



HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL
INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN
LATIN AMERICA AND ASIA

Dirty Hearts

The History of Shindō Renmei

Fernando Morais

Translated with a Critical Introduction by
Seth Jacobowitz

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Historical and Cultural Interconnections between
Latin America and Asia

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Fernando Morais

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Fernando Morais
São Paulo, Brazil

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Seth Jacobowitz
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A NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY

The spelling of Japanese names that appear in this book reflects the heterogeneity of the transnational Japanese diaspora that settled in Brazil between 1908 and 1942. The mass migration of nearly 189,000 Japanese immigrants to South America took place after more than a half-century of trade and immigration with the Anglophone world had already ensured widespread use of the Hepburn system of Romanization. Thus, while many prewar Japanese names conform to a familiar English orthography, still others were phoneticized according to Brazilian Portuguese convention, or altered in ways that left them nearly unrecognizable as Japanese at all. In response to these variations, this translation endeavors to preserve key differences, while also correcting the occasional misspellings that appear throughout the text and bringing them in line with standard orthographic practices. For the most part, the only changes that have been made in this translation were to add long vowel macrons where appropriate and unobtrusive. The use of the syllable *ti* instead of *chi*, and the use of *gue* and *gui* to denote a hard “g” sound, instead of *ge* or *gi*, have been left as is. Thus, the industrialist Chūzaburō Nomura has two long vowel macrons added, whereas Shindō Renmei enforcers Shiguetaka Takagui and Eiiti Sakane each preserve their distinctive spellings. All proper names follow the Western custom of first name, last name.

Only Japanese words deemed unfamiliar to English or Portuguese readers such as *kachigumi*, *makegumi*, *tantō*, and so on appear in italics and/or with long vowel macrons.

Lastly, there is a similar diversity of spellings for non-Japanese personal and place names in the book that is reflective of the varied origins of Brazil's immigrants. Wherever possible the spellings and accent marks have been preserved as per the original text.

TRANSLATOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Fernando Morias for granting permission to translate his work, and to series editors Ignacio López-Calvo and Kathy Lopez for inviting me to participate in this series about historical and cultural relations between Asia and Latin America. Editor Camille Davies at Palgrave Macmillan, her staff, and the anonymous peer reviewers gave constructive criticism that shaped the direction of the translation and critical introduction. Greg Robinson shared his exceptional knowledge of the Japanese American internment and patiently answered innumerable questions in our many conversations about this project. I am also grateful for the help of Gabriel Fernandes, who carefully went over the entire manuscript and made valuable suggestions to improve the overall reading experience.

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This translation and introduction are dedicated to the memory of Professor Kōichi Mori (1955–2019), scholar, mentor, and friend.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Fernando Morais (b. 1946) is a Brazilian journalist, writer, and politician. He is the author of nine books, which include his biographies of Communist operative Olga Benário Prestes, media mogul Assis Chateaubriand, Brazilian Air Force Marshal Casimiro Montenegro Filho, and best-selling author Paulo Coelho. His works have sold over two million copies in 19 countries, and four of his books have been made into films. He received the Prêmio Esso three times and Prêmio Abril four times for his journalistic work. *Corações Sujos* (Dirty Hearts; 2000) was awarded the Jabuti Award, the Brazilian equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize, in the category of Best Nonfiction Book of the Year in 2001.

Seth Jacobowitz is the Interim Resident Director of the Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies. He is author of *Writing Technology in Meiji Japan: A Media History of Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture* (Harvard Asia Center, 2015), which won the International Convention of Asia Scholars Book Prize in the Humanities in 2017. He is also the translator of *The Edogawa Rampo Reader* (Kurodahan Press, 2008). His research has been funded by the Fulbright Foundation, Japan Foundation, and National Endowment for the Humanities.

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Critical Introduction to *Dirty Hearts*

Seth Jacobowitz

BLACK SWAN EVENTS

On an unseasonably warm day in August 2019, I strolled through the grounds of Ibirapuera Park in São Paulo after meeting with artist and curator Roberto Okinaka at the Afro Brazil Museum. I was headed for the Japanese Pavilion, one of several landmarks downtown that attests to the prominence of the Japanese Brazilians and their cultural contributions to the largest city in South America. The pavilion was built in Japan and donated as an integral component of the park, which opened on August 21, 1954, in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the city. I walked slowly through the Japanese garden, savoring the beauty of the cherry blossoms growing in profusion alongside the exhibition hall and boisterous koi pond. The traditional *shoin* style architecture of the building, a replica of the Katsura Palace in Kyoto, marks a striking departure from the Brazilian modernism of Roberto Burle Marx's tropical landscapes and the curvilinear geometric forms of the museums nearby designed by architect Oscar Niemeyer. Yet it was the enigma of the cherry blossoms that stopped me in my tracks. I had just come back from Japan, where the rainy season was giving way to the blistering heat, humidity, and shrill cicada cries of summer. Yet here was the classical Japanese symbol for the renewal of spring, thriving in the balmy weather and blissfully indifferent to the fact that August in Brazil is actually winter.

The frisson brought to mind literary scholar Roberto Schwarz's notion of "misplaced ideas," which recognized the incommensurable gap between an imported Enlightenment ideology and the vicissitudes of slavery in the formation of Brazilian modernity.¹ But this, too, was a juxtaposition of elements on Brazilian soil, far removed from the cultural context or cyclical rhythms of nature in Japan. Rather than search for authentic roots in an ancestral homeland, or try to understand the Japanese Pavilion's artifice from a Japoniste perspective, I came away with a pragmatic realization that responds to the dilemma of misplaced ideas: local conditions matter. While I was lost in thought, balancing the equation in my head, a black swan floated by to lend further symbolism to this paradoxical scene.

From the moment that I announced my plans to embark on a research project on the literature and intellectual history of prewar Japanese immigration to Brazil, friends and colleagues unfailingly directed me toward Fernando Morais' *Corações Sujos* as the most popular account of the turbulent experiences of the Japanese Brazilians during World War II and its aftermath. Not all such voices were uncritical of the book, but there was unanimity in recognizing that Morais' blend of literary and investigative journalism had provided unrivaled visibility to the transformations that the Japanese Brazilian community underwent during the crucible years of 1942–1947. This included the raft of repressive measures taken against Japanese immigrants as Axis subjects after Brazil entered the war on the Allied side. The bloodiest chapter of internecine conflict within the Japanese Brazilian community erupted in 1946–1947 between the "enlightened" (*esclarecidos*) members of the community, who accepted that Japan lost the war, and the ideological hardliners in the secret society Shindō Renmei (League of Subjects of the Imperial Way), who violently enforced the false narrative of Japanese triumphalism. The lines were swiftly demarcated for the *kachigumi*, or "victory faction," and those they called *makegumi*, or "defeatists."

The consequences of Japan's unconditional surrender and loss of empire were so dire and wide-ranging that none of the Japanese immigrant communities around the world were spared, least of all the most distant and sizable colony in Brazil. In the first English-language study dedicated to postwar contemporary Japanese Brazilian literature and film, Ignacio López-Calvo observes that Morais' *Dirty Hearts* is "a hybrid of

¹ Roberto Schwarz, *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture* (1992).

historical essay, novel, testimonial, and biography.”² As indicated in the back matter of *Dirty Hearts*, Morais made extensive use of fifty federal, state, municipal, and private archives in Brazil, as well as eighty-eight personal interviews in the course of his research. Largely reproduced in this translation is also an impressive collection of photographs, maps, newspaper clippings, declassified police files, and other forms of material evidence from the period that impart archival depth and veracity to this combination of life writing and creative non-fiction.

Originally published by the prestigious Companhia das Letras in 2000, *Dirty Hearts* received the Jabuti Award, the Brazilian equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize, in the category of Best Non-fiction Book of the Year in 2001. Morais (b. 1946) is the author of nine books, which include his biographies of World War II-era Communist operative Olga Benário Prestes, media mogul Assis Chateaubriand, Brazilian Air Force Marshal Casimiro Montenegro Filho, and best-selling novelist Paulo Coelho. Morais’ works have sold over two million copies in nineteen countries, and four of his books have been made into films. In 2011, Brazilian cineaste Vicente Amorim directed a fictionalized adaptation of *Dirty Hearts* with a screenplay by David França Mendes that featured a mixed Brazilian and Japanese cast. It garnered numerous accolades on the domestic and international film circuit, which culminated in the Cinema Brazil Grand Prize for Best Adapted Screenplay in 2013. In addition to his career as a journalist and writer, Morais also served for eight years as a state deputy for São Paulo and held the offices of State Secretary of Culture (1988–1991) and Secretary of Education (1991–1993).

Morais traces Shindō Renmei’s path to power as the foremost pro-imperialist militant group that formed in response to the anti-Japanese, forced assimilation measures that began in earnest under Getúlio Vargas’ dictatorial Estado Novo (1937–1945) and intensified after Brazil declared war on the Axis Powers in 1942. The group’s membership correspondingly swelled in the mid-1940s as it absorbed smaller factions. It was widely believed to represent the vast majority of the 250,000 Japanese immigrants and their Brazilian-born children. In thirteen months of peak activity from January 1946 to January 1947, Shindō Renmei was responsible for twenty-three assassinations, 147 assaults, and innumerable acts of arson and intimidation against the “dirty hearts” in their midst, who collaborated with the Brazilian authorities or publicly affirmed that Japan had

²Ignacio López-Calvo, *Japanese Brazilian Saudades*, 155.

been defeated. Taking advantage of the leadership and communications vacuum caused first by the Estado Novo's prohibitions against "subjects of the Axis powers,"³ and then the severing of diplomatic relations with Japan (1942–1952), the group effectuated a near-complete takeover of the community's mediasphere. Shindō Renmei used clandestine meetings, radio broadcasts, and newsletters to communicate with the quarter-million strong population during and after the war.

Shindō Renmei is often described in *Dirty Hearts* as a secret society of "fanatics" or "cult followers." In fairness to Morais, such terminology was not principally his own, but reflects how contemporaneous critics and opponents in the Japanese Brazilian community characterized the organization. As sociologist Takashi Maeyama has pointed out, "the victory group called themselves *kyōkō* (the tough) and the opposition simply *haisen* (the defeatists). The defeat group, on the other hand, called themselves the *ninshiki-ha* (enlightened faction) and the opposition group *kachi-gumi* (victory group) or *fanaticos* (fanatics, in Portuguese)."⁴

By 1947, nearly the entire organization had been swept up in police raids on suspected militants led by the Brazilian secret police and public security service called the Department of Political and Social Order (DOPS). They ended up incarcerated on Anchieta Island, a penitentiary island akin to Alcatraz off the coast of São Paulo. Due to Shindō Renmei's extremist actions, the Constituent Assembly that ratified Brazil's Fifth Constitution on September 18, 1946, vigorously debated an amendment to ban all future immigration from Japan. What would have been an unprecedented prohibition in the history of the nation failed to pass by only one vote. But in the end, despite the political forces and popular sentiment arrayed against them, Shindō Renmei's leadership and death squads avoided having to pay a higher price for their crimes than ten to twenty years in prison. Morais insists that by throwing its support behind Adhemar de Barros

³Decree 383 on April 18, 1938 barred foreigners from political activities or speaking foreign languages in public. Radio broadcasts in foreign languages were prohibited, and publishing in foreign languages was technically only permissible when done in bilingual editions. Most improbable of all was that the first language taught to children had to be Portuguese, despite the fact that many recent Japanese immigrants neither spoke the language adequately nor had access to schools where their children might receive suitable instruction.

⁴Takashi Maeyama, "Ethnicity, Secret Societies, and Associations: The Japanese in Brazil," 601.

(1901–1969),⁵ who became the first democratically elected governor of São Paulo after Vargas’ dictatorship ended, Shindō Renmei exchanged campaign contributions and the promise of votes for political rehabilitation. In so doing, his argument goes, it helped to set in motion a permanent transformation in the Japanese Brazilian community from a largely insular colony with intimate ties to the Japanese empire to its new identity as an ethnic minority in postwar Brazil.

In light of the political and social forces that buffeted the Japanese Brazilians in the mid-1940s, it is necessary to point out that four-fifths of the colony were Issei who self-identified as “overseas brethren” (*kaigai dōbō*) of the Japanese empire. Among the roughly 189,000 Japanese who migrated to Brazil before the war, more than 160,000 came in the period from 1921 to 1941. The majority exchanged a hardscrabble life in Japan’s poorest provinces to work on coffee plantations and brush-cleared farmlands in the interior of São Paulo and neighboring Paraná. It was perhaps inevitable that many bitterly referred to themselves as exiles (*kimin*) synonymously with immigrants (*imin*). Nevertheless, they remained spiritually loyal to the emperor and felt entitled to return to a victorious Japan or resettle elsewhere in the empire. In their sense of mission and shared sacrifice, their lives were not substantially different from their fellow settler colonists who flocked to Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria. A common goal was to earn enough money working in Brazil to eventually repatriate and establish themselves as independent farmers or shopkeepers. They were not yet a “discontented diaspora,” as historian Jeffrey Lesser has evocatively called the postwar generation, but displaced imperial subjects.⁶

Unresolved tensions in the status of national belonging had continued to build for Japanese Brazilians in the decade leading up to the war. Historian Rogério Dezem insists that “pressured by two nationalisms, having on one side the militarist Japanese government and on the other the Vargas dictatorship, the Japanese immigrants, who had consolidated a high degree of homogenous social and economic organization on Brazilian territory since the late 1920s (immigrant colonies, cooperative

⁵His name is also sometimes spelled Ademar de Barros. He was a veteran politician so famous for extravagant promises and graft that the popular Brazilian expression *rouba mas faz*, “he steals but gets things done,” was coined to describe his governing style.

⁶Jeffrey Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora: Japanese Brazilians and the Meanings of Ethnic Militancy, 1960–1980* (2007).

associations, schools, etc.), suffered a form of ‘referential crisis.’”⁷ In the face of discriminatory policies by the Estado Novo, which further reinforced isolation and diminished their ability to earn a decent living, many immigrants had nowhere to turn to for support but their own ethnolinguistic compatriots. It should come as no surprise, moreover, that since the vast majority of the latest arrivals did not speak Portuguese and had only a tenuous foothold in mainstream Brazilian society, the path of least resistance would be to simply go home. Dezem continues, “In reflection of this, the book *Bauru kannai no Hōjin* (*The Japanese in Bauru*), written in Japanese by Shungorō Wakō, circulated in the colony in mid-1939. [...] It verified that 85% of the immigrants in the region wanted to return to Japan.”⁸ The dream of return to a lost or forgotten homeland, epitomized by the Portuguese-Brazilian concept of *saudade*, would ensnare these newcomers, too. What had previously been an economic impossibility also became a political one during the war years. When Japan was defeated, however, the once-sacrosanct right of return was foreclosed altogether. Recognizing the Japanese Brazilian community had everything to lose in the postwar era, many were willing, or at times coerced, to double down on the certitude of imperial victory proffered by secret societies such as Shindō Renmei. The alternative, in their eyes, was simply unthinkable.

* * *

Publication of this English translation of *Dirty Hearts* is timely for its coincidence with the resurgence of autocratic movements around the world. Consideration of one extraordinary historical moment from the vantage point of another demonstrates that what transpired in postwar Brazil was not due to an anomaly in the uprooted Japanese national character, but arose as a direct result of the revanchist tendencies inherent in modern political culture. Donald Trump and his tropical twin, Jair Bolsonaro, have governed from the same revenge culture playbook of twentieth-century authoritarianism, now updated to the latest social media. Their stock-in-trade techniques have been conspiracy theories, fake

⁷Rogério Dezem, “Hi-no-maru Manchado de Sangue: A Shindo Renmei e o DEOPS/SP,” *Imigrantes Japoneses no Brasil: Trajetória, Imaginário e Memória*, 244. Here and elsewhere, unless otherwise noted, the translations are my own.

⁸Ibid., 244.

news, and “alternative facts.”⁹ These techniques have been utilized to mobilize and radicalize their base, while intimidating adversaries, both real and imagined.

Today neo-fascist populism is the political movement that dare not speak its name. In an alarming echo of Getúlio Vargas, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, and countless other strongmen, Trump repeatedly attempted to execute a self-coup (*autogolpe*) in order to remain in office in the intervening weeks between the national election on November 3, 2020, and the state-by-state vote counting by the Electoral College on December 14, 2020. Anonymous threats of assassination, bodily harm, and arson by his militant supporters were similarly leveled against elected officials, poll workers, reporters, and Democratic activists to deny and nullify the election results.

Biden’s victory, which was the strongest showing against an incumbent president since Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated Herbert Hoover in 1932, may drive underground the most illiberal and radicalized factions of Trumpism, but it is unlikely to eliminate them. Certainly, it did not prevent convicted National Security Adviser and retired Lt. General Michael Flynn, whom Trump pardoned on November 25, 2020, from opining that Trump could declare martial law to invalidate the election results and try again.¹⁰ The accusations of election fraud were repeated by scores of Republican politicians in the waning months of 2020, while the remainder of the GOP party leadership stayed silent and refused to publicly acknowledge Biden’s win. This reached its crescendo in Trump’s incitement of an insurrectionist mob that invaded the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, to prevent certification of the Electoral College. In effect, an American *kachigumi* movement was born from the ashes of Trump’s defeat and abortive self-coup attempt.

In his essay on the political philosophy of rightwing conspiracy theorists, historian Richard Hofstadter defined the “Paranoid Style in American

⁹In an interview on January 22, 2017 on the US political talk show *Meet the Press*, presidential advisor Kellyanne Conway coined this phrase in reply to a demonstrable lie about the size of the inaugural crowd told by White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer. Moderator Chuck Todd swiftly responded, “Alternative facts are not facts; they’re falsehoods.” See Aaron Blake, “Kellyanne Conway Says Donald Trump’s Team Has ‘Alternative Facts.’ Which Pretty Much Says It All,” *Washington Post*, November 12, 2020.

¹⁰Flynn first made these spurious claims on Twitter on December 1, 2020 and then repeated them when the far-right media outlet Newsmax interviewed him on December 17, 2020.

Politics” (1964) as a problem that transcended the particularity of a single historical moment: “The paranoid style is not confined to our own country and time; it is an international phenomenon. [...] We are all sufferers from history, but the paranoid is a double sufferer, since he is afflicted not only by the real world, with the rest of us, but by his fantasies as well.”¹¹ This denial is based on a sense of incomprehensible loss of the traditional world by forces beyond its control. The desire to renew *völkisch* ties of blood and soil, that is, to stage a return to a mythic sense of belonging is viewed as necessary to overcome the perceived crisis. Hofstadter diagnosed the paranoid style in American politics of the 1960s thusly:

[T]he modern right wing, as Daniel Bell has put it, feels dispossessed: America has been largely taken away from them and their kind, though they are determined to try to repossess it and to prevent the final destructive act of subversion. The old American virtues have already been eaten away by cosmopolitans and intellectuals; the old competitive capitalism has been gradually undermined by socialistic and communistic schemers; the old national security and independence have been destroyed by treasonous plots, having as their most powerful agents not merely outsiders and foreigners as of old but major statesmen who are at the very centers of American power. Their predecessors had discovered conspiracies; the modern radical right finds conspiracy to be betrayal from on high.¹²

The John Birch Society (founded 1958) and subsequent far-right movements such as the Trump era’s QAnon have laid deep roots of discontent that have continued to fester in the body politic to the present day. Their will to believe unfounded hoaxes only matches their hostility to civil rights, science, government regulation, and international affairs.

In the absence of knowledge about *Shindō Renmei* in Brazil, American journalists and politicians could still reach into a cultural grab bag of things Japanese for suitable metaphors about the 2020 election. Commentating on the refusal of Republicans in Congress to congratulate President-elect Joe Biden, or even admit that he won the election, Fox News anchor Chris Wallace observed, “There are a lot who are just silent. And then there are some, I mentioned Ted Cruz, you know, who are like the Japanese soldiers who come out 30 years after the war, out of the jungle, and say, ‘Is

¹¹Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics.” *Harper’s Weekly*, November 1964.

¹²Ibid.

the fight still going on?”¹³ Wallace’s remarks resonate with the case of the Japanese Brazilians more than he was likely aware. Tens of thousands of Japanese chose to start their lives anew in Brazil when immigration resumed in 1952. Among those who decided to leave Japan behind for good was Hiroo Onoda, a second lieutenant and intelligence officer in the Imperial Army, who spent twenty-nine years hiding in the jungle on Lubang Island in the Philippines, where he engaged in guerilla warfare against American and Philippine military and police forces.

The last holdout, Lieutenant Onoda, officially declared dead in 1959, was found by Norio Suzuki, a student searching for him, in 1974. The lieutenant rejected Mr. Suzuki’s pleas to go home, insisting he was still awaiting orders. Mr. Suzuki returned with photographs, and the Japanese government sent a delegation, including the lieutenant’s brother and his former commander, to relieve him of duty formally.¹⁴

Onoda’s surrender took place in the presence of his former commanding officer, Major Yoshimi Taniguchi, on March 9, 1974. Three days later, Onoda received a full pardon from Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos—a former guerilla fighter against the Japanese—who returned his sword and praised his courage.¹⁵ Onoda returned to Japan and was greeted as a celebrity; but less than a year later, in April 1975, he chose to follow his older brother, Tadao, to Colônia Jamic in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, to raise cattle.

On December 11, 2020, meanwhile, US Congressman Clay Higgins (R-La.) took to Facebook to offer a grotesque comparison between Japanese internment and the supposed disenfranchisement of Trump voters in the national election:

The internment of 120K American citizens of Japanese ancestry during World War II happened. It was real. It was wrong. It was abhorrent. And it was challenged in court as a violation of Constitutional rights. The Supreme

¹³ Emma Colton, “Chris Wallace Compares Ted Cruz to Japanese Soldier Still Fighting WWII After He Questioned Election Results,” *Washington Examiner*, November 8, 2020.

¹⁴ Robert McFadden, “Hiroo Onoda, Soldier Who Hid in Jungle for Decades, Dies at 91,” *New York Times*, January 17, 2014. Suzuki, who is better described as an amateur explorer, famously declared he was searching for “Lieutenant Onoda, a panda, and the yeti, in that order.” He succeeded in finding a panda in the wild, but died in an avalanche in the Himalayas on his quest for the yeti in November 1986.

¹⁵ “Marcos Extols Japanese Straggler, Returns Sword,” in *New York Times*, March 12, 1974.

Court of the United States did not stop it. Lessons of history. They were 120 thousand. We are 75 million.¹⁶

This blatantly false equivalency with the burgeoning sedition movement elicited a forceful public rebuke six days later from the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), which wrote in response:

The Japanese American Citizens League condemns any attempts to equate the legitimate loss of constitutional rights of 120,000 Japanese Americans during WWII to the recent election results, in which all registered voters had the opportunity to cast their votes and be counted, resulting in the election of President-Elect Biden. [...] For Japanese Americans, there were absolutely no cases of treason or espionage that might have justified their mass incarceration. Instead, Japanese Americans demonstrated their loyalty to our country and the constitution by standing up in many ways. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 100th Infantry Battalion, and Military Intelligence Service consisted of Japanese Americans serving their country while many of their family and friends were held prisoner. They recognized the threat of totalitarianism that the Axis powers represented was a greater threat to our constitution than their own loss of rights.¹⁷

The Louisiana congressman's words are further reminder that not only Japan, but also Japanese descendants in the Americas, remain for some a palimpsest upon which their fears and desires can be projected. The injustices borne by those who were denied full citizenship and then wrongfully accused of having divided loyalties cannot help but cast a long shadow over American democracy. The same can also be said for Japanese Brazilians who, during the war, were subjected to discrimination, indemnities, and other measures meted out in retribution for Japan's aggression. Yet their fate during and after the war was to diverge significantly from their brethren to the north.

¹⁶ Jordan Williams, "GOP Lawmaker Compares Japanese Internment to Alleged Fraud That Cost Trump Election," *The Hill*, December 11, 2020. Higgins also inflated Trump's popular vote count by 777,000.

¹⁷ Japanese American Citizens League, <https://jacl.org/statements/representative-clay-higgins-fails-to-understand-the-gravity-of-claiming-a-loss-of-constitutional-rights>. Accessed Sept. 1, 2021.

TRAUMA AND TREASON IN NARRATIVE FORM

This is a book about traitors. *Dirty Hearts* derives its title from the epithet leveled by *kachigumi* extremists at compatriots in the Japanese colony who accepted Japan's defeat in World War II or those seen as collaborating with the enemy to achieve that end. The so-called defeatists and mainstream Brazilian society, in turn, saw the *kachigumi* as domestic terrorists whose illiberal views had so clouded their thinking as to enable them to commit acts of murder, arson, and extortion for a lost cause.

In the *Politics of Storytelling*, poet and anthropologist Michael D. Jackson sheds considerable light on the psychology of humiliation and defeat in ways that have direct bearing on the fratricide in the Japanese colony in Brazil. The desire for self-respect, or more accurately, respect for one's community, motivates narrativization toward mythic and realpolitik considerations. It is this imperative for those who have become pariahs in their own society or culture to articulate a worldview that bridges traumatic events and allows the silenced or marginalized to combat their sense of dispossession. In the case of Shindō Renmei, Japan's defeat was purposefully recast into a victory yarn that guaranteed, however temporarily, continuation of an imperial subjectivity upon which the vast majority of the immigrants depended. Jackson's citation of Hannah Arendt bears repeating here: "The greatest injury which society can and does inflict is to make [the pariah] doubt the reality and validity of his own existence, to reduce him in his own eyes to the status of a nonentity" (Arendt 1944:114).¹⁸

In a similar vein to the psychology of dispossession, the tidy narrative resolution of military conflict into clear-cut winners and losers can obscure the lasting consequences of war, which endure spatially and temporally far from the battlefield. Historian Aaron W. Moore has observed that individual veterans' wartime memory is oftentimes in tension with sanctioned versions of collective postwar remembrance:

The content of veterans' memory writings, as well as their respective roles in crafting postwar historical memory discourse, is not determinable by dividing them into "winner" and "loser" nations. American veterans, for example, do not necessarily accept public representations of the Second World War, despite the fact that the vast majority of such representations are triumphalist.¹⁹

¹⁸ Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling*, 50–51.

¹⁹ Aaron W. Moore, *Writing War: Soldiers Record the Japanese Empire*, 272.

I would have us re-read this statement against the certitudes of Shindō Renmei, who claimed a crowning victory in the face of crushing loss. The *kachimake* (victors/defeatists) split in the Japanese Brazilian community is a case study of how a nation's defeat could inspire a decade-long struggle for power and meaning a world away from its homeland, theaters of war, or occupied territories. Yet such is the recursive nature of history that the catastrophic toll of World War II did not spare any of Japan's subjects or their descendants around the world. Nor were they inoculated against a beleaguered afterlife of Nikkei identity that saw many Japanese Brazilians achieve great success as a model minority in their adoptive land, while others would undertake the reverse migration as *dekasegi* laborers and find themselves trapped in a cycle of "3D" (dangerous, dirty, and difficult) marginal employment.²⁰

Dirty Hearts, which begins with the "hoarse and halting voice" of Hirohito translated and transmitted to the furthest corners of rural São Paulo State, reprises public pronouncements such as the Jewel Voice Broadcast and Humanity Declaration meant to announce Japan's unconditional surrender and the emperor's acknowledgment of his loss of divine status.²¹ As Morais elucidates, rather than silence the revanchist holdouts, the contested scripting of Hirohito's words and image between General MacArthur and the Imperial Household Institution only escalated the thought war in Brazil. Shindō Renmei cynically disregarded the objective truth of these broadcasts, the photographs of Japan's rendition aboard the USS Missouri, and other forms of empirical evidence. Instead, they understood it purely as propaganda fit for further manipulation.

In *Embracing Defeat*, John Dower provides a sobering tally of the war dead and displaced in Japan proper. "All told, probably at least 2.7 million servicemen and civilians died as a result of the war, roughly 3 to 4 percent of the country's 1941 population of 74 million. Millions more were

²⁰ *Dekasegi*, which literally means "working away from home," has become an internationally recognized term for the hundreds of thousands of Nikkei Latin Americans, primarily from Brazil, who find work in Japan. I adopt the term "3D" from the corresponding "3K" (*kitsui, kitanai, kiken*) in Japanese.

²¹ The English translation of the Jewel Throne Broadcast that appears in *Dirty Hearts* is taken from the text recorded by the Federal Communications Commission and published in the August 15, 1945 issue of the *New York Times*. The translation of the Humanity Declaration likewise comes from the January 1, 1946 issue of the *New York Times*, which cites the translation provided by Allied headquarters.