alfredo Riquelme, eds., *Ampliando miradas. Chile y su historia en un tiempo global* (Santiago: RIL Editores, 2009), among others. As discussed below, in the Japanese context, these early attempts overcome nation-centric history focused on the deconstruction of the central ideological tenets of Japanese nationalism rather than attempting to place the nation within its wider international and transnational context.


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20. Harry Harootunian, History’s Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practices, and the Question of Everyday Life (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). Some exceptions (that prove the rule) are works that have attempted to bridge the gap between various national histories such as: NiChuKan Sankoku Kyōtsū Rekishi Kyōzai linkai, Mirai wo hiraku rekishi: Nihon, Chūgoku, Kankoku kyōdō henshū higashi Ajia sankoku no kingendaishi (Tokyo: Köbunken, 2006).


22. Erez Manela, in contrast to traditional approaches to international history, has introduced the idea of an international society as a subject of historical inquiry. See Manela, “International Society as a Historical Subject.”


24. For a good example of global history that covers an expansive timeframe and embraces the totality of the world, see: Andre Gunder Frank, ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age (Berkley: University of California Press, 1998).


30. Ibid.

31. Lindsay, “The Appeal of Transnational History.”

32. De la Guarda and Pan-Montojo, “Reflexiones sobre una historia transnacional.” For a consideration of the experience of Japanese Marxism and West German social history, see: Sebastian Conrad, The Quest for the Lost Nation.


35. Indeed, the transnational historical approach played a significant role challenging the Japanese version of historical revisionism, or the so-called...
Liberal View of History Study Group (jiyūshugi-shikan kenkyūkai), which emerged after the end of Cold War in the Atlantic Ocean and Europe.


42. On the entwinement of notions of pan-Asianism and Japan’s challenge to the regional order from the late 1930s see: Masafumi Yonetani, Ajia / Nihon: Shikō no furonteia (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006), section 2, Chapter 2. Recently, Prasenjit Duara has presented this type of imperialism based on formally independent states, the creation of which the authors of the Co-Prosperity Sphere claimed as their goal, as “new imperialism” and has argued that it was exhibited in the foreign policies of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Japan. See Duara, Prasenjit, “Nationalism, Imperialism, Federalism and the Example of Manchukuo,” Common Knowledge 12, no. 1 (2006): 47–65.

43. Stoler and Cooper influentially argued in 1997 that “Europe’s colonies were never empty spaces to be made over in Europe’s image or fashioned in its interests; nor, indeed, were European states self-contained entities that at one point projected themselves overseas. Europe was made by its imperial projects, as much as colonial encounters were shaped by conflicts within European itself.” See: Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in
Introduction


46. Weinstein, “Pensando la historia más allá de la nación: La historiografía de América Latina y la perspectiva transnacional.”

47. Bayly et al., “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History.”


54. As basic texts to follow the changing nature of social movements, see, for example, Alain Touraine, The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Alberto Melucci, Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

55. It should also be noted that there were other currents leading transnationalism in different trajectories around the turn of the century. While political scientists such as Sidney Tarrow and others tended to regard the nation as a basic entity and transnationalism as an alternative framework for a comparative approach, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has
highlighted grassroots social activism as a crucial site of reference to consider contemporary transnational politics. This argument enables us to see the political terrain of globalization from the perspective of people’s everyday life through the notion of “production of locality.” Appadurai has examined the influence of transnationality in terms of a complex set of local politics, society, and culture that often transgresses geopolitical demarcation of the nation-state. Sidney Tarrow, The New Transnational Activism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Also, see for example, Donatella Della Porta, Globalization from Below: Transnational Activism and Protest Network (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2006); Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).


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