ISHIKAWA TATSUZŌ AND SHIMAZAKI TŌSON: TWO WRITERS/TRAVELERS TO SOUTH AMERICA IN THE EYE OF IMPERIAL DISCOURSE[1]

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Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyze and compare the works of Ishikawa Tatsuzō and Shimazaki Tōson about South America. Both Japanese writers visited the region during the Empire of Japan's expansion throughout Asia and Central and South America via migration and settlers' projects. Ishikawa Tatsuzō (1905–1985) traveled to Brazil as a correspondent in 1930, a journey that would result in his celebrated novel *Sōbō* (1935). The book criticized the ill-treatment that Japanese migrant delegations to Brazil suffered during the previous decades. As for Shimazaki Tōson, he traveled to Argentina with the Japanese government's sponsorship in 1936 to participate in the International PEN Club Congress, an official voyage that sought to develop deeper ties with South American countries and mitigate the militarist image that Japan had developed in the previous years. The product of the trip was Shimazaki's travel account, *Junrei* (*Pilgrimage*, 1936). In essence, the works of these two writers are inseparable in terms of colonial discourse as they both envisaged in South America a standpoint from where to write about colonialism and modernization.

Migration to Latin America in Japanese Literature

Migration became a topic of late-Meiji and Taishō literature at the hand of government-aligned expansionist journals that integrated travel and utopian literary works from abroad and blended them with domestic genres. The latter included travel accounts, *jitsuwa* (true-life stories), *kaigai/imin shōsetsu* (overseas/immigrant novels), *shokumin shōsetsu* (colonizer's novels), and *risshi shōsetsu* (novels of success). Periodicals such as *Seikō* (*Success*, 1902–1915), *Tanken sekai* (*Exploration World*, 1906), and

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Shokumin sekai (*Colonizer's World*, 1908–1933) started depicting not only the migrants' journey overseas but also the economic prosperity that those ventures could bring for them. It should be noted that the first Japanese literary publications concerning migration shared their printing space with publicity coming from private migration companies and propaganda from government enterprises; this promoted an official ideology not only through content but also (and sometimes even more explicitly) through their paratexts and non-textual spaces.

Regarding Latin America specifically, the Japanese reading public first learned of the region through travel books published by businessmen and researchers with funding from government-sponsored migration companies. Among such books, two of the most renowned were Shiraishi Motojirō's *Nanbei jijō* (*Affairs of South America*, 1905) and Matsuo Saburō's *Nabei kōkai nikki* (*Diary to an Overseas Trip to South America*, 1906). Nevertheless, it was Horiuchi Shinsen's (1873–n.d.) short story "Nanbei yuki" ("Bound to South America," May 1908) that first fictionalized a voyage to the region and presented it as a setting in popular literature. The narration tells the life of Nisaburō, a poor Japanese farmer rejected for military service and bullied for his enfeebled physique, who ends up traveling to South America to work the land and eventually becomes a rich entrepreneur capable of sending money back to his family. According to Seth Jacobowitz's reading of this story, the figure of the young Japanese individual looking to somehow fulfill a patriotic duty coincides with the typical reader that Shinsen's fiction had described in *Seikō* and other journals, with a growing audience between the 1920s and 1940s.[2] This fact shows that literature worked parallel to official expansionist discourse since the early days of the Empire. For Latin America, it demonstrates how the earliest depictions of the region in Japanese literature were determined by imperial discourse, but more so by an imaginary economic realization that could not be obtained locally.

The image of Latin America as a region that could secure access to land and economic prosperity for young sojourners implied, however, a counter-image as a place where a settler could harvest their most ambitious utopias. Unlike the picture that the Japanese had of Canada and the US, countries associated with cosmopolitanism to where most migrants traveled

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[2] Seth Jacobowitz, "'Struggling Upward: Worldly Success and the Japanese Novel' by Timothy Van Compernolle," a review in *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 46/2 (2020), 522.

until the end of the nineteenth century, Latin America began to be seen as a bountiful natural region that needed to be capitalized and exploited. This image was distant from an Arcadia or Eden and closer to that of a primitive and backward wilderness lacking what the Empire of Japan could bestow: culture. Even the paratexts of "Nanbei yuki" evidence such a depiction of South America as a primitive territory, showing an aboriginal figure and wild animals (Figure 1). This primeval conception of South America would endure throughout the next decades until at least the postwar years, when travelers with purposes other than migration and settlement would start seeing the region within the paradigm of internationalization that the Allied Forces introduced in Japan during their occupation from 1945 to 1952.

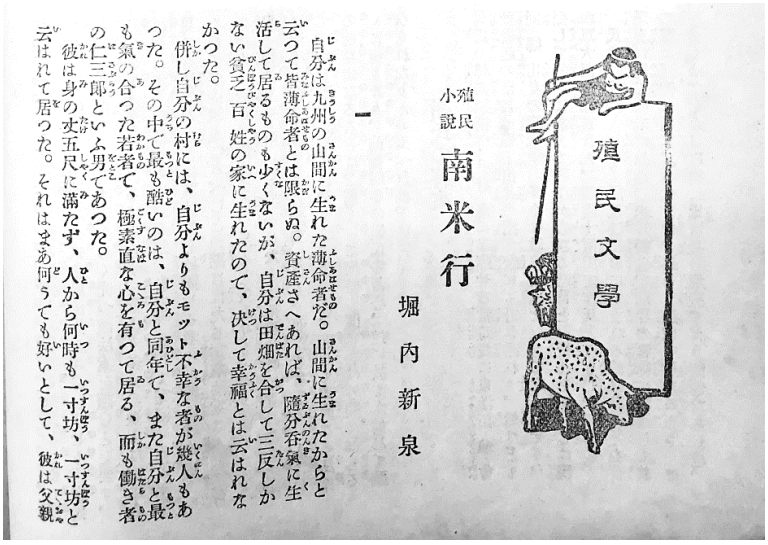

Figure 1. Initial fragment of "Nanbei yuki" in *Shokumin sekai* (May 1908)[3]

From this early twentieth-century literary context, two Japanese writers emerged to serve as contrasting examples of the pervasiveness of imperial discourse in Japanese literature and the resulting perception of Latin

[3] This image was taken by the author from Waseda University's Library collection and with permission from the institution.

America among Japan's reading public. The first of these is Ishikawa Tatsuzō (1905–1985), who traveled to Brazil in 1930 and became a fierce critic of the Empire's migration policies. The second one is Shimazaki Tōson (1872–1943), who visited Argentina in 1936 with the double mission of promoting Japanese culture and being an imperial emissary able to transform the international image of the Empire. These two writers took advantage of the primitive image of Latin America for their own needs: the former to condemn the Empire and question the idealized discourse that invited the Japanese to migrate to the region, and the latter to legitimize the Empire's need to civilize Latin Americans and the Japanese already settled there.

This study begins by analyzing how these two divergent positions on Latin America serve as instruments capable of both criticizing and justifying imperial discourses. Although these two writers wrote extensively about their travels to South America, the current study will focus on Ishikawa's novel *Sōbō* (*The People*, 1935) and Shimazaki's travel account *Junrei* (*Pilgrimage*, 1936), as they condense most of the ideas these authors developed about Japanese imperial policy and overseas migrant settlement.

Ishikawa Tatsuzō in Primitive Brazil

The novel *Sōbō* (1935) turned journalist and author Ishikawa Tatsuzō (1905–1985) into a national celebrity. The realist saga was the first to win the Akutawaga Prize, after which it sparked a storm of controversy concerning official expansionist policies. The Empire of Japan had recently invaded Manchuria in 1931 and broken off relations with the League of Nations in 1933 amid growing nationalist and militarist sentiments in all spheres of society. Ishikawa, who had traveled to Brazil in 1930 while being editor of *Shokumin* (*Colonies*), an expansionist journal of the government-controlled company *Kaigai kōgyō*, had harshly criticized the Empire in the travel book *Saikin nanbei ōraiki* (1931), which he published upon returning from his trip. It was his cruder depiction of the Japanese migrants in *Sōbō*, however, that has placed his work in the context of imperial discourse.

The novel starts at a Migration Center in the port of Kobe, where groups of migrants take physical examinations and language classes to depart for Brazil in a few days. Among them are the protagonists, Magoichi and Onatsu, two poor and orphan siblings from Akita Prefecture. They are accompanied by Katsuji (with whom Onatsu agreed to contract a marriage of convenience to become eligible for the state's family subsidy to travel to Brazil) and his younger brother and mother. Readers rapidly learn about their pasts. On the one hand, Magoichi was the one who planned his sister's

marriage and the trip to Brazil to avoid going through military conscription. On the other hand, Onatsu wanted to run away from their hometown after a sexual assault by her factory manager (unluckily, she ends up being molested by the supervisor of the Migration Center). Magoichi and Onatsu are victims of the gender and social expectations of Taishō Japan: becoming a soldier and breadwinner in the former's case and maintaining an obedient and submissive role as a woman in the latter's case. Therefore, within such a narrative structure, migration does not fulfill the characters' social duties but is instead their only possible escape; not a utopia full of possibilities, but their only way out of the motherland's dystopian conditions. As such, the novel does not portray a story of success, but rather one of misfortune, particularly that of the many "people" (in Japanese, *sōbo*) who had to comply with the social dictates of Japanese overseas expansionism.

Ishikawa's preferred narrative strategy to introduce readers to commentaries on migration is the recurrent debate he puts his characters through. While most migrants-to-be are enthusiastic and hopeful about the trip, some are doubtful and pessimistic. One of the latter says the following:

> There is not a single immigrant who knows what the real Brazil is like. It's a fantasy. A fantasy in which the good things someone heard about Brazil are put together with the good things of Japan. But the *real* Brazil is a harsh place. Its remote villages are like other worlds detached from this. The next village is ten miles away if close, thirty if far. Regardless, the radio and the newspapers there are all bad. There is not even a postal service. The farmers live by making their own bed on the dirty floor. It is a place where there is nothing but working and eating and sleeping.[4]

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[4] 移民達は誰一人本当のブラジルを知っ てはいない. 空想だ. 話に聞いたブラジルの良い所に日本の良い所だけを付け加えての空想だ. 事実のブラジルは大変なところだ. 僻遠の農村はこの世から隔離された別世界だ. 隣りの部落迄は近くて三里遠ければ十里, そこにはラジオは愚か新聞雑誌は愚か, 郵便の配達さえもない. 百姓達は土間に自分で寝台を作って住む. 働くと食うと寝るより他にする事もない所だ. Ishikawa Tatsuzō, *Sōbo (sanbusaku)* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1939), 27–28. See Matías Chiappe Ippolito, "Primitive, Primeval, and Peripheral. Images of Latin America in Japanese Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Waseda University, 2021).

This fragment is hardly an isolated example in *Sōbo*. While in the Migration Center, the characters discuss and complain about Brazil's salaries, education system, health conditions, and the lack of infrastructure, among other things.[5] Ishikawa introduces those kinds of statements through the voice of his characters to criticize official discourse on migration and show that the place where the government was sending migrants was worse than their living conditions in Japan. Hence, his novel served as a counter-discourse to the Empire of Japan's expansionist propaganda by portraying "the people" as victims represented in the austere circumstances of his characters and described South America to Japanese readers as a backward and primitive space. Indeed, literary critic Moriya Takahashi has claimed that the author's depiction of Brazil and Japan's countryside (*inaka*) as non-civilized spaces also sought to criticize city and cosmopolitan life as representative of the Empire of Japan's application of the modernization and Westernization processes incorporated after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, which led to the twentieth-century's escalating militarism.[6]

Alternatively, statements like the one quoted earlier must be highlighted as one of the many opinions and debates that *Sōbō*'s migrant characters share while waiting for their departure. Regardless, those experiences and sentiments cannot be taken as the general message of the novel. Literary critics Wu Fei Shan and Tachibana Reiko have pointed out that Ishikawa's anti-official discourse is only superficial, limiting himself to contrasting the opinions and voices of different migrant groups rather than making a strong argument.[7] Be it a critique of imperial discourse or a display of plurality, however, the point of view toward Brazil remains unchanged. In consonance with naturalist and proletarian writers of his time, Ishikawa fell prey to the victimization of his characters as a method of exalting and reaffirming his figure as a socially engaged intellectual. In this process, the primitive image of Latin America, created by the presence of imperial

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[5] Ishikawa, *Sōbo*, 9, 28.

[6] Moriya Takashi, "Burajiru nikkeiimin shōsetsuron," *Ibunka* 12 (2011): 133–156.

[7] Fei Shan Wu, *Ishikawa Tatsuzō no bungaku. Senzen kara sengo he, 'shakai-ha sakka' no kiseki* (Tokyo: Arts & Craft, 2019); Tachibana Reiko, "Loss and Renewal in Three Narratives of the Nikkei Brazilian Diaspora. Ishikawa Tatsuzō's Sōbō and its Sequels," *Japan Review* 29 (2016), 145–169.

discourse in popular literature in the previous decades, was not only maintained in *Sōbo* but also spread out within *junbungaku* or high literature.

The success of *Sōbo* led Ishikawa to write two sequels: "Nankai kōro" (Sea Route through the Southern Seas) and "Koenaki tami" (Citizens Without a Voice), both published in *Chūō kōron* in 1939. The first sequel describes the sea voyage of the migrants from the original novel, while the second one depicts their living conditions in the Brazilian coffee plantation once they arrive. In both, Ishikawa toned down Brazil's backward and primitive image to convey a more nationalistic and patriotic sentiment. Similarly, the characters start feeling less fearful about the living conditions in South America and becoming more interested in them. Fei Shan, Tachibana, and even Moriya[8] agree that Ishikawa's attitude change toward official migration policy was a product of his gradual conversion to imperial ideology, but these critics also highlight the pressures of censorship and self-censorship during the Pacific War that he endured for this change to take place. In fact, Ishikawa was imprisoned for three months in 1938, one year before the publication of *Sōbo*'s sequels, for criticizing the actions of the Japanese army in China in his novel *Ikitenuru heitai* (Living Soldiers).

One example of Ishikawa's about-face in "Nankai kōro," the first of *Sōbo*'s sequels, comes up at the end of the novel. The migrants finally arrive at the port of Rio de Janeiro after the narration built up to that moment for dozens of pages. The occasion is described as follows:

> April 29. The loyal Japanese subjects would not forget that day at the port of Rio [...]. The migrants, lined up along the ship, shouted three hurrahs together with the captain's voice and accompanied by other high-rank officials. Then, looking back on the long, very long sea voyage they had endured until today, they gave a salute and a bow towards the north-east sky and sang the national anthem twice. "We have finally reached the end of the world," they thought keenly while doing this. Pulsing with singing voices full of tears, the Kimigayo anthem turned into a chorus of mixed voices of all ages and started shedding a beautiful rhythm all over the waves and shores of Brazil. As the Rising Sun flag in the main mast made them wonder if the grace of the

[8] Moriya, "Burajiru nikkeiimin shōsetsuron," 133–156.

> Emperor would reach these remote lands and protect their future, tears poured down from their eyes.[9]

Sōbo's first sequel, "Nankai kōro," leaves its readers with some final thoughts: a nationalistic invocation, something nowhere present in the trilogy's original installment. Throughout the entire narration, the land retains the primitiveness that had characterized Latin America in Meiji and Taishō books. What changes is not the land itself, but rather the migrant views about it. When accompanied by the Empire of Japan's most cherished symbols (the anthem, the flag, the Emperor), they feel safe in Brazil as if they were in their homeland. In the passage, these symbols of Japan literally shroud the landscape just as the Empire's military had been using in its political affairs in the 1930s. Culture, then, is presented as an instrument to expand the nation's limits and protect overseas settlers.

Something similar occurs in "Koenaki tami," *Sōbo*'s second sequel, in which the migrants have already settled in a Brazilian coffee plantation. In this case, the land is described as a utopian place, a *locus amoenus* close to the Arcadia or Eden that the original installment so eagerly tried to tear apart. In it, there are green pastures, birds singing, and the constant flow of a crystalline river, all covered by "a huge setting sun burning in the Western hills."[10] Ironically, the phrase used to describe such a bucolic landscape resembles the one used to criticize it in the first installment: "[Magoichi] had blurted out things about Brazil even while sleepwalking, but now that he had arrived, he felt puzzled that the things he had heard in Japan about the country were totally different from reality."[11] The Brazil that Ishikawa portrayed in 1939, a year when the Empire of Japan was going full-speed with expansionism, was quite different from what the author had described in 1935

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[9] 四月二十九日・忠良なる日本の巨民はリオの港にあってもこの日を忘れはしなかった. 【略】移民たちはデッキにならんで, 高級船員と共に, 船長の發聲で萬歳を三唱した. それから長い長い今日までの航路を逆に辿って, 東北の空に向かって最敬禮をし, 國歌を二回合唱した. すると, たうとう世界の果てまで来てしまった自分たちがしみじみと考へられた. 涙ぐんだ歌聲にうちしめった君ケ代は, 老若男女, さまざまの聲のまじったコーラスとなって, ブラジルの岸邊, 打ち寄せる磯波のうへに美しい韻律を流した. 仰ぎ見るメン・マストの日章旗は, はるかなるこの土地にまでも皇國の餘榮が及び, 彼等の將来を見守ってぬてくれるかと思はれて, 涙が流れた. Ishikawa, *Sōbo*, 256.

[10] 西の丘に大きな入陽が燃えながら降って行った. Ibid., 289.

[11] Ibid.

– a time of political dissidence and controversy. The difference between these two visions of Brazil shows, then, not only the omnipresence of imperial discourse in representations of Latin America using a primitive image but also the capacity of such discourse to transform according to the political needs of each context.

Shimazaki Tōson in Primitive Argentina

A year after Ishikawa's novel *Sōbō* won the Akutagawa Prize, national literary celebrity Shimazaki Tōson (1872–1943) was dispatched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the 14th International PEN Club Congress, held in Buenos Aires between the 5th and 15th of September 1936. The trip was settled after the institution opened its branch in Japan, with the famous *homme de lettres* as its first president. According to official arrangements, Shimazaki was to promote Japanese literature and bring news of Japanese migrant communities living abroad, not only in South America but also in the many stops that he would make (Singapore, Colombo, Cape Town, Brazil, the United States, and Europe). There was also a third and hidden governmental objective: to publicize a positive picture of the Empire of Japan in the international arena, which could mitigate the damage caused by recent actions such as the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and dropping out of the League of Nations in 1933.

There were personal incentives as well. First, Shimazaki was involved in a scandal in the 1920s, after the publication of his autobiographical novel *Shinsei* (*New Life*, 1918–1919). In this novel, he describes an affair he had with his niece with her father's consent. Most importantly, as a representative of national literature, this trip signified an opportunity for him to cleanse his public image. A second incentive was the profits that the trip would bring him. In contrast to Ishikawa, who traveled to Brazil in 1930 with the help of a 200-yen subsidy that he acquired from his journalistic connections, Shimazaki did so with the benefit of a 50-thousand-yen compensation for bringing news about Japanese migrant communities, aside from incalculable gains in the form of publicity and media exposure. Third and finally, the genuine excitement about being considered one of the first Japanese writers to travel to Argentina surely motivated him too, both for personal enjoyment and as a milestone in the history of Japanese literature.

Junrei (*Pilgrimage*, 1936), the travel account that Shimazaki published upon returning to Japan, juxtaposes the official mandate and objectives on the one hand and, on the other, the apparent personal experiences and incentives. The book is not only a collection of vignettes

about the writer's exploits but also a sketch of South America and the migrants living in the region for the Japanese public. In its introduction, Shimazaki says of his motives for traveling abroad:

> I wanted to make a getaway to the sea, as a cloud invited by a faraway wind, and to be bathed by the sunlight there and to be blown by the lake breeze there. Yes, I had received requests from many sectors for this trip to South America, so I also had to fulfill my mission and bring about a report upon returning safely to Japan. But I did not hold any particular responsibility. From the very beginning, I only felt satisfaction for the things that would be touching my eyes. I left my country with many expectations floating lightly before me, just like many other travelers had done before.[12]

By presenting himself as part of the landscape and describing his movement as that of a cloud following only the "satisfaction for the things that would be touching his eyes," Shimazaki is detaching himself from any political mandate and asserts his voyage stems merely from a desire to acquire new experiences. In the same breath, by using a phrase expunged of contextual specificities such as "requests from many sectors," he is watering down the Empire's role in his dispatchment and turning the opportunity into an excuse for an adventure he links to previous Japanese travelers. Such aestheticization of the real motives of the trip is constant throughout *Junrei* and allows Shimazaki to maintain an undefined perspective toward governmental patronage.

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[12] 風に誘はるゝ雲のように廣々とした海の方へ出て行って、そこにある日光を浴び、そこにある湖風に吹かれたいと願った。もとよりこの南米旅にはいろいろな方面からの依頼を受け、その使命をも果たさねばならず、無事歸國の上はそれらの報告をも齎さねばならなかったが、それとてわたしは强ひてするやうな意識を待たずに、おのづから眼に觸るゝものがあるだけに滿足して、多くの旅人と同じように、成るべく淺く浮びあがることを楽しみに國を離れたものである. Shimazaki Tōsōn, *Junrei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1936), 3–4. For further analysis, see Chiappe Ippolito, "Primitive, Primeval, and Peripheral" (Ph.D. diss., Waseda University, 2021).

Still, it would not be entirely accurate to interpret Shimazaki's travel account as a masquerade for an imperial enterprise. Literary critics like Inaga Shigemi, Oka Erina, and Sakai Kazuomi have pointed out that the writer and traveler deliberately assumed an ambivalent stance in order to relate his role as a public servant to his personal enjoyment.[13] Moreover, there are historical particularities that explain Shimazaki's ambiguity. The first of these is the tightening censorship of the Empire of Japan, which made it difficult for writers to show explicit dissent with the government. The second one is the rise of colonial tourism, which emerged in Japan in the 1920s and boomed in the 1930s. As Shimazu Naoko explained regarding travelers that occupied Taiwan, this practice was an instance of ambiguity and indecision toward the dichotomy of Self-and-Other and the experience of alternative forms of modernity.[14]

In contrast, taking an ambivalent stance allowed Shimazaki to introduce different perspectives toward South America without opposing imperial discourse. After arriving in Buenos Aires, he presents the region as a place where he feels welcomed and at home and where even the flowers remind him of those in Japan:

> The South is cold, and the North is warm. In the exact opposite spot to where our home country is in the Northern hemisphere and the sun glows, there is a typical South American old-style, yet solid mansion built initially to be the residence of some German. The stone sculptures placed

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[13] Inaga Shigemi, "Sesshū em Buenos Aires, Bashō en São Paulo. A participação de Shimazaki Tōson no PEN Clube Internationale e a conferência sobre o mais típico do Japão," *Estudos Japoneses* 28 (2008), 149–168; Oka Erina, "The Politics of Junrei no Tabi: Shimazaki Toson and the Formation of a Zone of Political Contact in South America" [in Japanese], *Border Crossings, The Journal of Japanese-Language Literature Studies* 3 (2016), 35–50; Sakai Kazuomi, "Shimazaki Tōson no nanbei yuki. 'Kokumin gaikō' no shiten kara." *Kyoto Tachibana University Research Bulletin* 45 (2018), 17–29.

[14] Shimazu Naoko, "Colonial Encounters: Japanese Travel Writing on Colonial Taiwan," in Yuko Kikuchi, ed., *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 21–38.

> in the front garden are a lively group of pupils not up with the times, but the blooming flowers, much like Japanese plums, indicate the coming of the hasty spring to Buenos Aires, something unbelievable in early September. After a long 50-day trip of thinking of the moment in which I would be finally arriving at my wife's company, so tired of the trip herself, what was also waiting for me here was this unexpected place and this unexpected, yet pleasant season.[15]

South America is no longer a harsh place but a welcoming one. Still characterized predominantly by its natural features, the image of the region that Shimazaki conveys is quite different from the "primitive" one given by previous publications, including those of the anti-imperialist and paladin of the voiceless, Ishikawa. Here the continent is a place that invites the writer into a familiar environment and that nostalgically takes him back in time. In this sense, the writer of *Junrei* compares his walks through the region, particularly those along the Río de la Plata, with Matsuo Bashō's pilgrimage in premodern Japan.[16] This does not mean that Shimazaki does not depict certain areas of Argentina and South America as savage and backward (for instance, when describing the Amazon rainforest). However, those attributes are a reminiscence, looking back in time and assimilating the region into an already-lost Japan.

Concurrently, Shimazaki presents the city of Buenos Aires and, specifically, everything concerning the migrant community there as a space of civilization and progress. In fact, he seems to draw two Argentinas: the first is the South American one, unsophisticated yet evocative of a premodern Japan; the second version of Argentina is the Japanese settlers' one, developed, trendy, and prosperous. Notably, he is very eulogistic of the

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[15] 南は寒く、北は暖かい。この南米らしい、北半球にある自分達の國のとは正反對な日あたりのところに、元は獨逸人の住宅として建てられたといふ古風でがっしりした屋敷がある。庭前に置く石の彫刻物も時代離れのした瞳子の群像ではあるが、それだけまた落ちつきもあって、前栽のところに咲く梅に似た花のほころびは九月初めの陽気とも思はれないほど、ブエノス・アイレスへ来る春の早さを語ってぬる。五十日の長い航海の後、旅に疲れた家内を相手に漸く辿り着いた思ひのするその自分を待ってぬて呉れたのも、こんな思ひがけない場所と、思ひがけない好い季節の頃とであった. Shimazaki, *Junrei*, 99.

[16] Ibid., 119.

community's economy and work capacity, which he attributes to the local richness and Japanese customs combined. In this way, Shimazaki transforms the "primitive image" of South America yet again by presenting the region as a diamond-in-the-rough with economic potential that can be utilized in the Empire's favor. Furthermore, such a description allows him to detach the migrants from the notion of *kimin* (abandoned people),[17] a common 1930s critique of the Empire from opposition writers such as Ishikawa, and to turn the community into a carrier of Japanese modernization, mirroring the imperial discourse used in expansionist campaigns throughout the Pacific during those years.

Finally, it must be noted that Shimazaki describes the migrant community in Buenos Aires as a patriotic group devoted to the Emperor. The most explicit instance of this is when Shimazaki visits the Japanese migrant high school for the first time (not named in the travelogue, though it was known to be Buenos Aires' Nichia Gakuin). Surprised by the level of Japanese and manners of the teachers and students, the writer is moved to tears by a migrant girl who, upon meeting the envoys coming from Japan, recites the Japanese national anthem.[18] When seeing this and other actions of the Japanese settlers, Shimazaki confirms that they are loyal nationals, just as any Japanese living in the archipelago, who can worship the Emperor from afar (*yōhai*)[19] and work in favor of the Empire.

In analyzing the interactions between the Empire of Japan and the Japanese community in Argentina, Facundo Garasino concentrated on the case of Shinya Toshio (1884–1954), a pioneer migrant to the South American country later turned leader of the community and imperialistic proponent during the 1930s and 1940s. According to Garasino, the case of Shinya

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[17] For an analysis on the notion of *kimin*, see Endō Toake, *Nanbei kimin seisaku no jitsuzō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shōten), 2016.

[18] In the end, one girl was chosen. She stood up from among the crowd and started singing the national anthem of Japan especially for us. This was a second-generation girl singing with words of a nation she had never seen with her own eyes. Never throughout the journey had I been so much in tears as at that time. やがて一人の選ばれた少女が聴衆の中から立って，特にわたしたちのために日本の唱歌を歌った．見知らぬ故國の言葉もめづらしげに歌ひ出づるその少女こそ，第二世そのものであった．旅に来て，わたしもその時ほど涙の追ったこともない．Shimazaki, *Junrei*, 104.

[19] Ibid., 109.

proves that the Japanese government was using and counting on the local elite to promote its expansionist propaganda and transmit a positive image of the Empire through its settler communities abroad.[20] Shimazaki's description of the migrants in Argentina in *Junrei* opened the door for them to work for the Empire in a similar fashion. As representatives of Buenos Aires' modernization imbued with patriotic sentiment despite the distance, Shimazaki portrayed them as potential helping hands of the Empire and called for the latter to support them.

Primitive South America as an Instrument in a Political Struggle

The image of South America that these two writers constructed in the first half of the twentieth century resulted from the omnipotence and omnipresence of the Empire. It must be reiterated that Ishikawa and Shimazaki were both writing at a time when imperial discourse was inescapable, especially for the latter since he was financed by the government. In that regard, South America was depicted in their oeuvres with the background of previous propagandistic periodicals and literary genres such as *kaigai shōsetsu* or *imin shōsetsu* that conveyed a backward, underdeveloped, and primitive image of the region meant to promote the government's expansionism. The continent was an Other to the Empire.

The "primitive image" also presented the connection between Japan and South America as a result of Meiji migration policies. Unlike some works of this period (but more so those of the postwar era), it did not portray a history of travels initiated since the so-called Christian century of Japan, when Mexico (or New Spain) played the role of a stopping point for the ships traveling from the Pacific to Europe. The reason for portraying the links between South America and Japan only through the Meiji lens was to build upon a power structure that could legitimize the imperial advance: on one side was the supposedly underdeveloped South America, and on the other, the supposedly already-modernized Japan. Such a depiction posited the Empire as an emissary of culture with policies that permeated local communities.

Despite having opposite ideological positions on official policy, Ishikawa's and Shimazaki's analyses referenced depictions of South America

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[20] Facundo Garasino, "Ratenamerika kara teikoku wo senden suru: hitori no aruzenchin nihon imin ga kataru seiyō – oriento – shinsekai," *Nihon gakuhō* 35 (2016), 129–152.

that ultimately merged on similar patterns. The "primitive image" of the region that they used served these two writers to either (1) highlight the harsh living conditions of migrants and thereby criticize the government (in the case of Ishikawa) or (2) praise the modernization that the migrants had carried overseas to legitimize the Empire's advance (in the case of Shimazaki). For both writers, the Japanese settlers in South America fulfilled an instrumental role: they were victims that could display the Empire's failures or flag-bearers and vessels of the official policy employed to justify imperial expansion. In either case, South America and its Japanese communities were conceived as tools in a political struggle.

As a final note, the current study has provided evidence that Ishikawa and Shimazaki incorporated alterations to the original "primitive image" of South America that emerged in Japan during the early twentieth century. Whether in confronting the hegemonic discourse on migration or relaying a new perspective on it, both authors complexified the issue of Otherness and its representation. By depicting South America in a crude and provocative way, Ishikawa expunged all idealization from the "primitive image" of the region, at least for the first installment of the *Sōbō* trilogy. Meanwhile, Shimazaki transformed this same "primitive image" by presenting South America as a place where Japanese migrants had been welcomed and able to develop fully in social and economic terms. In this way, he imbued the settlers with a deeper understanding than that of being considered either *kimin* (abandoned people) or successful travelers. These aesthetic changes opened the door for new representations of South America and envisaged in the region a standpoint from where to write on colonialism and modernization.