



Title of the presentation: Juliet Kono and Her Local Hawaii:
Glocalism in Tsunami Years

Name: Rie Makino

Affiliation: College of Commerce, Nihon University

Short biography

Rie Makino is professor of English at Nihon University, College of Commerce. Her research interests include Asian American literature and transnational studies. She is the recipient of a Grant-in-aid for Scientific Research from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (2017–20). Her major publication is “Japanese Santa Claus: Levi-Strauss’ Perspective of Non-Assimilation and the Spirit of Charity in Karen Tei Yamashita’s *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*” in *The American Review: The Japanese Association for American Studies* (2012).

Her essay on teaching Yamashita’s works, “*Brazil-Mar*u and Racial Identities in Japanese Classrooms” will be published from MLA Books in 2020.

Abstract

The term “transbordering,” within the current context of Asian–American studies, illustrates a variety of meanings with regard to writers and their works: the physical mobility of a writer between his/her nation and host country; the writer’s psychological alienation, being unable to assimilate into his/her circumstance; and the writer’s privilege of intentionally rejecting a sense of belonging to one location. To understand “Asian American” realities, focus must shift from domestic issues within the United States. Japanese American writer and poet Juliet Kono’s works clearly depict some of the aspects of transbordering.

Last year, I received permission from Kono to translate her work *Tsunami Years* (1995) into Japanese. This paper is based on my experience of introducing her works to Japanese audiences by focusing on the abovementioned global and local issues. Kono, an editor of *Bamboo Ridge*, is generally known as a local writer in Hawaii, while at the same time, her being “local” implies an oxymoronic refrain of “globalism.”

Tsunami Years begins with Kono’s quotation of American poet Elizabeth Bishop’s poem “At the Fishhouses” from the collection titled *A Cold Spring*. “The Elizabeth Poems” is dedicated to her mother-in-law, Elizabeth Lee, who died after suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. In this poem, themes related to Kono’s white mother-in-law overlap with those related to Bishop, who was a canonical American writer who crossed racial and national borders. A tsunami stands as a symbol of the disruption of postcolonial politics between her and the two white Elizabeths as well as the disastrous experiences in life.

This paper, by focusing on the glocal elements in Kono’s works, explores her psychological transbordering as a significant element in her localism.