# Introduction

Recent scholarship has highlighted the exchanges and relations among states, societies, and peoples that transcend national boundaries. This transnationalism arose partly as a result of globalization, and as a critique of the nation-state as a unit of analysis. But scholarship has equally shown that far from withering away in a global age, the nation-state and nationalism have endured. For better or worse, it remains a primary reference point of political and social agency, informing policies and shaping the attitudes in the 21st century.

It can thus be said that societies are caught up between nationalism and globalization, the local and the global, among other polarities. This in-betweenness characterizes much social phemonenon today, especially in migration and mobility studies, which exemplify, to adopt the language of postcolonial theory, "hybridity." But hybridity is not only about amalgamation; it also has a temporal and spatial dimension, since it hints at transitions: from one point to the another, from nationalism to globalization, from one country to another, from the past to the present. Not all of these movements are forward-looking, however. Some gaze backwards; others move to and fro, or are caught in a time warp, trapped in a present pulls them in conflicting directions.

The studies in this issue of *Asian Studies* capture three instances of these tensions and transition points. In his article, David Rear shows how Japanese society has been breaking away from the dominant ideology of nihonjinron, which characterizes Japan as a "homogeneous nation built on a unique set of collectivist and harmonious social values" (2). Using Discourse Analysis, he shows how new meanings of *kosei* (individuality) and *kokusaika* (internationalization)—depart from their traditional significations, which are often inflected with the nationalist, conservative ideology of nihonjinron. In this respect, Rear portrays a Japan caught between nihonjinron and its alternatives.

The challenge to nihonjinron finds an unusual parallel in Filipino residents in Nagoya, who are caught between the Philippines and Japan. They are part of both countries in some ways, but not in others. Through

quantitative analysis, Sioson illustrates how transnational practices—sending remittances to and having savings in the Philippines—reduce the likelihood that Filipino residents will stay in Japan: they will return home or migrate to another country. Either way, their transnational practices do reveal the continuing pull of the nation-state (albeit through affective and financial ties to their families), even if they no longer physically live there. At the same time, Filipino residents may be working in the Land of the Rising Sun, but arguably do not see themselves as part of it.

Transition points are not unique to the present. It could be said that societies are always in tension, always in transition. Even in 1860s and 1870s France, we see this point exemplified in the writings on Java of Marquis Ludovic de Beauvoir. In Wening Udasmoro's analysis of his travel account of nineteenth-century Javanese society, we see, among other things, the entanglements of Indonesian history with that of France. She situates de Beavoir's writing within a long tradition of European, Orientalist writing. At the same time, she also shows that de Beauvoir penned his account at a time when views on the Orient (in France at least) were shifting and becoming more critical, changing from the purely denigrative of early European writers to the more objective stance of modern anthropology. In effect, de Beauvoir was arguably caught between Orientalism and Objectivity, as it were.

We now know how French and Dutch colonialism fared in Asia, but we do not have the benefit of historical hindsight when it comes to Japanese and Philippine societies. In what direction(s) will the alternatives to nihonjinron and the migration question take Japanese society? How will migration continue to change Philippine society? And how do questions of the Other and Empire still resonate in this era and ethos of racism and anti-immigration? Like de Beauvoir, we are trapped in at least two contrasting attitudes to migrants; one is welcoming, while the other is not.

Answers to these questions are far from forthcoming, but we hope that the articles in this issue can help us chart these confusing times.

Janus Isaac Nolasco
Managing Editor